Beit Al Qur'an is a unique Islamic international institute dedicated to the service of the Holy Qur'an. The pioneering concept of Beit Al Qur'an was inspired by the Islamic faith, the Holy Qur'an and Islamic heritage as can be seen in the services the institute offers to the public and in the great collection of Holy Qur'anic manuscripts on display at Al Hayat Museum from all parts of the Islamic world from China and East Asia in the east to North Africa and Spain in the west, throughout Islamic history from the 7th century to this day.

Beit Al Qur'an came to being through the generosity of many people of good will from all walks of life. For the institute to continue its worthy services it seeks and hopes for continued support from its friends and visitors.

Funds raised from the sale of this book will go towards the support of Beit Al Qur'an and all its activities.
"Bismi'Allah Al-Rahman Al-Rahim"
In the name of God
the Merciful the Compassionate
Contents

Preface  6
The Inspiration  8
The Objectives of Beit Al Qur’an  14
Beit Al Qur’an & Its Functions  20
Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa Lecture Hall  24
The Abdul Rahaman Jassim Kanoo Mosque  26
Al Fergan Library  28
Youssif Bin Ahmad Kanoo School for Quranic Studies  30
Al Hayat Museum  32
The Museum Display Policy  34
The Holy Qur’an: Al Mishaf Al Shareef  40
Aya, Surah & Juz’  44
The Language of the Holy Qur’an  50
The Recitation of the Holy Qur’an  52
The Beit Al Qur’an Collection  54
The Power of the Written Word  58
Kufic to Naskh  62
Reform of the Script  68
The Kufic Script  72
Eastern Kufic Script  74
Western Kufic Script  78
The Naskh Scripts  84
The Calligraphic Traditions  88
The Mamluk Tradition  92
The Safavid Tradition  96
The Ottoman Tradition  100
The Various Calligraphic Traditions  104
Illumination & Colour  110
Preface

It was a day of great pride and celebration not only for me personally, but for all those who had worked so tirelessly for over 10 years to bring Beit Al Qur'an into reality, when His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa inaugurated this unique Islamic centre on the 15th of Sha'ban 1410 Hijra, 12th March 1990. It was a day of achievement for the many who contributed whether, heads of state or school children, each in their private capacity, to see this great centre open to the public to spread the message of Islam and the Holy Qur'an.

To achieve this task was not easy. Raising money through public donations for an idea such as Beit Al Qur'an was an enormous undertaking fraught with uncertainties and a new experience for the people in our area. What made it possible is the immense desire by all Muslims to serve the Holy Qur'an and its message. This eternal and unbreakable bond between the Holy Qur'an and the Muslim people and the timely contribution by many people of good will has seen us through some difficult times during the construction period of the project, and we eventually succeeded, all of us together, in making Beit Al Qur'an a beacon for culture and heritage in Bahrain.

Beit Al Qur'an has already accomplished a great deal during a short period. We have a permanent exhibition of magnificent Holy Quranic manuscripts in our Al Hayat Museum where visitors can see the best in Quranic calligraphy from the different eras and many areas of the Islamic world; we have a splendid lending library which is open to the public free of charge and a mosque which is open for prayer 'Salat' at all times. We have also staged exhibitions of Islamic art and culture and sponsored lectures on a variety of subjects by prominent scholars and religious leaders from different countries. We have published books on Islamic heritage and religion and celebrated the Holy month of Ramadan with lectures, seminars and daily recitations of the Holy Qur'an by outstanding readers. In addition, we have committed ourselves to continue our work for Islam and the Holy Qur'an by expanding our services at the centre and initiate programmes of study and scholarship aimed at the deeper understanding of Islam and the Holy Qur'an and bringing the Quranic message to all, young and old.

A cornerstone of Beit Al Qur'an's policy is to welcome at the centre all people in our area, from whatever cultures or backgrounds, for the Holy Qur'an has a message for all humanity. This book presents the various functions and services of Beit Al Qur'an and gives to non Muslims an introduction to the Holy Qur'an and the history of its calligraphy. The book explains the calligraphic styles and relates them to many of the exhibits on display at the Al Hayat Museum. We hope through this to open to our visitors a small window of vision at the glory of Islam, the Holy Qur'an and Islamic heritage. The success of our efforts shall be measured by the degree of pleasure our visitors shall gain during their visit to Beit Al Qur'an.

