

## Exerting Efforts Towards Accomplishing Sincere Righteous Actions: One of the causes for the increase of Eemaan

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

### Exerting Efforts Towards Accomplishing Sincere Righteous Actions

Another cause for the increase and strengthening of eemaan is for the Muslim to exert efforts towards enacting sincere righteous actions for the countenance of Allaah; he should try to do more (good) deeds and to do them on a regular basis.

This is because for every action that Allaah has legislated, which the Muslim undertakes and with which he makes his intention behind it sincere, it increases him in eemaan, since eemaan increases because of obedience and ample acts of worship.

Furthermore, the servitude that Allaah has enjoined on His slaves and demanded them to enact, the obligatory and voluntary of them, are distributed among the heart, the tongue and the limbs. Each of them has a servitude specific to it.

Examples of the servitude of the heart that are specific to it are sincerity, love, *tawakkul*, *inaabah*, hope, fear, reverence, awe, contentment, patience and other actions of the heart.

Examples of servitude of the tongue that are specific to it are reading the Qur'aan, *takbeer*, *tasbeeh*, *tahleel*, seeking forgiveness, praising and commending Allaah, sending *salaah* and *salaam* upon His Messenger and other actions that can only be done by the tongue.

As for the servitude of the limbs that are specific to it, examples of this are *sadaqah*, hajj, prayer, ablution, proceeding towards the mosque and other such actions that are only possible with the use of the limbs.

Thus, these actions of the heart as well as those of the tongue and the limbs are all from eemaan and are inherently present within the true meaning of the word eemaan. To perform such actions and to increase in them will therefore result in an increase of eemaan and to neglect them and to lessen the performance of them will result in a deficiency of eemaan.

## **i. Actions of the Heart**

In reality, actions of the heart are **the foundation of the religion**. They are its uppermost part and the most important of ordinances. In fact, apparent [i.e., actions of the limbs and tongue, which are sensed. [t]] actions are not accepted if they are void of any actions of the heart; the reason being that the acceptance of all actions are stipulated by sincerity to Allaah and sincerity is an action of the heart.

This is why actions of the heart are mandatory upon everyone and the abandonment of such actions can never be deemed praiseworthy under any condition whatsoever.

People are of three levels with regard to the accomplishment of these actions, similar to the case with actions of the body: one who oppresses his own self, one who suffices with that which is obligatory and one who chases after the good.

Consequently, it is imperative of every Muslim that he starts with the purification and rectification of his heart and with having concern for it, before he concentrates with the rectification of his exterior, as no consideration is given to the rectification of the outer whilst the inner is corrupt.

In addition, when the Muslim does rectify his heart with purifying actions, sincerity, truthfulness and love for Allaah and His Messenger, his limbs will turn upright as in the hadeeth of an-Nu'maan Ibn Basheer that is recorded in the two Saheehs. He said: "I heard the Messenger of Allaah - sallallahu alaihe wa-sallam - say: **"... Indeed, and within the body is a morsel of flesh; if it is sound, then the whole body will be sound and if it is corrupt, then the whole body will be corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart."** [Al-Bukhaaree. (1/127 Fath) and Muslim, 3/1220]

This hadeeth contains the greatest indication that the rectification of the slave's outer movements is directly connected to the rectification of the activity of his heart and inner soul.

If his heart is pure, there being only love of Allaah, love of that which Allaah loves, fear of Him and of falling into that which He hates, the movements of his limbs will all become sound. This is in sharp contrast to a corrupt heart which is conquered by a love for desires, chasing lusts and placing the wants of the self first. Whoever is in such a predicament, the movements of his limbs will all be corrupt.

For this reason, it is said that **the heart is the king of the limbs** and that the rest of the limbs are its soldiers. In addition to this, the limbs are an obedient army to the heart; they race to its obedience and towards the execution of

its commands, not opposing it in any matter whatsoever. Thus, if the king is righteous, this army will be a righteous one. If on the other hand, the king is corrupt, the army will, because of this resemblance, also be corrupt.

