

Core Curriculum

5 The Qur'an and Hadith

5.3 The Structure of the Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (s) by Allah during the month of Ramadan on what is known as the Night of Power or Laylat al-Qadr. Laylat al-Qadr, the night of the Qur'an's revelation, is the most important night of the Islamic calendar and praying on that night is the occasion through which Muslims can gain the most blessings from God.

The medium through which God revealed the Qur'an was the archangel Gabriel. The Qur'an was all revealed to the Prophet (s) at once, but it was gradually revealed to people over a span of two decades.

Each verse that was revealed to the Prophet (s) was revealed in a particular context. The reason for this is because each verse in the Qur'an has practical applicability. The teachings of the Qur'an are not abstract or theoretical, they are concrete and directly relevant to human life in this world as well as the Hereafter. The occasions of revelation in the Qur'an are what are called the shan al-nuzūl.

The occasions of revelation provide us with the historical context, moment, situation as well as the persons involved when the verse was revealed. Through this we are better able to apply the Qur'an's verses in a practical way in most or all aspects of our lives. Some of the shan al-nuzūl are evident in the Qur'an, but others must be derived from the authentic hadiths or transmitted sayings of the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as).