To fulfill its objectives, the Beit Al Qur'an building was designed within a traditional Islamic architectural concept in an entirely modern mould. The building consists of five major functional elements with their ancillary facilities and services. These are arranged around a tranquil covered court yard with a water fountain at its centre. The fine detailing of the interiors, enhanced by the rich tracery of delicate woodwork of the maqdatiyyat, oriel balconies, are bathed in natural daylight highlighting the elegance of the spaces and their restrained beauty. The bold exterior design of the building, in its landscaped setting, gives it distinction and authority within the surrounding environment. The solid masonry is accentuated by a slender minaret of traditional proportions based on the historic 12th Century minarets of Al Khans Mosques in Bahrain.
Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa Lecture Hall

The space was donated to Beit Al Qur'an by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, in memory of his son Sheikh Mohammed. It is a fully equipped lecture hall used by Beit Al Qur'an for conferences and seminars and is open for use to the public as a venue for appropriate functions, particularly those relating to Islamic religion and culture. The space seats some 150 to 200 persons and is equipped with modern audio visual and simultaneous translation facilities and is connected to Beit Al Qur'an's central courtyard by a closed circuit TV system. Large audiences of over 200 and up to a 1000 people can therefore be accommodated in the central courtyard when the need arises for popular lectures and activities.

A number of international Islamic scholars have given lectures in the hall on important subjects on Islamic religion and culture. Amongst these were: Sheikh Mohammed Al Ghazali, Sheikh Mohammed Saeed Tantawi and Dr. Aysha Abdul Rahman, bint Al Shat'i from Egypt, Ahmad Qudrat from South Africa, Sheikh Salih Kamal, Dr. Ghazi Al Gosaibi and Dr. Mohammed Abdo Yamani from Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa and Mr. Yousef Ahmad Al Shihabi from Bahrain and many other specialists and intellectuals from the Arab and Islamic worlds, Europe and America. The lecture hall has a busy programme during the Holy month of Ramadan when lectures are presented on a regular basis on a variety of topical subjects including: religion, economics, art, architecture and science. The space has also been made available by Beit Al Qur'an to many of Bahrain's professional societies and organisations.
The Abdul Rahman Jassim Kanoo Mosque

The mosque in the building where prayers are conducted five times a day is large enough to accommodate 150 worshippers. The area was donated to Beit Al Qur'an by Mr. Abdul Rahman Jassim Kanoo from Bahrain. A specially commissioned stained glass dome which is one of the largest of its type in the world, covers the unusual circular prayer area. The design of the dome depicts a calligraphic composition by the well known Egyptian calligrapher Ahmad Mustafa showing verse 18 of Surat Al Baqarah from the Holy Qur'an and other geometric patterns. The stained glass and its supports were manufactured for Beit Al Qur'an in the United Kingdom. The blue ceramic tile wall mihrab, the niche by which the Imam leads prayer, was designed and produced for the mosque by specialist ceramic artists from Turkey. The tiles of the mihrab were made in 1984 and the numerals for the year are included as part of the design composition within a calligraphic frame depicting verse 255 of Surat Al Baqara from the Holy Qur'an "Ayat Al Kursi".

During the month of Ramadan, the mosque is the hub of activity in Beit Al Qur'an where the traditional Al Taraweeh Prayers are held after the Evening 'Isha' Prayers. These are followed by readings from the Holy Qur'an recited by invited readers from the Arab and Islamic worlds.
Beit Al Qur'an lays special emphasis on academic research and serious scholarly work on the Holy Qur'an and other related Islamic subjects and on the dissemination of knowledge on Islamic religion and culture. Beit Al Qur'an's Al Forqan Library, established through a generous donation by Sheikh Ahmad Zaki Yamani, from Saudi Arabia is designed to meet these requirements and has fully equipped facilities with spacious reading rooms, individual study carrels and comprehensive referencing facilities. It is designed to cater for scholars and the general public in three main languages: Arabic, English and French. The library holds reference material on the Holy Qur'an and Holy Quranic subjects, commentary, interpretations and the Hadith.

