



Noble Sanctuary Online Guide

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We appreciate your comments and suggestions to improve this site, and will try to answer any questions you may have about the Noble Sanctuary.

Islam, Iman, Ihsan

"One day we were sitting in the company of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None of us recognized him. He sat with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Resting his knees against his and the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said, 'O Muhammad, tell me about Islam'.

The Messenger of Allah replied, 'Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish the prayer, pay the zakat, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so'.

He said, 'You have spoken the truth,' and we were amazed at him asking and then verifying that he had spoken the truth. He then said, 'Inform me about Iman'.

He replied, 'It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and in the divine destiny of both good and evil'.

He said, 'You have spoken the truth'.

He then said, 'Tell me about Ihsan'.

He said, 'It is to worship Allah as if you see Him, for though you do not see Him, surely He sees you'.

He then said, 'Inform me about the Hour'.

He replied, 'The one who is asked knows no more than the one who is asking'.

He said, 'Tell me some of its signs'.

He said, 'That the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, and barefoot, destitute shepherds will compete with one another in the building of magnificent buildings'.

Then he (the questioner) went on his way but I stayed with him (the Prophet) for a long while.

He said to me, 'Umar, do you know who this questioner was?'

I replied, 'Allah and His Messenger know best'.

He said, 'He was Gabriel. He came to instruct you in your religion'."

-----related by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab
-----in Sahih Muslim

In this hadith related by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the basic aspects of the way of Muhammad are laid out. Islam is to observe the five pillars of Islam, which are the affirmation of the Oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad,

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as well as the institutions of prayer, zakat, fasting and pilgrimage. Iman, or faith, requires belief in God, His angels, books, messengers, the divine destiny of good and evil, and the Day of Judgement. Ihsan, or excellence, is to worship God as though you see Him, knowing that He sees you.

These sciences, together with the study of the application of Qur'an and hadith to the needs of society, developed into a unified system of Sacred Law known as the *Shari'a* (the path leading to the source), governing all aspects of life. A great [tradition of scholarship](#) developed throughout the Muslim world for the study of Sacred Law and the religious sciences and many scholars travelled to Jerusalem to establish madrasas, religious schools, in and around the Sanctuary.

excerpt from [*The Noble Sanctuary: Al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem*](#)

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