Only the heart that is pure is of benefit before Allaah, as Allaah says:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

**"The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, except for the one who comes to Allaah with a pure heart."** [Soorah ash-Shu'araa' (26):88-89]

The pure heart is the one that is free of all diseases, blights and distasteful matters. It is the heart that contains nothing but love of Allaah, fear of Him and fear of anything that will distance him from Allaah. [See Jaami' al-'Uloom wa al-Hikam of Ibn Rajab, page 71]

Shaykh al-Islam says: **"Moreover, the heart is the foundation. If it embodies knowledge and intention, this will take effect on the body without fail. It is not possible for the body to play truant to what the heart desires... so if the heart is righteous as a result of its knowledge and action on eemaan, this absolutely necessitates the rectification of the body in apparent speech and action in accordance with complete eemaan."** [al-Fataawaa, 7/187]

Consequently, for one to endeavor to fully fight his self in rectifying his heart and to fill it with love of Allaah and of statements and actions that Allaah loves, is one of the most formidable ways in which one increases his outer and inner eemaan.

Ibn Rajab says: **"...the heart cannot be rectified unless there settles within it knowledge of Allaah, His greatness, love of Him, fear and awe of Him, hope and *tawakkul* in Him and for it to be overflowing with this. This is the reality of tawheed and the meaning of 'none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah.'**

So there can be no question for the rectification of the hearts until its deity, which it worships, knows, loves and fears is one deity, having no partner. If there were in the heavens and the earth a deity being worshipped other than Allaah, the heavens and earth would as a result become corrupt, as Allaah says:

لَقَسَدَتَا اللَّهُ إِلَّا آلِهَةً فِيهِمَا كَانَ لَوْ

**"Had there been therein (i.e., the heavens and earth) deities besides Allaah, then for sure both would have been ruined..."** [Soorah al-Anbiyaa' (21):22]

One concludes from this that righteousness cannot be attained by the celestial and earthly worlds until the activity of its inhabitants are made all for Allaah. The movement of the body is dependent on the activity of the heart and its intention. If therefore, the heart's movement and desire are for Allaah alone, it will become sound and all the movements of the body will become sound. If, however, the movement and intent of the heart are for other than Allaah, it will become corrupt and the activity of the body will also become corrupt in accordance to the (level of) corruption within the activity of the heart." [Jaami' al-'Uloom wa al-Hikam, page 71. See al-Waabil as-Sayyib of Ibn al-Qayyim, page 12]

It has been authenticated on the Prophet that he said: **"Whoever loves for Allaah, hates for Allaah, gives for Allaah and withholds for Allaah has indeed perfected eemaan."** [Related by Aboo Daawood, 4/220, at-Tabaraanee in al-Kabeer, number 7737, Ibn Battah in al-Ibaanah, 2/658 and others. Al-Albaanee declared it saheeh, see as-Silsilah as-Saheehah, 1/658]

'The meaning of this is that with all the motions of the heart and limbs, if they are all for Allaah, the eemaan of the servant, both the interior and exterior, will be complete and the goodness of the activity of the heart necessitate goodness of the activity of the limbs.

Thus, if the heart is good, there being only desire of Allaah and of that which He desires, the limbs will only proceed towards that which Allaah desires. Consequently, the limbs hasten towards that which incurs the pleasure of Allaah, they refrain from what Allaah dislikes or what is feared that would be disliked by Allaah even if it is not sure of that.' [Jaami' al 'Uloom wa al-Hikam, page 72]

Whenever the hearts become righteous with eemaan, truthfulness, sincerity and love and no desire for other than Allaah is left in the heart, all the limbs will attain righteousness and they will not move except for Allaah and only in areas that His pleasure will be attained.

Furthermore, the heart is always occupied in thought, either about its essential afterlife and its betterment, or about the welfare of its worldly life and living, or its thoughts center on misgivings, false aspirations and hypothetical circumstances.

The sum and substance of the rectification of the heart is that you occupy it with thoughts on that which constitute its welfare and true and actual success.