There will be, eventually, some 50,000 volumes in these languages and translations of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an published in all living languages. The reading room in the library also has a comprehensive periodical section with easy access to the public.

Membership of the library and its book lending facilities are open free to members of all ages. The library intends to encourage interest in books and reading by promoting book festivals and exhibitions at Beit Al Qur'an and will have arrangements with other libraries world wide to share reference and other facilities.
The Yousif Bin Ahmad Kanoo School for Quranic Studies was donated to Beit Al Qur'an by the Yousif Bin Ahmad Kanoo Group and it comprises of seven study areas, fully equipped with computer and other modern educational aids. The aim of the school is to teach the Holy Qur'an, its various approved recitations and other subjects relating to commentaries and interpretations. Beit Al Qur'an aims to develop advanced academic and religious instruction programmes for the school according to prevailing needs. The work in the school will support and supplement the research undertaken by scholars on relevant subjects at Beit Al Qur'an. The school areas and equipment are also available, where appropriate, for use by the public where space is required for private teaching of the Holy Qur'an for special groups.
Al Hayat Museum and its ancillary facilities occupy the most substantial part of Beit Al Qur'an and comprises of ten halls over two floors. The voluminous spaces are interconnected by easy split level ramps linking the two main levels of the museum. Visitors can perambulate effortlessly from one hall to another through the subtle changes in level. The treasures on show exhibit different aspects of the Beit Al Qur'an collection and its vast historic range. They are displayed in specially designed cabinets with sophisticated environmental controls and fibre optic lighting technology. The cabinets cater for the very special lighting, and humidity requirements essential for the proper display of rare and delicate old manuscripts.

The ten halls of the museum are sponsored by organisations or individual benefactors. The thematic displays in each of these halls are arranged to give an overall view of Beit Al Qur'an’s collection with each space presenting a different specialised aspect of the collection such as early Holy Qur’ans on parchment; illuminated Holy Qur’ans; the Holy Qur’an in print with examples from the first ever printed copy to modern coloured and illuminated prints; unique exhibits relating to historic manuscripts or events; translations of the meaning of the Holy Qur’an in many languages including many first edition issues in Latin, English, French and Dutch; the Holy Qur’an written on a variety of materials and the Holy Qur’an and modern calligraphy.

Each of the halls bears a historic name, the name of an Islamic holy city, the name of famous Islamic pioneers or the name of the sponsor of that particular space. The halls are:

Ahmad Al Fatih Hall, donated by His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa
Ahmad Mohammed Al Farisai Hall, donated by Mr. Sheikh Al Faris, from Kuwait.
Al Aza’ Al Hadiim Hall, donated by Investcorp Bank, Bahrain.
Makka Al Mukarrama Hall, donated by The National Bank of Bahrain, Bahrain.
Al Medina Al Munawara Hall, donated by Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, Bahrain.
Al Quds Al Safadi Hall, donated by The Arab Banking Corporation, Bahrain.
Bandar Bin Sultan Al Saud Hall, donated by His Highness Prince Bandar Bin Sultan Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.
Al Khalifa Al Rashid Hall, donated by The Arab Support Fund in Bahrain.
Abdulrahman Mohammed Kamal Hall, donated by Mr. Saad Kamal, of Saudi Arabia.
Bahrain Hall, this space is open for future sponsorship.

![General view of the Museum showing the interconnecting ramps](image-url)
The Museum Display Policy

The museum’s display policy aims at putting on public view a selection of its Holy Quran manuscripts in the different styles from different eras and parts of the Islamic world in an original and interesting form, breaking new design grounds in presentation techniques and avoiding the limitations imposed by the traditional methods of presentation of manuscripts.

