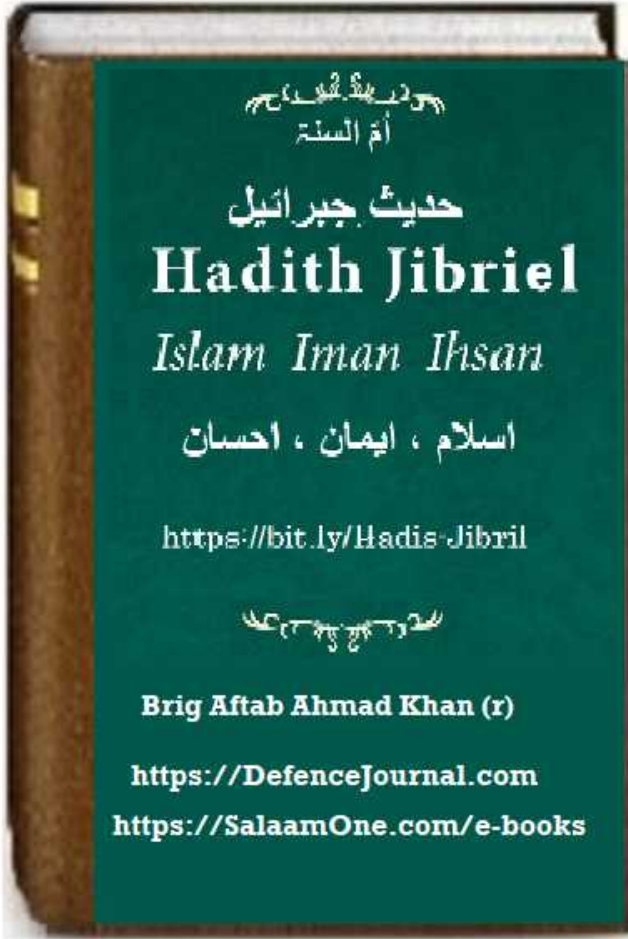


Hadith of Jibriel



Compiled by: Brig Aftab Khan (r)

Based on "[The Vision of Islam](#)" by Professor William C. Chittick & Sachiko Murata

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In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Introduction

In this fast world people generally feel that they are running short of time. People hardly find time to read lengthy religious books or listen to the sermons. One tends to look for a summary or a brief. On religious matters the scholar may have his own opinion and sectarian biases, going through whole Quran and Hadith books is not possible for common people. Al-Alam (The Omniscient) is one of the beautiful names of Allah, He sent Quran for guidance and in it the shortest summary in just three verses ([Surah Al-Asr](#)

[103](#)).¹ moreover angel Jibriel was sent to teach Islam to the people publically in the most concise form, free from human error and biases. This unique and unprecedented method, also blocked any effort by any mischievous person to introduce deviation [[Bid'ah](#) ([بدعة](#))]² later.

Islam is based on [Quran](#), the book of Allah, which declares Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as a role [model](#)³, he thus elaborated and taught Islam through practices (Sunnah)⁴ and narrations ([Hadiths](#)). The Quran is available in written form as well as in the memory of millions of Muslims (Hafiz, Quran memorizers) in each Muslim village and town in all age groups through out the world since fourteen hundred years⁵. The Sunnah was passed down from generation to generation through practice and Hadith through memorization, notes, narration from Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) because Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Caliphs [prohibited](#) Hadith book⁶ writing, which could undermine the book of Allah, the mistake committed by previous people ([Jews and Christians](#))⁷. However during the second and third century Hijrah [Hadith books](#) were

¹ <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.shakir/103:1>

<https://quran1book.blogspot.com/2021/10/Najaat.html>

² <https://wp.me/scyQCZ-bidah>, <https://bit.ly/Bidaah>

³ <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.shakir/33:21>

⁴ <https://quran1book.wordpress.com/2020/11/18/hadith-sunnah/>

⁵ <https://quran1book.wordpress.com/2020/11/19/quran-on-quran/> ,

<https://wp.me/pcyQCZ-l2> ,

<https://quran1book.wordpress.com/2020/11/19/quran-on-hadith/>

⁶ <https://quran1book.wordpress.com/2021/06/04/prohibition-of-hadith-writing/> ,

<https://wp.me/scyQCZ-sahabah>

⁷ <https://quran1book.wordpress.com/2020/11/18/jews-christians-quran/>

written down⁸. By applying the Hadith verification [criteria](#) set by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم can easily distinguish fake from real, but unfortunately it's ignored^{9, 10}.

Umm al-Kitab - The Foundation of the Quran Command Verses 3:7

The Quran's standard is incredibly rigorous, as Allah Almighty categorised its verses into two distinct groups, imposing a condition for the acceptance of the "Firm Command Verses" (Ayat Muḥkamat)¹¹ for the derivation of legal rulings and beliefs. These verses serve as the bedrock of the Quran, possessing only a singular and unambiguous meaning. Conversely, there exist other verses that may carry multiple interpretations, harbour doubt, and remain open to diverse understandings. From these verses, beliefs, fundamentals, legal or rulings, cannot be deduced. Islam stands as a complete and perfect faith, impervious to alteration or imperfection by any scholar, learned individual, or revered figure who might attempt to inject their interpretations or theories, even if they claim to do so under the auspices of venerable and sacred figures. Such actions amount to blasphemy against these revered personalities as no pious believer can go against the Quran.

بُؤِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ مِنْهُ أَمْ الْكِتَابِ وَ آخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَةٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَ ابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِمْ وَ مَا يَعْلَمُ

⁸ <https://wp.me/scyQCZ-hadiith>

⁹ <https://quran1book.wordpress.com/2020/11/18/hadiith-criteria/>,
<https://bit.ly/Hadiith-Basics>

¹⁰ أصول المعرفة الإسلامية Fundamentals of Islamic Knowledge
<https://bit.ly/TheReal-Islam>

¹¹ Master Key to Quran (3:7) <https://bit.ly/Key2Quran-Eng>

تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَ الرّٰسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۚ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۗ وَ مَا
يَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (سورة آل عمران 3:7)

Translation

He is the One Who has revealed to you 'O Prophet' the Book, of which some verses are precise (آيَاتٌ مُّحْكَمَاتٌ)—they are the foundation of the Book (أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ)—while others are elusive. Those with deviant hearts follow the elusive verses seeking 'to spread' doubt through their 'false' interpretations—but none grasps their 'full' meaning except Allah. As for those well-grounded in knowledge, they say, "We believe in this 'Quran'—it is all from our Lord." But none will be mindful 'of this' except people of reason. (Translation: Quran 3:7)¹²

According to verse 3:7, Islamic rulings are exclusively derived from the "Firm Command Verses" (Ayat Muḥkamāt) of the Quran, which form the bedrock of the Quran itself (Umm al-Kitab). Personal interpretations or distortions of these verses cannot introduce new beliefs, innovations (Bid'ah), or changes to Islam. This verse (3:7) stands as a resolute prohibition against altering its meanings through interpretations, thereby thwarting the emergence of sects.

However, some individuals have misinterpreted the verse (3:7) through their interpretations to justify sectarianism. They restrict the scope of its applicability to the "Ambiguous Letters" (*haroof muqataat*), the unseen (*al-ghaib*), and the Almighty only, overlooking the fact that the term "*Mutashabihat*" also applies to

¹² Master Key to Quran : <https://bit.ly/Key2Quran>

verses with multiple meanings. Additionally, the term "*Al-Raskhoon*" (firm in knowledge) has been misapplied to certain Imams, suggesting that they possess knowledge of the meanings of "*Mutshabhat*" alongside Allah. This interpretation raises questions about whether these Imams hold a higher status than the Prophet ﷺ, despite clear evidence from the Quran and Sunnah that the Messenger ﷺ of Allah faithfully conveyed everything he received and concealed nothing. Rulings and commands cannot be established through circular arguments and interpretations but must be derived exclusively from the "*Muhakkamah*," the Command verses that constitute the foundational cornerstone of the Quran (Umm al-Kitab).

The meanings of ambiguous verses are limited to the scope of letters and words, leaving the realm of the unseen and Allah's essence. Conversely, verses with multiple interpretations are included within the category of "ambiguous verses" (Mutashabihat).

Similarly, the term "*Al-Rasikhun*" (those firmly grounded in knowledge) implies that they are well-versed in the meanings of "ambiguous verses" (Mutashabihat) beyond Allah's knowledge. However, they are not above or beyond the guidance provided by Allah's Messenger ﷺ. It is well-established through the Quran and Sunnah that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ conveyed everything he received, hiding nothing. This is evident not through conjectures, allegorical interpretations, or distortions but through the "Firm Command Verses" (Ayat Muḥkamat), which form the core foundation of

Islamic jurisprudence derived from the original scripture (Umm al-Kitab).

The great philosopher, scholar and poet, Iqbal said (Persian):

آن کتابِ زنده، قرآنِ حکیم : حکمتِ او لایزال است و قدیم
نسخهٔ اسرارِ تکوینِ حیات: بے ثبات از قوتش گیرد ثبات
حرفِ او را ریبِ نئے، تبدیلِ نئے: آیه اش شرمندہٗ تاویلِ نئے

It is the living book, the wise Quran: The words of wisdom written in it are eternal and ancient. It (the Holy Quran) is a recipe for the mysteries of existence or non-existence of life. Uncertainty also becomes steadfast because of it. There is no doubt in its letters and there can be no change. There can be no interpretation (tawi) of its verses (Iqbal).¹³

Umm al-Sunnah: The Foundation of Sunnah

The The Hadith of Gabriel

The Hadith of Gabriel,¹⁴ sheds light on the core principles of Islam, faith¹⁵, and excellence (ehsan), encompassing the "Firm Command Verses" (Ayat Muḥkamat) of the Quran. Should any Muslim question these verses, they effectively challenge the Quran itself, for the Hadith of Gabriel is fundamentally rooted in these "Firm Command Verses" that no Muslim can deny.

The Quran and the explanation provided by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ have undeniably and clearly defined Islam and faith, addressing fundamental inquiries. However, a unique approach was employed to expound

¹³ http://www.zindgienau.com/Issues/2017/September2017/images/unicode_files/heading3.htm

¹⁴ Hadith of Gabriel English: <https://bit.ly/Hadith-Jibriel>

¹⁵ Faith Fundamentals: <https://wp.me/sbruvK-faith>

upon Islam, faith, and *ehsan* (excellence), ensuring absolute clarity and leaving no room for doubt. This method involved a comprehensive dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the Prophet ﷺ. "The Hadith of Gabriel" is consequently considered the cornerstone and bedrock of the Sunnah, just as Surah Al-Fatiha is referred to as "Umm al-Quran," symbolising the essence and wisdom of the Quran.

In summary, "[The Hadith of Gabriel](#)," which every Muslim should be acquainted with, is firmly grounded in the "Firm Command Verses" of the Quran. It encompasses beliefs in the Oneness of Allah, the existence of angels, the prophethood of the messengers, the revelation of the Books of Allah (including the Quran as Allah's final revelation through the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), the concept of the Hereafter, the concept of destiny, and the foundational pillars of Islam (such as the declaration of faith, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage).