Hence, in the area of knowledge and conceptions, one occupies it with knowledge of what binds one of *Tawheed* and its rights, of death and what leads on from it up until entering Paradise and Hellfire and of the ill actions and the ways to protect oneself from committing them. In the area of intentions and resolutions, one occupies it with desires of that which will cause one benefit and to reject desires that which will bring harm upon him. [See al-Fawaa'id of ibn al-Qayyim, page 310 and 311]

Indeed, of immense assistance to the servant in this regard is to increase the beneficial observations, which are enacted in the heart, so that his attachment with Allaah strengthens, as the existence of righteous actions is associated to the establishment and great number of these observations in the heart.

**Ibn al-Qayyim**, may Allaah have mercy upon him, said: "We will by the aid and tawfeeq granted by Allaah, point out these observations in a manner that will make known the reality of this matter:

**The first observation of the traveler to Allaah and the home of the hereafter**, is that there exists in his heart an observation of this world and its insignificance, its trivial fulfillment, extensive futility, vile participants and rapid demise... Thus, if the servant undertakes this observation of the world, his heart will migrate from this world and it will travel to seek the home of the hereafter.

At this moment, an observation of the hereafter and its continuity is enacted in his heart. That it is in all truth, **the real life**. Its inhabitants will never migrate or depart from it. Rather, it is the place of settling, the last stopping point of all travelers and the end of the journey...

Thereafter, **an observation of the Fire is made in his heart**, of its combustion, blaze and the depth of its pit; its intense heat and the immense torment of its inhabitants. He observes them as they are brought forth to it with blackened faces, blue eyed with iron chains and fetters around their necks. When they reach the fire, its doors will be opened in front of their faces and they will witness that abominable sight, whereupon their hearts will be become severed out of regret and sorrow...

Consequently, if this observation is accomplished in the heart of the servant, he will be stripped of sins, disobedience and of following desires and will instead don the guise of fear and caution... How distant he will actually be from disobedience and violations is dependent on the strength of this observation.

This observation will melt away, roast through and expel the destructive remnants and elements within his heart and thereupon, the heart will find the sweetness of well being and its pleasure.

Thereafter, **an observation of Paradise is established in the heart** and of what Allaah has prepared in it for its inhabitants: things that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and no imagination of has ever been made within the heart of a person. This is besides the detailed types of bliss Allaah has portrayed to His servants upon the tongue of His Messenger, guaranteeing the loftiest types of pleasure concerning foods, drink, clothes, palaces, delight and happiness. So, enacted in his heart is an observation of an abode, within which Allaah has placed everlasting bliss in its entirety.

Its ground is musk and its pebbles are pearls. Its structure is made up of bricks of gold and silver and of pearly embroidery. Its drink is sweeter than honey, possesses a fragrance more pleasant than musk, is cooler than camphor and tastier than ginger. In relation to its women, if the face of one of them were to be revealed to this world, it would overpower the radiance of the sun. The clothes of the inhabitants are made of the silk of sarsenet and brocades. Their servants are youths looking like scattered pearls. Their fruit will be everlasting, whose season is not limited and supply not cut off Therein are thrones raised high. Their food is the flesh of the fowls they desire. They will have drink of wine, there being no harmful effect within it and they will not suffer intoxication. Their vegetation is the fruit that they desire. Their view will be of fair females possessing wide lovely eyes like preserved pearls. They will be reclining upon thrones and in that Garden being made happy. In it are what the souls covet, what gratifies the eyes and they will abide in it forever.

If one adds to this observation, **the observation of the day of Mazeed** "... looking at the face of the Lord and listening to His speech without an intermediary... If this observation is attached to the ones before it, there and then, will the heart race towards its Lord faster than the procession of the wind moving in its direction and the heart will not on its way bother to glance, neither left nor right..." [Madaarij as-Saalikeen, 3/250-252]

Hence, if such observations are manifested in the heart of the servant and he contemplates over them, it will be of great help towards the purification of his heart and its eradication of denounced characteristics and ignoble desires

and towards the evacuation of any attachment to other than Allaah. Furthermore, it will be a great motive for worship, love, fear, repentance and of feeling in need of Allaah.