The museum also collates and preserves in their original form many of the manuscripts in its collection which were often acquired from different sources at different times. As a matter of policy the museum rotates its exhibits with the intention of varying the display themes so as to cover various aspects of the Holy Quran and its calligraphy and many of the items from the Beit Al Quran collection will be on display for the first time anywhere. Subjects will be covered to detail areas in the teaching of the Holy Quran and the progress and development of Quranic calligraphy and illumination.

The museum sponsors visiting exhibitions on Islamic culture and heritage from institutes and individuals both in the region and internationally and sends parts of its collection on similar exchanges. A number of exhibitions of international standing on Quranic calligraphy, art of the Islamic book and on various aspects of Islamic art and culture have already been held at Beit Al Quran and received public acclaim.
Recite in the Name of Thy Lord

The start of the first 'Ayat', verse, of the Holy Qur'anic revelation to descend on the Holy Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.), Surat Al-Imran, Chapter 3. The calligraphy is in the Dinar script by the Bahrian calligrapher, Solhman AlShaar.
Al Qur'an, Islam's Holy Book and the cornerstone of the Islamic faith is the unalterable word of God Almighty. It is God's message transmitted to the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) through the intermediary of the Archangel Gabriel, in the nobler form of classical Arabic in a unique and highly moving language. The Holy Qur'an is the final revelation and the culmination of all divine messages. The text of the Holy Qur'an as it can be read in the (Al Mishaf Al Shareef) expounds an eloquent message of monotheism which is the foundation of Islam. It illuminates the life of all Muslims whether spiritual or temporal and binds the Muslim Nation 'Islamic Ummah' to a system of law which inspires people by its guiding principles of human dignity, righteous living, individual responsibility and social justice.

The Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) received the divine revelation of the Holy Qur'an over the period of his prophethood extending some 23 years. The revelation stopped with his death in 632, by which time the Holy Qur'an was complete. The first 'Ayat', verse, of the Holy Qur'an to descend on the Prophet was in Ghar Hira'a, a cave of refuge and solitude near Makkah, in which the Holy Prophet first heard the voice of the Angel Gabriel commanding him to: "Recite in the name of thy Lord", the first verse of the 96th 'Sura', chapter, of 'Al Aalq'. The revelation continued to descend on the Holy Prophet several 'Ayat' at a time until the Holy Qur'an was complete. The Holy Quranic verses were immediately transmitted from believer to believer as they were heard directly from the Prophet, orally by huffah (followers of the Prophet who memorised the Holy words), and through writing on a variety of media such as animal skins, palm tree fronds, thin stone plaques, bone plates and other material available for writing at that time. These first Quranic records were kept with great pride amongst the early Muslims and close companions of the Prophet.

The collection of the scattered sections of the Holy Qur'an into the complete Al Mishaf Al Shareef became of paramount importance in early Islam during the reign Abu Bakr Al Siddiq, (634). Abu Bakr, the first of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Al Khulafa Al Rashedeen) and the first ruler of the Muslim Nation after the death of the Holy Prophet, was advised by Omar ibn Al Khattab (644), an early venerate companion of the Prophet and the second of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, to start the task of committing the revelation into the Mishaf Al Shareef for posterity. This task became the more urgent due to the martyrdons of many of the huffah in the early campaigns for Islam. Taking Omar's advice, Abu Bakr ordered Zaid ibn Thalib, one of the first companions of the Prophet to collate and record in writing the Holy Quranic revelation as

- Surat Al Aalq, Verses 1-5. The first Ayat of the Quranic revelation to descend on the Holy Prophet.
it was directly heard from the Prophet, 
and thus began the task of committing 
the Holy Qur'an into the single corpus 
of the 'Al Mishaf Al Shareef'.

