



Handbook of
**ISLAMIC
DA'WAH**

Edited by
Mohd Yusof Hussain



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Chapter 6

The Qur'an as a Source of Islamic Da'wah: Understanding Its History

THAMEEM USHAMA

The great religions of the world have their sacred books, but it is the claim of Muslims that the Qur'ān is the only sacred book to have survived absolutely unchanged, since it was first revealed and written down fourteen hundred years ago.¹ The Oxford Dictionary spells the name as 'Koran' and defines it as the sacred book of the Mohammadans, the collection of Mohamed's oral revelations written in Arabic.² In the Encyclopedia Britannica, the Qur'ān is described as the sacred book of Islam, on which the religion of more than one billion people is founded, being regarded by them as the true word of God.³ Since the language in which the revelation came down is Arabic, it is appropriate to study the meaning of the word Qur'ān according to lexical sources. There are a few views on the meaning of the term 'Qur'ān.'

The Word Qur'ān

The Muslim scholars differ regarding the definition of the word Qur'ān from linguistic and etymological perspectives.⁴ Some of them assert that the word Qur'ān is *maṣḍar* (verbal noun) synonymous and corresponding in meaning with the word *qirā'āt*,⁵ as stated in the Qur'ānic passage: "It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it: But when We have promulgated it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated)."⁶ According to this passage, the word Qur'ān is *mahmūz* (provided with *hamzah*) and it is recited with *hamz*.⁷ The word is derived from the tri-literal word *qar'a'a*.⁸ The word Qur'ān is on the measure of *fu'lān*. The vowel *ḍammah* (the vowel point for u) is placed on the first consonant