The intent here is to highlight that one of the greatest incentives for eemaan, one of its most beneficial consolidators and most important reasons for its increase and development is the rectification of the heart through eemaan, love of Allaah, His Messenger, of that which Allaah and His Messenger love and to purify it from anything that opposes or nullifies this.

Allaah is the one who grants *tawfeeq*.

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ...

\* i.e., the day of increase. Allaah says in the Qur'aan: "**For those who do righteousness is al-Husnaa and more ...**" [Soorah Yoonus (10):26]

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ

Allaah also says, "**There** (i.e., *Jannah*), **they will have all that they desire, and We have more**" [Soorah Qaaf (50):35]

*Husnaa* has been explained to mean *Jannah* and 'more' to mean seeing Allaah. This is attested to by the hadeeth recorded in Saheeh Muslim and Sunan at-Tirmidhee and related by Suhayb ar-Roomee, may Allaah be pleased with him, in which the Prophet said:

**'When the people of *Jannah* enter *Jannah*, Allaah will say 'Would you like something I can increase you with?' They will reply, 'Have you not whitened our faces? Have you not admitted us into *jannah* and saved us from the Fire?'**"

The Prophet then said: "**Then the veil will be lifted and they will not have been given anything more beloved to them than seeing their Lord.**" In a similar narration, the end reads: "The Prophet then recited this aayah: "**For those who do righteousness is al-Husnaa and more...**" [t]

## ii. Actions of the Tongue

As for actions of the tongue like the remembrance of Allaah, praising and commending Him, reading His Book, sending *salaah* and *salaam* upon His Messenger, ordering the good, forbidding the evil, *tasbeeh*, seeking forgiveness, supplication and other actions that are performed by use of the tongue, without doubt, performing such actions, on a regular basis and often is one of the greatest causes for the increase of eemaan.

Shaykh Ibn as-Sa'dee, may Allaah have mercy upon him, says: "**One of the causes that procures eemaan is to greater the remembrance of Allaah at all times and to also supplicate much, which is the core of worship.**"

Remembrance of Allaah implants the tree of eemaan in the heart. It nourishes and develops it. The more the servant increases in his remembrance of Allaah, the stronger his eemaan will become.

Just as eemaan calls to much remembrance, whoever loves Allaah will mention Him much. [As the saying goes: "Whoever loves something, increases in his mention of it" [t]] Indeed, love of Allaah is eemaan, or rather, it is its spirit." [Al-Tawdeeh wa al-Bayaan, pg. 32]

Ibn al-Qayyim mentions in his book al-Waabil as-Sayyib that remembrance has a hundred benefits. He listed seventy-three of these benefits [See al-Waabil as-Sayyib, pg. 84 and onwards], such as that remembrance repels Shaytaan. It pleases the Most Beneficent, causes depression and anxiety to disappear and brings joy and happiness. It strengthens the heart and body, illuminates the face and heart, brings about sustenance and many other tremendous benefits that he mentioned, may Allaah have mercy upon him, which are attained because of the remembrance of Allaah.

Undoubtedly, the greatest and most beneficial benefit in the remembrance of Allaah is the fact that it increases eemaan, strengthens it and stabilizes it. Accordingly, a number of texts are related 'in the Book and Sunnah, which command and encourage the remembrance of Allaah. They beckon for its increase and show its excellence and importance. Allaah says:

.. وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

"... and remember Allaah much so that you may succeed." [Soorah al-Jumu'ah (62):10]

Allaah says:

.. وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

"... and (for) men and women who remember Allaah much, Allaah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward." [Soorah al-Ahzaab (33):35]

Allaah says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ...