Any deviation from or tampering with these fundamental principles can be viewed as a departure from the core tenets of Islam. There is no room for compromise in this matter, as introducing alterations or novel interpretations amounts to an attempt to modify Allah's divine decrees. Those who tamper with Allah's commands effectively claim to be partners in Lordship (Rabb) (9:31). They are committing not only innovation but also a grave act of associating partners with Allah (shirk), a sin that has been unequivocally condemned. The Prophet ﷺ's assertion, "Every innovation is misguidance," (كُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ) is reinforced by Quranic

verse 3:7 and should be firmly established in our consciousness. Thus the parameters of Islam defined by establishing “Islamic Standard Constants” explained earlier.

The Hadith of Jibriel

Any explanation of the beliefs, practices, and institutions that make Islam a major religion can benefit from an example that makes sense in terms of modern scholarship and has a basis in traditional Islamic learning. The illustration and example apart from Quran is found as the famous and authentic hadith, known as Hadith Jabriel, that Muslim scholars and thinkers have often employed for similar purposes in primitive texts.¹⁶ Typically anyone interested to know and understand Islam should memorise this hadith, in the fashion of traditional Islamic learning. Hadith of Jibriel contains everything basic to Islam in concise form and is harmony with Quran. Professor William C. Chittick and his wife Sachiko Murata has written a book “ [The Vision of Islam](#)¹⁷” which is based upon the Hadith of Jibriel or we can call it one of the best explanations of Hadith of Jibriel. This article is based upon information

¹⁶ See for example Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri (d. 769/1368), *The Reliance of the Traveller: A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*, translated by N. H. H. Keller (Dubai: Modern Printing House, 1991), pp. 807-15. For an interesting example of a twentieth-century African Muslim who used this model to teach the basics of Islam to illiterate tribespeople, see L. Brenner, *West African Sufi: The Religious Heritage and Spiritual Search of Cerno Bokar Saalif Taal* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 187-92.

¹⁷

from this book besides other sources mentioned in links.

حدثنا مسدد، قال: حدثنا إسماعيل بن إبراهيم، أخبرنا أبو حيان التيمي، عن أبي زرعة، عن أبي هريرة، قال: كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بارزا يوما للناس، فاتاه جبريل، فقال: ما الإيمان؟ قال: "الإيمان أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وبقائه ورسوله ثم قال حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ إِذْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا رَجُلٌ شَدِيدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ شَدِيدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعْرِ لَا يَرَى عَلَيْهِ أَثَرَ السَّفَرِ وَلَا يَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَسْنَدَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخْذَيْهِ وَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَتَقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ وَتَحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا قَالَ صَدَقْتَ قَالَ فَعَجَبْنَا لَهُ بِسَأَلِهِ وَبِصِدْقِهِ قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ قَالَ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ قَالَ صَدَقْتَ قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِحْسَانِ قَالَ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قَالَ مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ قَالَ فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ أَمَارَتِهَا قَالَ أَنْ تَلِدَ الْأُمَّةُ رَبَّتَهَا وَأَنْ تَرَى الْحَفَاةَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رَعَايَ الشَّأْيِ يَطَّوُلُونَ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ قَالَ ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ فَلَبِثْتُ مَلِيًّا ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي يَا عَمْرُؤُ أَتَدْرِي مِنَ السَّائِلِ قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ قَالَ فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ [صحيح مسلم . 93 . 97] , [صحيح البخاري/كتاب الإيمان: 50 . 4777]¹⁸ . صحيح مسلم . ابن ماجه 64 , مشكوة المصابيح 3]¹⁹

Umar ibn al-Khattab said: One day when we were with God's messenger, a man with very white clothing and very black hair came up to us. No mark of travel was visible on him, and none of us recognized him. Sitting down before the

¹⁸ Saheeh Muslim 93: <http://www.equranlibrary.com/hadith/muslim/1366/93>
https://islamicurdubooks.com/hadith/hadith- php?tarqeem=1&bookid=1&hadith_number=50 ,
https://islamicurdubooks.com/hadith/hadith- php?tarqeem=1&bookid=23&hadith_number=3

¹⁹ حديث جبرائيل أم السنة : <https://bit.ly/Hadis-Jibril> / <https://wp.me/scyQCZ-jibriel>

Prophet, leaning his knees against his, and placing his hands on his thighs, he said, "Tell me, Muhammad, about **submission**."

He replied, "**Submission** means that you should bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is God's messenger, that you should perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms tax, fast during Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to go there." [See also²⁰]

The man said, "You have spoken the truth." We were surprised at his questioning him and then declaring that he had spoken the truth. He said, "Now tell me about **faith**."

He replied, "**Faith** means that you have faith in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and that you have faith in the measuring out, both its good and its evil."

Remarking that he had spoken the truth, he then said, "Now tell me about doing what is **beautiful**."

He replied, "Doing what is beautiful means that you should worship God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you."

²⁰ Narrated Talha bin Ubaidullah (RA): A man from Najd with unkempt hair came to Allah's Apostle ﷺ and we heard his loud voice but could not understand what he was saying, till he came near and then we came to know that he was asking about Islam. Allah's Apostle ﷺ said, "You have to offer prayers perfectly five times in a day and night (24 hours)." The man asked, "Is there any more (praying)?" Allah's Apostle ﷺ replied, "No, but if you want to offer the Nawafil prayers (you can)." Allah's Apostle ﷺ further said to him: "You have to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan." The man asked, "Is there any more fasting?" Allah's Apostle ﷺ replied, "No, but if you want to observe the Nawafil fasts (you can)." Then Allah's Apostle ﷺ further said to him, "You have to pay the Zakat (obligatory charity)." The man asked, "Is there anything other than the Zakat for me to pay?" Allah's Apostle ﷺ replied, "No, unless you want to give alms of your own." And then that man retreated saying, "By Allah! I will neither do less nor more than this." Allah's Apostle ﷺ said, "If what he said is true, then he will be successful (i.e. he will be granted Paradise)."[Al Bukhari 46] <http://www.equranlibrary.com/hadith/bukhari/1366/46>

Then the man said, "Tell me about the Hour."

