The Quran is the holy book which Muslims recite and turn to for guidance in all aspects of their life. It is the last testament in a series of divine revelations from God. It comprises the unaltered and direct words of God, revealed through the Angel Gibrael, to the final Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) some 1400 years ago. Islam is a continuation of the teachings of previous Prophets, such as Noah, Abraham, David, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them all), some of whom were also given divine books. Muslims believe that the key message brought by all Prophets was the same; to believe in One God and not to associate partners with Him, to stay away from sins and to lead a life devoted to earning God’s pleasure. All Prophets taught about life after death and gave glad tidings of paradise for those who obey God, but warned of punishment in hell for those who choose to disobey Him.

The Quran is unique because it is the only revealed book that exists today in the precise form and content in which it was originally revealed. Furthermore, it was actively recorded during the time the religion was being established. The distinctive approach of the Quran is that its spiritual message includes practical injunctions aimed at the general welfare of human beings, society and the environment in which we live. The Quran’s message is eternal and universal, transcending our differences in race, color, ethnicity and nationality. It provides guidance on every aspect of human life—from economics and the ethics of trade to marriage, divorce, gender issues, inheritance and parenting. It neither condemns nor tortures the flesh nor does it neglect the soul. It does not humanize God, nor does it deify man. The Quran describes signs of God’s existence in the universe and how everything is carefully placed in the total scheme of creation.

This is the Book in which there is no doubt, in it is guidance for those who fear God. Who believe in the unseen, establish the prayer, and spend out of what We have given them. And who believe in that which was sent down to you (Muhammad), and that which was sent down before you (the Books and the Prophets), and have certain faith in the hereafter. They are on (true) guidance, from their Lord, and it is these who will prosper” [Quran, 2:2-5].

"The above observation makes the hypothesis advanced by those who see Muhammad as the author of the Qur’an untenable. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merits, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at that time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronunciation on the subject?"

[Maurice Bucaille, The Bible, the Quran and Science, 1978, p. 123]
The Quran has been preserved for over 1400 years through parallel memorization and writings.

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly Guard it from corruption." [Quran 15:9]

The Quran is the only book that has been memorized in its entirety by millions. The process of memorization began during the Prophet’s (pbuh) life and continues to be emphasized by Muslims, even to this day. The use of memorization in oral transmission through the generations “had mitigated somewhat from the beginning the worst perils of relying solely on written records,” related John Burton. [John Burton, An Introduction to the Hadith, Edinburgh University Press, 1994, p27]

Muhammad (pbuh) was very vigilant in preserving the entire Quran in written form as well. The Prophet (pbuh) could not read or write, so as soon as a portion of the Quran was revealed, he called upon his scribes to record the revealed text. The Prophet (pbuh) specified the part of the Quran the revelation belonged to and had the companions read back what was written to ensure that it corresponded exactly with what was revealed. Thus, the complete Quran was not only memorized by the Prophet (pbuh) and many of his companions, but also existed in written form during his lifetime. Within a year after the Prophet’s (pbuh) death, a manuscript of the entire Quran was assembled by a committee led by the chief scribe of the Prophet (pbuh), who followed stringent criteria to safeguard against any errors. The manuscript was unanimously approved by the companions of the Prophet (pbuh), including the bandits who had murdered the Prophet (pbuh) within the last few years with very complicated and advanced technological methods that this is the case.

The Quran describes geographical concepts that were proven after its revelation. For example, it was the common dogma 1400 years ago that the earth was flat, but the Quran described it as a sphere, compressed at each end (like an ostrich egg). “And the earth moreover, He has made egg shaped” [Quran 79:30]. In 1597, when Sir Francis Drake sailed around the world, the earth became known to be a sphere.

What can explain the origin of the Quran?

The life and character of the Prophet (pbuh), the depth of the Quranic message, its appeal and relevance to both the spiritual and the mundane, all testify to the Divine origin of the Quran. These points compel us to admit our inability to provide an explanation that relies solely upon material causes. In a world starved of love and compassion, the Quran’s universal message is the perfect antidote to the collective despair of the human condition.

1. pbuh stands for ‘peace be upon him’ an invocation of respect
2. Professor Alfred Kroner, a prominent scientist of anatomy
3. see 877-Why Islam brochure titled “What they say about Muhammad (pbuh)”
4. the halter word for egg in Arabic; meaning ostrich egg.