"Indeed, the believers are none other than those whom when Allaah is mentioned, their hearts tremble with fear..." [Soorah al-Anfaal (8):2]

Allaah says:

...أَلَّا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"... Verily, it is in the remembrance of Allaah that the hearts (truly) attain tranquility" [Soorah ar-Ra'd (13):28]

As recorded in Saheeh Muslim, Aboo Hurayrah, may Allaah be pleased with him, reports: "The Messenger of Allaah was on his way to Makkah when he passed by a mountain known as jumdaan. He said, 'Travel through, this is Jumdaan: the mufarridoon have excelled.' Someone asked, 'Who are the mufarridoon O Messenger of Allaah?' He replied, 'Men and women who remember Allaah much.'" [Muslim, 4/2062]

Aboo Dardaa', may Allaah be pleased with him, relates the Prophet saying: "Should I not inform you of the best of your deeds, the most sanctifying of them before your Lord and which does more to raise your status with Him. (A deed,) that is better for you than the disbursement of gold and money, or battle with the enemy whereby you strike at their necks and they strike at yours?" They said: "What is it O Messenger of Allaah?" He replied: "Remembrance of Allaah."

[Related by Ahmad, 5/195; Ibn Maajah, 2/1245; at-Tirmidhee, 5/459; at-Tabaraanee in ad-Du'aa', 3/1636; al-Haakim, 1/496; Aboo Nu'aym in al-Hilya, 2/12; al-Baghawee in Sharh as-Sunnah, 5/10 and al-Mundhree mentioned it in at-Targheeb wa at-Tarheeb, 2/395 via many chains from Ziyaad Ibn Abee Ziyaad from Abee Bahriyyah from Aboo Dardaa' from the Prophet. Al-Haakim declared: "This hadeeth has a chain of narration that is saheeh and it has not been related by al-Bukhaaree or Muslim." Adh-Dhahabee agreed. Ibn 'Abdil-Barr states: "This is related with a connection to the Prophet via chains that are good," Al-Baghawee and al-Mundharee declared its chain of narration to be hasan.]

'Abdullah Ibn Busr mentioned that a man said to the Prophet : "O Messenger of Allaah, the rites of eemaan are much for me, so tell me of something that I might hold fast to." He answered: **"Let not your tongue cease from the remembrance of Allaah."** [Related by Ibn Abee Shaybah, 10/301 & 13/458; at-Tirmidhee, 5/458; Ibn Maajah, 2/1246 and al-Haakim, 1/495. At-Tirmidhee declared: "The hadeeth is hasan ghareeb." Al-Haakim said: "This hadeeth has a chain of narration that is saheeh and it has not been related by al-Bukhaaree or Muslim." Adh-Dhahabee agreed. Al-Albaanee mentioned in his checking of al-Kalim at-Tayyib, page 25: "Its chain of narration is Saheeh"]

Recorded in the Saheehayn is the hadeeth of Aboo Hurayrah, may Allaah be pleased with him, in which he reports the Messenger of Allaah as saying: **"Allaah says, 'Indeed I am as My servant presumes Me to be and I am with him when he remembers Me. So if he remembers Me to himself I remember him to Myself and if he remembers Me amongst a company, I remember him amongst a company that is better than them ...'"** [Al-Bukhaaree, (13/384 with Fath) and Muslim, 4/2061] Many other texts are likewise indicative of the excellence and importance of remembrance and of the virtue of engaging in it.

Consequently, if a person turns away from all of this and does not engage his tongue with remembrance of Allaah, his tongue will be engrossed with matters besides it such as backbiting, slander, mockery, lies and obscene language. This is because the slave cannot but speak. Thus, if he does not speak with the remembrance of Allaah and of His commands, he will speak of these things.

Ibn al-Qayyim says: "For the tongue does not keep quiet at all. It is either a tongue that remembers or a tongue that is frivolous and it has to be one of these two.

It is the (nature of the) soul; if you do not preoccupy it with truth, it will occupy you with falsehood. It is the (nature of the) heart; if you do not accommodate it with love of Allaah, it will dwell with love of creation and this is a certain reality. It is the (nature of the) tongue, if you do not preoccupy it with remembrance, it will most definitely occupy you with frivolity.

Thus, choose for your own self one of the two courses and confer upon it one of the two standings." [Al-Waabil as-Sayyib, pages 166- 167 and also see page 87]

### **iii. Actions of the Limbs**

As for the actions of the heart like prayer, fasting, hajj, sadaqah, jihaad and other acts of obedience, they are also reasons for the increase of eemaan.