The Prophet replied, "About that he who is questioned knows no more than the questioner."

The man said, "Then tell me about its marks."

He said, "The slave girl will give birth to her mistress, and you will see the barefoot, the naked, the destitute, and the shepherds vying with each other in building." Then the man went away. After I had waited for a long time, the Prophet said to me, "Do you know who the questioner was, `Umar?" I replied, "God and His messenger know best." He said, "He was Jibriel . He came to teach you your religion."²¹

Try to imagine the situation. The Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم of God, the greatest human being on the face of the earth is sitting at the edge of an oasis in Medina with a group of his companions, that is, people who have accepted that he is the representative of God. Suddenly a man appears whom no one recognizes.

Medina, at the time, was a small community in the midst of the desert (with a population of several hundred or perhaps a few thousand). Everyone knows everyone. If a traveller arrives, it is no small event, given the difficulty of travel and the small population. Everyone learns about new arrivals within hours. The system of personal relationships established by familial, tribal, and other bonds ensures that news is spread around much more efficiently than can ever be accomplished by today's primetime news. A man

²¹ <http://www.equranlibrary.com/hadith/muslim/1366/93>

appears whom no one knows, but no one has arrived in town for several days, except the uncle of so and so, whom several of them have already seen.

Not only do the companions fail to recognize the man, but he also shows no signs of travel, which is very strange. If they do not know him, then he must be a newly arrived traveller. Someone would not be able to freshen up that quickly after several days of travel in the desert, even if he had ridden on the back of a camel. (You think you feel bad after six hours in a car— think of six days in the hottest and dustiest environment you can imagine, with no stops for tea, coffee or cold drinks)

As soon as the man arrives, everyone is all ears. Who can this person be, and how did he get here without us knowing about it? Next strange fact: The man is obviously on familiar terms with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم of Allah. He comes right up to him and kneels down in front of him, his knees against the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم knees. Notice that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم himself is kneeling, not in prayer as modern Westerners might kneel, but simply because kneeling is, for most people of East, the simplest and at the same time the most respectful way to sit. Remember that, even in houses, chairs were unheard of. People sat on the ground, as they still do in much of the world— and this includes some of the richest and most sophisticated parts of the world, such as Japan. For most of the ancient world, chairs were the prerogative of kings.

You would not go right up to a person and kneel with your knees touching his unless he were, for example,

your brother or a very close friend. The normal procedure, even if the person sitting there was just an ordinary person, would be to greet him from a respectful distance and keep the distance. But the stranger from the desert obviously knows Muhammad(ﷺ) very well. He even places his hands upon Muhammad's(ﷺ) thighs, which would be an unheard of piece of effrontery if the man were a stranger. Then the man addresses Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ) by his name, whereas people always address him by his title, Messenger of God. The man begins talking without introduction as if he had been part of the conversation all along.

Once Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ) answers the man's first question, the man says, "You have spoken the truth." Umar (Razi Allah) remarks, "We were surprised at his questioning him and then declaring that he had spoken the truth." This is an enormous understatement. More likely, the companions were flabbergasted. What kind of insolence is this? To come up to God's own messenger and begin to grill him, and then to pat him on the head as if he were a school boy! This is inconceivable. But then again, the companions took their clues from Muhammad(ﷺ). He was looking as if all this were perfectly normal and natural. What could they do but follow his example?

After the man leaves, Prophet Muhammad(ﷺ) waits awhile, allowing his companions to think about this strange event. Finally, he tells them what had happened. They would not soon forget, and you can be sure that by that night, everyone in Medina had

heard about Jibriel 's appearance. **No one was supposed to forget about this visit, for the Prophet had just presented them with their religion in a nutshell.** If they ever wanted to know what was essential in Islam, all they had to do was remember the strange events of this day.

Religion

The hadith of Jibriel provides us with a picture of the religion of the followers of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Islam. The first three questions and their answers suggest that in the Islamic view, religion comprises three main elements. We will be referring to these elements as **dimensions**. The fourth question raises another issue that also needs to be taken into account, and we will also deal with that. But let us first establish a picture of **Islam as a three-dimensional reality**. The issue raised by the fourth question can be set aside for the moment.

Submission:

The first dimension of Islam is submission, and it comprises a series of activities, such as bearing witness, praying, and fasting. The word for submission is '*Islam*', the same word that is used to refer to the religion as a whole. We will see later that *Islam*²² has other meanings as well. In this context, it refers to the activities that a Muslim must perform. Arabic words, Islam, Muslim and Salaam are derived from the trilateral root *sīn lām mīm* (س ل م) (S-L-M), which occurs **140 times in the Quran**²³, in 16 derived forms. Word 'Islam'

²²<https://salaamone.com/muslim1/> , <https://salaamone.com/muslim-only/>

²³ <http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=slm>

(submission to the will of Allah to attain peace) has been chosen as name of Deen Islam (religion). Muslim (obedient, submitted, surrendered to the will of Allah in “Islam) is the name given to the adherents of Islam, while ‘As-Salaam’ (Giver of Peace) is one of many attributive names of perfection of Allah. Verbal noun (form IV), as proper noun occurs 8 times in Qur’an.

