

CHAPTER 26
{PART ONE}
Islaam & Eemaan

Islaam linguistically means "obedience" and "submission."

In Islaamic terminology, it is when the servant submits and surrenders entirely to Allaah outwardly and inwardly, obeying His commands, and avoiding what He has forbidden. It includes all of the religion. Allaah (ﷻ) said,

وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

"And I am pleased for you Islaam as a religion." [Sooratul-Maa'idah, 5:3]

And He said,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

"Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allaah is Islaam." [Soorah Aali-Imraan, 3:19]

And He (ﷻ) said,

وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

"Whoever desires other than Islaam as a religion, never will accepted from him." [Soorah Aali-Imraan, 3:85]

As for Eemaan, it linguistically means to "believe." In this meaning, Allaah said,

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَنَا

"But you would not believe (have Eemaan in) us." [Soorah Yoosuf, 12:17]

Islaamically, Eemaan is acceptance of the heart, which necessitates acceptance in statement and action. It is a belief, a statement, and an action - a belief of the heart, a statement of the tongue, and action of the heart and limbs.

The proof that all of this enters under the term Eemaan is the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ),

الإيمان أن تؤمن بالله، وملائكته، وكتبه، ورسوله، واليوم الآخر، والقدر خيره وشره

"Eemaan is to believe in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and pre-decree - the good and bad of it."⁶⁴

And his statement:

الإيمان بضع وسبعون شعبة، فأعلاها قول: لا إله إلا الله، وأدناها إمطة الأذى عن الطريق، والحياء شعبة من الإيمان.

"Eemaan is made up of seventy-something parts, the highest of which is the statement, 'Laa ilaaha ilia Allaah.' The lowest part is to remove something harmful from the path, and shyness is a part of Eemaan"⁶⁵

Eemaan in Allaah, His Angels, etc. is the belief of the heart.

The statement, "Laa ilaaha ilia Allaah" is a statement of the tongue.

Removing something harmful from the path is an action of the limbs.

Shyness is an action of the heart.

With this, it is known that Eemaan includes the entire religion. So, there is no difference between it and Islaam. In this way, each one means the same as the other when used separately. However, when they appear together, Islaam is explained as an outward submission of the tongue and actions of the limbs. It occurs from both, a believer with complete Eemaan, and a believer with weak Eemaan.

Allaah (ﷻ) said:

⁶⁴ See al-Bukhaaree (50) and Muslim (9).

⁶⁵ Recorded by al-Bukhaaree (9) and Muslim (35).

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
"The Bedouins say, "We have believed (Eemaan)." Say, "You have not yet believed; but say (instead), 'We have submitted (Islaam),' for faith (Eemaan) has not yet entered your hearts." [Sooratul-Hujuraat, 49:14]

Based upon this, even a hypocrite would be called a Muslim outwardly, yet remain a disbeliever inwardly.

Eemaan (when it comes together with Islaam) is explained as inward submission, which is the belief and acceptance of the heart and its action. This occurs only with a true believer, as Allaah (Taa'laa) said:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا
وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ
الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

"The believers are only those who, when Allaah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith (Eemaan)', and upon their Lord they rely - the ones who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend. Those are the true believers." [Soorah al-Anfaal, 8:2-4]

With this meaning, Eemaan is a higher level. So every believer (with Eemaan) is a Muslim (with Islaam), yet the opposite is not the case.

CHAPTER 26

{PART Two}

The Increasing and Decreasing of Eemaan

Islaam & Eemaan

From the base beliefs of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah is that Eemaan increases and decreases. Both, the Qur'aan and Sunnah prove this.

From the Qur'aan is Allaah's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) statement,

لِيَزِدُّهُمْ إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ

"...so they would increase in Eemaan along with their (present) Eemaan"
[Sooratul-Fath, 48:4]

From the proofs of the Sunnah is the saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ),

ما رأيت من ناقصات عقل ودين أذهب للب الرجل الحازم من إحداكن.