Dr. Abdul Latif Jassim Kenoo
Beit Al Qur'an as the name implies in Arabic is the house of the Holy Qur'an. It was conceived in the tradition of the old 'madrasa', schools that were attached to great mosques in the past, where enlightenment was passed to all those who sought it. Like those institutions of old, it combines religion, knowledge and culture under one roof. It is a unique Islamic international institution dedicated to the service of the Holy Qur'an, open to Muslims and people from all nationalities and beliefs. It is situated in a prestigious area of Manama, the capital of the State of Bahrain, commanding an imposing presence in its urban setting. Beit Al Qur'an’s concept was inspired by the Islamic faith, the Holy Qur’an and Islamic heritage as can be seen through the institute’s functions, activities and services and in the great collection of Holy Quranic manuscripts on display in the museum halls from all parts of the world, from all key eras of Islamic history.

With its various complimentary elements, Beit Al Qur'an is unique in many ways. It is the first and only institute of its kind to be totally dedicated to the service of the Holy Qur’an and the preservation of historic Quranic manuscripts. It is the first institute of its size and range of functions in the area to be totally funded and wholly supported by public donations and generous help from people from all walks of life, ranging from heads of state to school children each contributing in his private capacity. It is an Islamic cultural institute founded by the people for the benefit of all the people in the world.

Beit Al Qur'an was founded in Bahrain by Dr. Abdal Latif Jasim Kanoo, who is a serious collector of Islamic manuscripts and art in general. Dr. Kanoo’s keen sense of history and his immense pride in his Islamic faith and heritage motivated him to collect Holy Quranic manuscripts first, and later Islamic art in general. He was inspired by the heritage he saw during his travels in the Arab and the Islamic world and by the rich collections of Islamic art in celebrated museums visited during his study period abroad. Dr. Kanoo’s personal journey into the collectors world acquired later a very serious purpose, for as his collection of Holy Qur'ans and Islamic manuscripts expanded to a substantial size, he felt a heavy responsibility as its keeper. The responsibility of holding these great manuscripts transcended the concept of ownership to the concept of custodianship.

It is this feeling that inspired Dr. Kanoo to initiate the idea of Beit Al Qur'an. He felt a necessity to create an institute to function as a guardian of this great heritage for future generations and to help through varied activities in the protection and display of these rich treasures, an institute with services dedicated to the study of the Holy Qur'an and the propagation of its message. Dr. Kanoo subsequently donated his collection of Holy Quranic manuscripts to Beit Al Qur'an and this formed the nucleus of its Al Hayat Museum collection which can now lay claim to be one of the most important of its kind in the world.
The Objectives of Beit Al Qur'an

Beit Al Qur'an strives to serve the Holy Qur'an and the study of its teachings through all its activities. The institute's main objectives are:

- The service and understanding of the Holy Qur'an.
- The presentation of the Holy Qur'an and its teachings to all people of all ages and the encouragement of its learning, study and recitation.
- The promotion and sponsorship of cultural activities, lectures and seminars aimed at the dissemination of knowledge about Islam, the Holy Qur'an and Islamic heritage.
- The promotion and sponsorship of academic research and studies by scholars into Quranic sciences.
- The collection and preservation of Holy Quranic manuscripts and calligraphic heritage for future generations and avail these where possible to scholars and to the general public by putting them on display in an appropriate cultural setting.
- The promotion of museological studies into the presentation, restoration, display and storage of manuscripts and old books.
- The publication of books and other material on the Holy Qur'an and other subjects relating to Islamic heritage.
Scholars & Lecturers at Beit Al Qur'an

- Ahmad Davodt, South Africa, lecture at Beit Al Qur'an

- The Mosaic Scholar Sheikh Mohammed Ali Ghazali, Egypt, lecture and seminars at Beit Al Qur'an

- Dr. Ghazi Al Gosabi, inaugurating the Makkah and Medina Exhibition, Beit Al Qur'an

- Mr. Yousef Al Shinaish & Dr. Ali Fakhro, seminar in session at Beit Al Qur'an
Distinguished Visitors at Beit Al Qur'an

- Mrs. Khokela Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh
- Cheiffo Amadou, Prime Minister of Niger
- Mr. Mahmoud Yass, the former Secretary General, Arab League

- Mrs. Banozir Bhatti, Prime Minister of Pakistan
- Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom with H.H. Sheikh Ali bin Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.