Faith:

The second dimension is **faith**²⁴ [*īmān*²⁵ (إِيْمَانٌ)]. The Prophet does not tell his listeners what faith itself is, no doubt because he assumes that they already know. Rather, he tells them what the objects of their faith should be. What is it that they must have faith in? The answer is God, the angels, the scriptures, the messengers (i.e., the prophets), and so on. Verbal noun *īmān*²⁶ (إِيْمَانٌ) (*faith*) occurs 45 times in Quran it is derived from the trilateral root *hamza mīm nūn* (أ م ن) which occurs 879 times²⁷ in the Quran, in 17 derived forms:

- a. 20 times as the form I verb *amina* (أَمِنَ)
- b. 537 times as the form IV verb *āmana* (ءَامَنَ)
- c. once as the form VIII verb *u'tumina* (أَوْثَمَنَ)
- d. four times as the noun *amānāt* (أَمَانَاتٌ)
- e. twice as the noun *amānat* (أَمَانَتٌ)
- f. five times as the noun *amn* (أَمْنٌ)
- g. twice as the noun *amanat* (أَمَانَةٌ)

²⁴

<https://wp.me/sbruvK-faith>

<https://quransubjects.blogspot.com/2019/10/faith.html>

²⁵ [https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=Amn#\(2:108:14\)](https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=Amn#(2:108:14))

²⁶ <https://tanzil.net/#search/quran/ايمان>

²⁷ [https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=Amn#\(2:108:14\)](https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=Amn#(2:108:14))

- h. 14 times as the adjective amīn (أَمِين)
- i. once as the noun māmān (مَأْمَن)
- j. six times as the active participle āmin (ءَامِن)
- k. 10 times as the active participle āminīn (ءَامِنِينَ)
- l. once as the active participle āminat (ءَامِنَات)
- m. once as the passive participle mamūn (مَأْمُون)
- n. 45 times as the form IV verbal noun īmān (إِيمَان)
- o. 202 times as the form IV active participle mu'min (مُؤْمِن)
- p. 22 times as the form IV active participle mu'mināt (مُؤْمِنَات)
- q. six times as the form IV active participle mu'minat (مُؤْمِنَات)

Ihsan (Beautiful):

The third dimension is *Ihsan*, 'Doing what is beautiful'. The Prophet does not look at the activity itself, but the motivation for the activity. An act cannot be beautiful if it is done without the awareness of God²⁸

. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Worship Allah as if you are seeing Him. If you do not see Him (i.e. do not be so engrossed and cannot reach this level), then it is as if He is seeing you." [[Muslim Hadith:97](#)]²⁹

God is the criterion for the beautiful, the **good**, and the **right**.

²⁸ <https://quransubjects.blogspot.com/2022/01/Ehsan.html>

²⁹ https://islamicurdubooks.com/hadith/hadith-.php?tarqeem=1&bookid=2&hadith_number=97

“---- and then are God fearing and believing, and then are God fearing and doing good beautifully (aḥsanū); God loves the good-doers (muḥ'sinīn)”
[\(Quran:5:93\)](#)³⁰

Din

We will discuss the Prophet's answers in detail and, along the way, we will find out why it had to be Jibriel , among all the angels, who appeared. But first, we will look at a single word in this hadith, one that deserves special attention, because it is employed to describe the whole. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), having answered four questions, calls the four answers "your religion." The Arabic word he uses is *din* and the translation as "religion" is more or less standard. However, it may not be the most appropriate translation in the context. The English word religion itself is notoriously vague, especially among people who make it their business to study religion. We cannot enter into the problems on the English side, but we can try to understand what, in this context, this word *din* would have meant to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his listeners.

Our primary resource for understanding the Arabic language employed by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Qur'an and the various learned commentaries that have been written upon it. When Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) employed a word that is found in the Qur'an, he always had the Qur'anic meaning in mind. We will first look at dictionary definitions, then at the Qur'anic usage.

The root meaning of the word *din* is to obey, to be submissive, to serve. A closely related word, written the same way in Arabic script, is *dayn*, which means "debt." The connection between obedience and debt is not too hard to understand. If you lend someone some money and the person owes it to you, he is obliged to submit the money to you. We are dealing here with a society where personal relationships are everything. We are not talking about owing money to an impersonal entity like a bank. Rather, the person who lends the money is a fellow member of your community, and everyone knows that you are now indebted to him. Moreover, in this kind of community, a person's word is the person's honour, and to live without honour is to be less than human. Hence, when you owe someone something in the context of close personal relationships and the preservation of the honour, not only of the individual, but also of the family and the tribe, you are forced to be deferential toward that person. In effect, to be indebted to someone is, to some extent, to submit to that person's wishes. And, conversely, to submit to someone is to acknowledge that you owe something to that person.

The Arabic dictionaries provide us with a number of possible English synonyms for *din*, words that suggest the range of its meanings: obedience, abasement, submission; religion, that is, the means whereby one serves God; belief in the unity of God; the religion of Islam; a particular law, statute, or ordinance; a system of usages, rites, ceremonies, etc., inherited from the past; custom, habit; way, course, mode of activity;

management of affairs. *Din* also has meanings that bring it close to the sense of *dayn*. Hence it can signify repayment, requital, recompense; retaliation; a reckoning; and the Day of Reckoning, the final judgement in the next world.

The word *din* has other meanings as well, but these few give us an idea of the problems that arise as soon as we translate *din* as religion. When Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, "He came to teach you your *din*," what exactly did he mean? The above definitions are helpful. He certainly meant "your religion" is "Islam," understood as the designation for the path set down by the Qur'an.

Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also certainly had in the back of his mind—since it is demanded by the choice of this specific word—the connection with *dayn*. This connection suggests some of the moral weight that he wanted to give to what he was explaining to his companions. Muslims look at Islam as a debt that they owe to God. A debt is something that they are morally obliged to pay back.

They are indebted to God first because:

1. He gave them existence and
2. Because he offered them eternal happiness.

There is a tremendous sense of "oughtness" carried in the word *din* when it is applied to Islam. It is the only moral thing to do, or rather, the only human and humane thing to do. Just as a person who borrows something and then runs out on the debt has no honour and is not even worthy of being called a human being, so also someone who shirks the religion is less than

human and beneath contempt. If the hadith of Jibriel describes "your religion," so also it describes what you owe to God, and God is reality itself. We will see shortly that several of the other definitions that the dictionary offers for *din* easily fit into the category of what Muslims understand by the religion of Islam. But let us first try to gain a rough idea of what the Qur'an itself says about *din*, a word that it uses in many instances.

