

What is the Qur'an?

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By Anwer Ali.

Preface to the Holy Qur'an.

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Short explanation of the role and purpose of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an comprehends the complete code for the Muslims to live a good, chaste, abundant and rewarding life in obedience to the commandments of Allah, in this life and to gain salvation in the next. It is the "chart of life" for every Muslim, and it is the "constitution" of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. The Qur'an is the eternal contemporary of the Muslims. Each generation of Muslims has found new sources of strength, courage and inspiration in it. It is also, for them, a "compass" in the turbulent voyage of life, as it has explained itself in the following verses:

. . . Indeed, there has come to you light and a clear book from Allah; With it Allah guides him who fill follow His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by his will and guides them to the right path. (5: 15-16)

It has created an all but new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character. It deserves the highest praise for its conceptions of Divine nature in reference to the attributes of Power, Knowledge, and Universal Providence and Unity – that its belief and trust is one God, creator of Heaven and Earth is deep and fervent, and that it embodies much of a noble and moral earnestness.

It is Qur'an which transformed the simple shepherds and wandering Bedouins of Arabia into the founders of empires, the builders of cities, the collectors of libraries. If a system of religious teachings is evaluated by the changes which it introduces into the way of life, the customs and beliefs of its follower, then Qur'an as a code of life is second to none.

It is not strange then, that more translations and more commentaries of the Holy Qur'an have been published than that of any other book claimed to be the Divine Revelation.

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