The momentous task of collating and 
arranging the complete Holy Qur'an 
into the single volume of 'Al Mishaf Al 
Shareef' was eventually concluded in 
651, under the orders of the 3rd of the 
Rightly Guided Caliphs, Ottoman ibn 
Affan (d.666). This collated 'Mishaf' 
was immaculately checked by eminent 
haflah and other companions of the 
Prophet, and arranged to strict instruc-
tions given by the Prophet during his 
lifetime. This 'Al Mishaf Al Shareef' 
was later transcribed into four (some 
references say seven) identical copies 
called the Imams, one kept in Makkah 
while the others were sent to the most 
important Islamic regions of the period: 
Basra, Kufa and Al Sham (Syria). These 
Mishafs were kept in the principal 
mosques of these areas to be used as 
references from which all Holy Qur'an 
Mishafs were to be reproduced and 
guaranteed to which all Mishaf copies 
could be checked. From that period to this 
day adherence to these Mishafs of the 
Holy Qur'an has been so strict and so 
complete that no textual variants have 
been permitted, nor can any Mishaf 
copy be made, throughout the Muslim 
world, without being in full and 
absolute conformity with these 
authenticated copies of the Holy 
Qur'an. This can be clearly seen in all 
the Holy Quranic copies on display in 
the Beit Al Qur'an collection from the 
coldest Islamic periods to this day.

- The text of the same Ayah (30:79-80 & 81) from Surat Al-Saffat, from the Holy Qur'an. The top example is a 9th C. manuscript written 
in Iraq and the bottom example is the exact modern text printed in Saudi Arabia.
The Holy Qur’an consists of 114 ‘Suras’, chapters, which are composed of ‘Ayas’, verses. The Holy Quranic Ayas were revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) in random sequences of a few Ayas at a time, and once those Ayas were learnt by the hufuf or committed into writing, they were arranged by the Holy Prophet into a pre-ordained sequence which became the order for the later and final canonic recension of the Holy Qur’an, completed during the reign of the Caliph Othman.

The complete Qur’an consists of 6236 Ayas of varying length and place of revelation. More than 2/3 of the Holy Qur’an, 4613 Ayas, were revealed in Makka over a period of 13 years mostly prior to Hijra (the flight of the Holy Prophet from Makka to Medina and the start of the Islamic Hijra, lunar calendar in the year 622). The remainder of the Holy Qur’an, 1623 Ayas, were revealed in Medina, mostly after the Hijra of the Prophet to this Holy city. The Suras of the Holy Qur’an are thus associated with these two Islamic Cities, and the words Makka (reference to Makka) or Mediniya (reference to Medina) are stated in each Sura heading with the title and verse count on written and printed Holy Qur’ans. As a general rule, the 114 Suras of Al Mishaf Al Sharif are arranged, with a number of exceptions, in such a way that the shorter Suras precede the longer ones. Al Suur Al Makka, numbering 86 tend to be short and stress in glorious language the oneness of God Almighty, the necessity of faith and the proclamation of the righteous path of Islam and the inevitability of the day of judgement. Al Suur Al Mediniya, numbering 28, are generally longer than the Suur Al Makka and deal with the giving of law and the social and political codes for the Islamic Nation.

To facilitate the learning and recitation of Qur’an, which is the duty of all Muslims, the 77437 words of the Mishaf Al Sharif are traditionally divided into approximately thirty equal sections called ‘Ajaa’s’, singular, ‘Juz’. Each of these ‘Juz’ is further subdivided into two equal parts called ‘Aza’ab’, singular, ‘Aza’. The location of the start of each of these Aza’ab’s and Aza’hs are marked by decorative devices on the margins of written and printed Qur’ans to assist the readers in the location of the verses and the pacing of the memorisation process in the recitation of the text. It is traditionally accepted that each of the thirty Aza’ab’s of the Mishaf Al Sharif are read, a Juz’a day, over the thirty days of Ramadan, the month of fasting. There are also other less common subdivisions of the Holy Quranic text used according to prevailing traditions in different parts of the Islamic world at different periods of history.

Detail of some decorative devices on the margins of the Mishaf Al Sharif