To exert efforts therefore, towards enacting acts of obedience, which Allaah has made incumbent upon His slaves and performing acts that achieve nearness (to Allaah), which Allaah has recommended His servants to undertake and to accomplish these acts in a proficient and complete manner, is one of the most tremendous causes behind the strengthening and increase of eemaan.

Allaah says:

هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ وَالَّذِينَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ  
فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْوَاحِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِقُرُوبِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ فَاَعْلَمُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَاتِهِمْ م وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ قَٰوِلِينَ هُمْ الْعَادُونَ  
الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ يَحَافِظُونَ

**"Successful indeed are the believers: those who offer their prayers with all solemnity and full submissiveness; who turn away from al-Laghw; who pay the zakaah; who guard their chastity, except from their wives or those that their right hands possess, for them, they are free from blame. However, whoever seeks beyond that, then they are the transgressors; those who are faithfully true to their amaanaat and covenants and those who strictly guard their prayers. These are indeed the inheritors, who shall inherit Firdaws. They shall abide therein forever."** [Soorah al-Mu'minoon (23):1-11]

These precious qualities, each one of them profits and develops eemaan. They are also characteristics of eemaan and fall under its explanation.

So, the attendance of the heart in prayer and the event of the praying person striving with his self to call to mind and heart what he is saying and doing, such as recitation, remembrance, supplication, standing, sitting, bowing and prostration, are reasons for the increase and development of eemaan.

Allaah named prayer 'eemaan' when He said:

... مَا نَكُفُّوهُ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِي...

**"... and Allaah would never cause your eemaan [i.e., the prayers that were performed towards the direction of Jerusalem, before the commandment of changing the qiblah to the Ka'bah in Makkah. [t]] to be lost ..."** [Soorah al-Baqarah (2):143]

Furthermore, concerning the statement of Allaah:

... إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ...

**"... and establish the prayer. Verily, the prayer prevents from all obscenities and evil deeds. And the remembrance of Allaah is greater ..."** [Soorah al-Ankaboot (29):45]

Prayer is the greatest obstrucater of every obscene and evil deed that negates eemaan. In addition, prayer also embodies the remembrance of Allaah, which nourishes and develops eemaan because of His saying:

**"... And the remembrance of Allaah is greater ..."**

Likewise, *zakaah* also nurtures and increases *eemaan*, (both) the obligatory type of *zakaah* and its recommended type, as the Prophet has said, "... *and sadaqah is proof.*" i.e., a proof for the *eemaan* of its giver. Hence, it is evidence of *eemaan* and it nourishes and develops it.

Further, to avert from *al-Laghw*, which is any speech or action that is void of good. Instead they (i.e., the believers) speak and do well, and abandon evil in both speech and action. This is without doubt, from *eemaan* and *eemaan* increases and profits from it.

This is why whenever the Companions, may Allaah be pleased with them, and those after them sensed heedlessness or their *eemaan* was in disarray, they would say to each other, 'Sit with us so that we may have *eemaan* for an hour'. So they would remember Allaah and remember his religious and worldly favors causing their *eemaan* to renew itself.

Again, abstaining from forbidden and indecent acts, especially, the obscenity of fornication, this is definitely a great sign for *eemaan*. The believer, because of the fear he has concerning his standing in front of his Lord, he:

... نَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

"... **restrained himself from impure evil desires and lusts.**" [Soorah an-Naazi'at (79):40]

... in response to the necessity of *eemaan* and to nourish what he already possesses of *eemaan*.