The trilateral root *dāl yā nūn*³¹, (د ي ن) occurs [101 times](#) in the Quran, in five derived forms:

- [92 times as the noun *dīn*](#) (دين)
- Once as the form I verb *yadīnu* (يَدِينُ)
- Once as the form VI verb *tadāyan* (تَدَايَنَ)
- Five times as the noun *dayn* (دَيْن)
- Twice as the passive participle *madīnīn* (مَدِينِينَ)

In the broadest sense, the Qur'an uses the term for a set of rules and regulations, or a collection of norms for correct activity. In this broad sense, we do not know if the religion in question is right or wrong, true or false, until we look at the context. For example, Joseph employs a ruse to keep his brother Binyamin (Benjamin) with him in Egypt, because "he could not have taken his brother according to the king's religion" ([Quran;12:76](#))³². Translators usually render the term *din* in this verse as "law," thereby suggesting the modern distinction between sacred and profane. But

³¹ The trilateral root *dāl yā nūn* (د ي ن) occurs 101 times in the Quran, in five derived forms: [https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=dyn#\(1:4:3\)](https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=dyn#(1:4:3)) , <https://tanzil.net/#search/quran/دين> ,

³² <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.shakir/12:76>

given what we know about ancient world views in general and the Egyptian world view in particular, there is no reason to suggest that the king's law was outside his religion, or that his religion was any different from his law.

In another example of the general use of the term, the Qur'an employs it to refer to the ways followed by the people of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh is the Qur'an's most important human villain. Pharaoh says to his council:

Let me slay Moses, and let him call to his Lord. I fear that he may change your religion, or that he may cause corruption to appear in the land.
[\(40:26\)](#)³³

In other words, Pharaoh meant, if you listen to what Moses says, you will leave the religion that we all follow, and thereby our social fabric—the rules and regulations that we follow in order to maintain harmony and stability—will be ruined.

In a slightly more specific sense, the word *din* refers to the message brought by all the prophets, including Muhammad (ﷺ). Thus the Qur'an addresses Muhammad (ﷺ) and his adherents with the words that appear below. Notice the distinction between "you" (plural) and "thou" (singular) in the verse. Notice also the switch between first and third person references to God, a peculiarity of the Qur'anic style:³⁴

³³ <https://quran.wwpa.com/page/verse-40-26>

³⁴ When God speaks in the first person in the Qur'an, he sometimes refers to himself as "I" and sometimes as "We." One could say that "We" simply reflects the imperial usage of time immemorial: A king refers to himself as "we" because he speaks for everyone in his kingdom. Some Muslim theologians, however, maintain that when

God has laid down for you as religion that with which He charged Noah, and what We have revealed to thee, and that with which We charged Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: "Perform the religion, and scatter not regarding it." (42:13)³⁵

What is this religion that God has set down as a duty for Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (peace be upon them all)? In the Islamic view, these prophets share the declaration, "There is no god but God." along with the worship of the one God who is designated by this declaration. This declaration and worship are called *tawhid*, which means literally "the assertion of God's unity." *Tawhid* is fundamental to Islam. The Qur'an says specifically that all God's messengers were charged with *tawhid*:

And We never sent a messenger before thee save that We revealed to him, saying, "There is no god but I, so worship Me." (21:25)³⁶

In the Qur'anic account of the Prophet Joseph's (Yousaf, pbuh) imprisonment, Joseph (pbuh) gives the following advice to his fellow prisoners. In effect, he defines right religion as *tawhid*:

Judgement belongs only to God. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That

God says "I," he is referring to his own self, which is one. In contrast, when he says "We," he is referring to his many names and attributes, which bring about diversity in creation.

³⁵ <https://www.islamawakened.com/quran/42/13/default.htm>

³⁶ <https://www.islamawakened.com/quran/21/25/default.htm>

is the right religion, but most people do not know.
[\(12:40\)](#)³⁷

The word *Islam*, like *Din*, has a wide range of meanings, as we will see later. In a broad sense, it designates the submission of every prophet to God. Abraham in particular is looked upon as having been perfect in his submission:

*When [Abraham's] Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I have submitted myself to the Lord of the worlds." And Abraham charged his sons with this, as did Jacob: "My sons, God has chosen the religion for you, so do not die unless you have submitted." [\(2:132\)](#)*³⁸

In this and other passages of the Qur'an, "the religion" refers to tawhid³⁹ and submission to God in the most general sense. It includes both Islam and pre-Islamic religions. What is especially important in such verses is that this religion has been established by God and that it functions for God's purposes. This suggests the sense of several Qur'anic verses that insist that religion must belong to God. In other words, any religion—such as that of the Qur'anic Pharaoh—that was not established by God is not a true religion. Likewise, any religion that people do not live up to in God's terms (not their own terms) cannot function as a true religion:

³⁷ <https://quran.wwpa.com/page/verse-12-40>

³⁸ <https://www.islamawakened.com/quran/2/132/default.htm> ,
<https://trueorators.com/quran-tafseer/2/132>

³⁹ <https://quransubjects.wordpress.com/2019/12/03/monotheism/> ,
<https://quransubjects.blogspot.com/2019/11/monotheism.html>

What, do they desire another religion than God's, while to Him has submitted

[islam] whoso is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly? (3:83)⁴⁰

God says: "Take not two gods. He is only one God. So fear Me!" To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. His is the religion forever. (16:52)⁴¹

Worship God, making thy religion pure for Him. Does not pure religion belong to God? (39:3)⁴²

Still more specifically, "religion" refers to that form of religion that God revealed through Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessings upon you, and I have approved for you Islam as a religion. (5:3)⁴³

It is in this sense that the word is employed in the hadith of Jibriel. "Religion," or more properly, "the religion" (*al-din*), is a set of teachings, including *tawhid* and submission to God, that God perfected for Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his followers. In other words, this religion (Islam) has been given a seal of completion and approval by God himself.

