

Holy Books



Holy books from the point of view of a Muslim

I first read the Qur'an before I became Muslim. I read it in English and it came across as a series of rule and stories to convey rules about past prophets for example. What I did find remarkable was how clearly the rules that were 'black and white' rules were stated. They are expressed so you are in no doubt. For example, every few pages you are instructed to 'keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms' in no uncertain terms. What I also thought was interesting was that rules that Muslims generally take for certain such as perhaps wearing the headscarf were not actually clearly written and it made me wonder why such things were such deeply held beliefs.

As I began to approach Islam with a greater level of understanding it became clear that Qur'an, the eternal words of Allah, were to be understood by using the context and life of the Prophet Muhammad pbuH and so uncertainties in the Qur'an were made certain by understanding how he would have behaved in a particular situation hence why the headscarf is such a strongly adhered to view.

I found it interesting, as well, when I read the Qur'an for the first time that it 'speaks to you'. Initially, I don't mean that I discovered deep truths, I didn't when I first read it in the English translation. What I mean is; it is 'first person' narrative and is consistent in its message all the way through. That narrative is Allah passing His message through the Angel Jibril to the Prophet Muhammad pbuH and interestingly it is entirely consistent in style despite being delivered over a period of 23 years. Well that is interesting to a non-Muslim perhaps, but from a Muslim perspective it is expected as Allah is unchanging.

Although Qur'an may be compared to the Bible as they are both holy books; they are absolutely distinct in their form and way of writing, even though the result is that there are many similarities between Muslims and Christians.

When I came to gain a better relationship with the Qur'an after accepting Islam I began to understand in a different way. When you view things with the spiritual eye you see what you hadn't seen before and that sight fills in the gaps that had caused you to not really understand in the first place. Certain passages speak to you in a profound way and can reduce your physical self to nothing while you swim in the words of Allah, their depth palpable, though unknown.

Although I do not speak Arabic, I recite and read the Qur'an in Arabic. The very physical sensations of the letters have their own impact despite not having full understanding of what is being said. One could say that the depth of knowledge in every 'ayat' (sign- each line of Qur'an is a signpost to Allah) is such that we can only work toward understanding them anyway. To translate not to understand fully.

It is important to keep the Qur'an in your daily life as a Muslim. This means making sure that you listen to recitations or read some every day, to keep in mind what you have learned about it and to keep in mind the link that Allah has made with you through the angels and the Prophet Muhammad pbuH.

Task: Read the account of Holy Books

All: What is Qur'an?

Most: Explain why Muslims use it in their daily lives.

Some: Why might a non-Muslim not understand the Qur'an?