In addition, observing trusts and contracts and preserving them is from the signs of *eemaan* and related in a hadeeth: "... *and there is no eemaan for the one who is not trustworthy.*" [Related by Ahmad, 3/135; Ibn Abee Shaybah in both his Musannaf, 11/11 and al-Eemaan, pg.5; Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh, (1/208 al-Ihsaan) and al-Baghawee in Sharh as-Sunnah, 1 /75. Al-Baghawee declared, "This is a hasan hadeeth" It was declared saheeh by al-Albaanee in his tahqeeq of al-Eemaan by Ibn Abee Shaybah]

If you would like to know of the *eemaan* and religion of a slave, then inspect his condition: does he fulfill all of his trusts and contracts, the verbal and financial or trusts concerning rights? Does he observe the rights, covenants and oaths, the ones between himself and Allaah or those between himself and his fellow servants? If the answer is in the positive then he is a person of religion and *eemaan*. If however that is not the case, his religion and *eemaan* will be deficient in accordance to the level of his infringement of these obligations.

Allaah ended these *aayaat* with the issue of safeguarding the prayers with respect to their limits, rights and times. This is because preservation of this, is of similar standing to the water that flows around the garden of *eemaan*. So it irrigates it, nurtures it and produces its crop upon every occasion.

The tree of *eemaan* is in need of constant irrigation at all times; this irrigation is the maintenance of acts of obedience and worship of the day and night. It also demands the obliteration of anything that harms it, such as alien and harmful rocks and growths; this is in reference to the abstention from unlawful matters in both speech and action. Whenever these undertakings are accomplished, this garden will witness its geese and it will produce its assorted crop.

In light of this clarification, the strong effect of righteous actions on the increase of eemaan has become clear to us. It is also clear that the performance and increase of these acts are a tremendous cause for the increase of eemaan.

Shaykh al-Islam says: "The perfection of eemaan is in enacting the commands of Allaah and His Messenger and refraining from the prohibitions of Allaah and His Messenger. Consequently, if one does not perform certain commandments and replaces them by embarking on certain prohibitions; this will result in a proportional decrease of eemaan."

Thus, prayer is eemaan, hajj is eemaan, sadaqah is eemaan, jihad is eemaan and all the actions that Allaah has ordered His slaves with are eemaan. If the servant does these acts his eemaan will increase and the performance of these actions will be a cause for the increase of his eemaan, on the condition of sincerity and adherence.

Shaykh Muhammad al-'Uthaymeen, may Allaah preserve him, states: "The increase of eemaan has causes, some of these are: performing acts of obedience because eemaan increases in proportion to the fineness, type and abundance of the action. Thus the finer the action the greater will be the increase of eemaan; the fine aspect of the action is determined by the degree of sincerity and adherence. As for the type of action, the obligatory type is better than the recommended and some forms of worship are more emphasized and virtuous than others; the more virtuous the act of obedience is the greater will be the resultant increase in eemaan. As for the abundance of the action, then eemaan increases as a result of it because action is from eemaan, so it is not surprising that eemaan increases because of an increase of the action." [Fath Rabb al-Bariyyah, pg. 65]

In addition, other great righteous actions that increase eemaan, which have not yet been mentioned are da'wah to Allaah and keeping company with virtuous people. Because of the importance and great benefit of these two matters in the increase of eemaan, its discussion is imperative.

As for da'wah to Allaah and to His religion, consulting each other with the truth and patience, calling to the fundamentals of the religion, to the adherence of its laws by way of ordering the good and forbidding the evil and sincerely advising the Muslims, this is all from the incentives and causes for eemaan.

With this, the servant perfects himself and others, as Allaah has sworn by time, [Refer to Soorah al-'Asr (103). [t]] that the whole genus of humans are in a state of loss except for the one who is categorized with four qualities: eemaan and righteous actions, which both constitute the perfection of the self (thirdly) mutual consultation with the truth, which is beneficial knowledge, righteous action and the true religion and (fourthly) mutual consultation with patience in all of this, and with these (last) two, others are perfected.

This is because da'wah to Allaah itself and advising His servants are amongst the greatest fortifiers of eemaan. The person involved in da'wah has to work to aid this da'wah and establish the proofs and evidences for its realization. He has to undertake matters from their proper channels and approach issues from their rightful paths. These issues are from the ways and channels of eemaan.