The Qur'an also uses the word *din* to refer to specific prescriptions or regulations of Islam. Thus, for

⁴⁰ <https://trueorators.com/quran-tafseer/3/83>

⁴¹ <https://quran.wwpa.com/page/verse-16-52>

⁴² <https://quran.wwpa.com/page/verse-39-3>

⁴³ <https://quran.wwpa.com/page/verse-5-3>

<https://quran1book.wordpress.com/2020/11/09/perfected/>

example, verse [24:2](#)⁴⁴ refers to the punishment specified for those who engage in fornication as "God's religion."

Three Dimensions of Islam

According to Professor William C. Chittick, religion in the Islamic view has three dimensions. These are *Islam* (submission), *Iman* (faith), and *Ihsan* (doing what is beautiful). The translations of the three terms are problematic, and we will need to discuss these terms in more detail. For the moment, however, we want to look at the metaphor that is implicit in the use of the word dimension.

When we say that Islam has three dimensions, we are implying that it is helpful to think of Islam in geometric imagery. The spatial reality with which we have contact has three dimensions (leaving aside the fourth dimension for the moment). It is possible to study physical reality in one-, or two-, or three-dimensional terms, and it is possible to study the first dimension independent of the second, or the first and the second independent of the third. In other words, we can study reality purely in terms of lines, or we can study it in terms of surfaces and area, or we can study it taking depth into account as well.

Each of Islam's three dimensions can be studied independently. For the purposes of our research, we might ignore the fact that a given dimension does not offer a complete view of reality. The "mathematical operations" are simplest this way, so it is the route that

⁴⁴ <https://trueorators.com/quran-tafseer/24/2>

most people are tempted to follow. If we pay attention to too many things at once, it becomes impossible to draw a picture that makes any sense.

We will deal with Islam's three dimensions separately, but we will suggest all along that this is simply a heuristic device. The point is that Islam's self-understanding is complex, and that in order to gain the whole picture, we need to develop it a little at a time. We separate out the dimensions only to suggest that they fit together as a whole. In the same way, we talk about height, breadth, and depth only to suggest that space needs to be considered in terms of all three before we can have a proper picture.

We have arranged the three dimensions in the order in which they are found in the specific text of the hadith of Jibriel that we have cited, though other arrangements would also have been possible.⁴⁵ We think that this arrangement is particularly appropriate, because it begins with what is most obvious and easy to access. Here, however, the spatial metaphor becomes less and less helpful, and one could more profitably think in terms of dimensions of human existence.

We can think of human beings in terms of three basic dimensions or domains or levels of selfhood. The most external dimension is connected to what appears. People do things, and these actions can be analysed and discussed without reference to the people themselves. We may look simply at the activity:

⁴⁵ Here we have followed the text as given by Muslim in his Sahih. If we had instead followed the text as given by Bukhari, we would have dealt with faith before submission, and the details would have differed somewhat.

Someone hits a home run that decides the World Series; someone wins the prize bond; someone collects his paycheck. What is important in the first place is the act or event—we can study personalities and motivations later, if we care to at all.

We may also wish to take into account the inner dimensions of a person. There are basically two questions that we can ask, one having to do more with knowledge, and the other having to do with intention and will. When we look at an activity, we might be interested in what sort of understanding lies behind the activity. How many times have we heard it said—parents in particular are fond of this line—"How could you have been so stupid?" Someone does something, and it is clear that only ignorance of the actual situation could have led to the act. However, a major problem arises as soon as we ask, "How does one gain knowledge of the actual situation?" How can the "actual situation" be defined? Should we define it in terms of the person and the act, the social or cultural context, the biological determinants, the historical moment? What about the structure of the cosmos, the structure of the human psyche? What about God, angels, devils? Knowledge of which of these, if any, will provide us with an understanding of the actual situation? This then is a dimension of human experience having to do with knowledge, understanding, and world view. Islam approaches these issues from the vantage point of faith, for reasons that will become clear.

We can also ask a very different set of questions about the inner dimension of human beings and their activity: What was the motivation? What choices were involved? What was the intention behind the act? People may well have all the requisite knowledge, but then do things that others consider unacceptable. Moreover, they may perform these acts precisely because they know that they are unacceptable. The question of motivation frequently arises in courts of law. If someone meant to do what was done, it is a crime. However, if the person did not intend to commit a crime, then the whole issue has to be examined more carefully.

Religion is a right or correct way. The hadith of Jibriel suggests that in the Islamic understanding, religion embraces right ways of doing things, right ways of thinking and understanding, and right ways of forming the intentions that lie behind the activity. In this hadith, the Prophet gives each of the three right ways a name.

Thus one could say that: "submission" is religion as it pertains to acts, "faith" is religion as it pertains to thoughts, and "doing the beautiful" is religion as it pertains to intentions. These three dimensions of religion coalesce into a single reality known as Islam.

In the living actuality of a person, we differentiate acts, understanding, and intentions only for our own purposes. We are dealing with a single human personality for which this differentiation does not necessarily have any meaning. People simply live out their lives. Then we, as external observers, may divide

what we observe or fail to observe into different categories.

In the same way, Muslims or followers of other religions live out their religions. Theologians, philosophers, historians, psychologists, and other scholars may categorise. In doing so, they distort the whole. Nevertheless, by dividing things up, they may give us what we need in order to put things back together again and come to a fuller understanding.

A Fourth Dimension

We left out the last section of the hadith of Jibriel about the hour (end of time). The Arabic word *Sa`ah* (ساعة) signifies a short period without specific number of minutes or hours, while in our calendar it is a single unit out of twenty four units of the day and night. In Quranic terminology, however, it is used for the day when all the created beings will cease to exist, as well as for the day when all the creation shall be revived and presented before the Lord of all the creations.

The Hour (al-Saa'ah) is either:

1. *Saa'ah Sughra* (the lesser hour), which is a person's death, whereupon his reckoning starts when he leaves this world and passes into the Hereafter.
2. *Saa'ah Kubraa* (the greater Hour), which is when mankind will be resurrected from their graves to be judged and rewarded or punished accordingly.⁴⁶

When the word *al-Saa'ah* is used on its own in the Quran, it refers to the greater reckoning (the Day of Judgement), as in the aayah (interpretation of the

⁴⁶ <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/2281/signs-of-the-hour>

meaning): "People ask you concerning the Hour" [\(33:63\)](#)⁴⁷.

The word *The (end of) Time* (السَّاعَةِ) is mentioned [twelve times](#) in Quran⁴⁸, Allah says:

*They ask you about the hour, when will be its taking place? Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord; none but He shall manifest it at its time; it will be momentous in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but of a sudden. They ask you as if you were solicitous about it. Say: Its knowledge is only with Allah, but most people do not know. (7:187)*⁴⁹

Word "Yawm-al Qiyamah" (يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ) is also used in Quran seventy times⁵⁰ for the Day of Judgement and 'Yawm ad-din,' (يوم الدين) 'Day of Judgement' about fifteen times.⁵¹ There are many [other words](#) also used for the 'Day of judgement, like *al-Qari'ah*—the Calamity (القَارِعَةُ), *al-Zalzalah*—(الزُّلْزَلَاتِ) the Earthquake, *al-Sa'iqah*—the Blast; *Yawm an Tha'qila*—the Hard Day, *Al-Yawm al-Muhit*—the Encompassing Day, *Yawm al-Fasl*—the Day of Separation, *al-Tammah* *al-Kubra*—the Great Disaster, *al-Haqqah*—the Reality, *Yawm al-Haqq*—the True (inevitable) Day, *Yawm al-Hisab*—the Day of Reckoning, *Yawm al-Khuru'j*—the Day of Exodus (from the graves), *al-Şūr*—"The

⁴⁷ <https://tanzil.net/#33:63>

⁴⁸ <https://tanzil.net/#search/quran%20السَّاعَةِ>

⁴⁹ <https://tanzil.net/#trans/en.shakir/7:187> /

<https://trueorators.com/quran-tafseer/7/187>

⁵⁰ <https://tanzil.net/#search/quran/قيامه>

⁵¹ [https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=dyn#\(1:4:3\)](https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=dyn#(1:4:3))

Trumpet"; *fanā'*—the "extinction of all save God", *al-ḥaṣhr* "means the specific gathering together" of resurrected for their judging; *ba'th* "signifies the calling forth for judgement"; *al-ma'ād*—"the return", "the general term used by theologians for the entire process" of resurrection, judgement and consignment to heaven or hell, *al-maḥshar*—the terror of the place of assembly;

al-mawqūf—the time of standing before God before being judged by God *etc. etc.*⁵².

The Prophet ﷺ was given knowledge of certain specific signs indicating that the Doomsday was in proximity. He has informed the Muslim Ummah of all these signs in explicit terms in his Traditions. In one of such Traditions he said that his appearance and the Day of Qiyamah were as close to each other as two fingers of a hand. (Tirmidhi). Geo-physical data of modern knowledge giving the age of this world as millions of years do not confront or contradict any of the Qur'anic verse or any authentic Tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the contrary, the Prophet ﷺ addressing the Muslims said in a Hadis: "When compared to the early people, you are like a white thread of hair on the body of a black ox." This gives us an idea of the enormous age of this world as thought by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The knowledge of the occurrence of the Doomsday (end of time) is not known to any one but Allah.

⁵² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judgement_Day_in_Islam#Names

In Hadis Jibriel the Prophet ﷺ provides a rather cryptic description of the signs that will occur at the end of time, such as the slave girl giving birth to her mistress. The tone is typical for many hadiths and a few Qur'anic verses. The implication is that religion includes knowledge of the way in which time will unfold and come to an end. Hence there is an allusion to an Islamic view of history. Given the geometrical metaphor of dimensions, where time is a fourth dimension, it is appropriate to think of the Islamic conception of **time and history** as a dimension of the religion. And time also has something to do with the dimensionality of human beings, since everyone has a beginning and an end.⁵³

If the main body of their book 'The Vision of Islam' Professor William C. Chittick and his wife Sachiko Murata explain Islam in terms of the Islam (submission), Iman (faith), and Ihsan (doing what is beautiful) [Hadith Jibrael] the final section looks at some of the implications of the Islamic view of history. However, this is not the history one reads about in modern history books, where the underlying world views are of rationalistic types that have only recently come into existence. Rather, they deal with a view that sees history full of divine meaning and that makes definite statements about beginnings and, especially, ends.

Conclusion

It can be suggested that when the Prophet ﷺ said to his companions, "*Jibriel-- came to teach you your religion,*" he was defining, first of all, the Islamic idea of Islam itself. By implication, however, he was also telling us how Islam understands religion in general. Certainly, any authentic religion will have to have the three dimensions that the Prophet ﷺ mentioned which are *Islam* (submission), *Iman* (faith), and *Ihsan* (doing what is beautiful). Allah sent the Quran for the guidance of humanity, there is the shortest summary of the Quran in just three verses (Surah Al-Asr 103). Moreover angel Jibriel was sent to teach Islam to the people publically in the most concise form, free from human errors which is also based on Quran. This has closed any addition, subtraction or deviation (Bid'ah) in Islam, yet people have tried to make sects and groups by adding more as if Jibriel and Prophet ﷺ missed out something important and the deviators have more knowledge. All deviations must be rejected and original *Din*, Islam be restored in the perfected original form⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ <https://quran1book.wordpress.com/>

The Author

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