Shaykh al-Islam states: "The reason for the presence of eemaan and its constituents sometimes traces back to the servant (himself) and at other times back to others, for example, one is destined to interact with someone who invites him to eemaan, orders him with good and forbids him from evil. He explains to him the signs of the religion, its proofs and evidences. He shows him what to consider, what befalls him, what to take heed from. In addition (to this), there are many other reasons." [Al-Fataawa, 7/650]

Furthermore, the reward is always from the same class as the action. So, just as the person strives to perfect his fellow servants, advises them, consults them with truth and to be patience in all this, Allaah will most definitely compensate him with rewards similar to his actions. Allaah will assist him with a light and spirit from Him and with strength of eemaan and tawakkul.

Eemaan and strong tawakkul on Allaah bring about victory over the enemies of the devils of men and jinn as Allaah has said:

هُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ إِنَّ

**"Verily, he (i.e., Shaytaan) has no power over those who have eemaan and put their trust solely on their Lord."** [Soorah an-Nahl (16):99]

Moreover, this person is also occupied with aiding the truth and whoever turns to undertake something, then he will most definitely be granted certain triumphs in knowledge and eemaan according to his truthfulness and sincerity.

One who commands the good and forbids the evil must therefore remain adherent to truthfulness and sincerity when commanding and forbidding in order for it to bear fruit and produce pure eemaan in him as well as those whom he is propagating to. He must also observe wisdom and leniency when inviting, be patient with those whom he is calling and to have knowledge of that which he is calling them to.

If these features are realized within him, his da'wah will bear fruit and benefit by the will of Allaah and it will be a cause for the strengthening of his eemaan and of those whom he is calling.

As for keeping company with virtuous people, clinging to them, accompanying them and coveting to benefit from them, this is a great cause for the increase of eemaan. The reason being that these type of gatherings embody reminder of Allaah, fear of Him and His punishment, targheeb, tarheeb and other matters, which are of the greatest of causes towards the increase of eemaan.

As Allaah says:

وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

**"And remind, for indeed, reminding benefits the believers"** [Soorah adh-Dhaariyaat (51):55]

Allaah also says:

فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى

**"Therefore, remind, in case the reminder benefits; those who fear will remember and the wretched will avoid it." [Soorah al-A'laa (87):9-11]**

This shows that possessors of believing hearts benefit greatly from reminders and from being in congregations of remembrance. It provokes activity and resolution within them and obligates profit and elevation. This is in stark contrast to gatherings of frivolity and foolishness, for these are immense reasons for the decrease and fading away of eemaan.

To this effect, our righteous predecessors were the most concerned with gatherings of remembrance and the most distant from meetings of frivolity and foolishness. Many of their statements that indicate this have preceded, like the accounts of 'Umayr Ibn Habeeb al-Khatmee and Mu'aadh Ibn Jabal, may Allaah be pleased with them.

There is another cause, with which I will end the discussion on these causes, which one must pay attention to and not neglect. The Muslim has to train and adapt himself to fight everything that causes a decrease, weakness or disappearance of eemaan.

"Since, in relation to eemaan, just as one must enact all the causes that strengthen and develop eemaan, then likewise, in addition to this, one must repel the preventive matters and obstacles (towards the attainment and increase of eemaan). Repelling these are accomplished by the abandonment of disobedience; being repentant of the disobedience one does commit; safeguarding the limbs from the unlawful issues and opposing the trials and afflictions of misconceptions that weaken the desires of eemaan, which are in essence, the desire and love for good. Endeavoring after this can only be accomplished by abandoning desires that (would otherwise) negate those desires (of eemaan), such as desire of the soul for evil and by opposing the soul that constantly commands evil.

When the servant preserves himself from falling into the trials and tribulations of misconceptions and desires, his eemaan will become complete and his certainty will become strong." [At-Tawdeeh wa al-Bayaan of Ibn as-Sa'dee, page 37]

*Posted from the Book: Causes Behind the Increase and Decrease of Eemaan, by Shaykh 'Abdur-Razzaak al-'Abbaad. Al-Hidaayah Publications*

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