"I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion - perhaps deterring a determined, wise man - than one of you."⁶⁶

Within the Aayah is the proof of the increasing of Eemaan, and in the Hadeeth is the proof of decreasing in religion.

Every text proving the increase of Eemaan also includes a proof for its decrease and vice-versa, because they are both connected. It is not logical that one could be present without the other.

It has been confirmed that the Companions used to say this; it is not known that one of them opposed this belief. The Salaf were agreed upon this. Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said, "As for Eemaan increasing and decreasing, the people of the narrations and the scholars of Fatawaa in all the lands held this belief." Two different narrations have been mentioned from Imaam Maalik regarding the decrease of Eemaan: one that he remained silent, and the second is agreement with the majority.

⁶⁶ Recorded by al-Bukhaaree (304) and Muslim (80).

There are two sects who oppose this fundamental belief:

First: The absolute Murjiah who say that Eemaan is nothing but to profess it with the heart. They claim this acceptance of the heart never wavers, so according to them, the wicked and just are both at the same level of Eemaan.

Second: Those who follow only the texts of threats and warnings from the Mu'tazilah and the Khawaarj. They expel Muslims who commit major sins entirely from any association with Eemaan. They say that Eemaan is either completely present or completely nonexistent, and they deny that one person could be at a higher level than another.

Both of these groups are refuted by legislative proofs and intellectual ones.

As for the legislative proofs, some texts proving the increasing and decreasing of Eemaan have already preceded.

As for intellectual proofs, we say to the Murjiah, that their statement of Eemaan being merely acceptance of the heart, never wavering or changing, then this is disproved by what has already been mentioned. It is contrary to what the Qur'aan and Sunnah establish of statements and actions all entering into Eemaan.

In addition, their statement that the acceptance of the heart never changes is contrary to the senses. It is known to everyone that conviction of the heart is only based upon knowledge, and no doubt, knowledge varies depending on its sources. The information relayed by one person is not as trustworthy as if it were relayed by two and likewise. Furthermore, whatever knowledge people gain by hearing of any matter is in no way comparable to actually witnessing it. So certainty is of varying levels as is well known, even a single person may find himself at some times and situations stronger in certainty than at other times.

Thus, we wonder how it is correct to rationally assume two men could be exactly equal: one remaining constant upon obedience to Allaah, avoiding disobeying Him; when a notion to sin occurs to him, he immediately gives it up and repents to Allaah. And the other wasting all chances to carry out what Allaah has made obligatory on him, committing what Allaah forbids him, yet not perpetrating deeds which take him into disbelief - how could these two be equal in Eemaan!

To those who only focus on the texts of threats, warnings, and punishments, we say their statement that one who commits a major sin leaves Eemaan totally; this is in contradiction to what the Qur'aan and Sunnah prove. If this is clear, how could we conclude that two people are exactly equal when one fulfills his obligations, seeking Allaah's reward and avoids sins, the other oppresses himself by doing what Allaah forbids him to do, and he leaves his obligations, although not committing acts that cause him to disbelieve?

Assuming we say that a Muslim who commits major sins does in fact leave Eemaan, yet how could we say two people are the same in Eemaan, one seeking the reward of Allaah, and the other from those foremost in doing righteous deeds by Allaah's help?

CHAPTER 26
{PART THREE}

The Ways of Increasing & Decreasing Eemaan

Islam & Eemaan

There are many ways to increase one's Eemaan (faith in Allaah, His Books, His Messengers, etc.). Some of them are as follows:

1. Knowing Allaah's Names and Attributes: Indeed, each time the servant's knowledge of them increase, knowing what they mean and their effects, then his Eemaan in his Lord likewise increases as well as his love and honor for Him.

2. Reflecting upon Allaah's signs in the universe as well as His Aayaat: Whenever the servant reflects upon them, thinking deeply over what they include of Perfect Capability and Supreme Wisdom, then no doubt his Eemaan and certainty will increase.

3. Performing actions of obedience, seeking nearness to Allaah: Eemaan increases according to the quality, quantity, and type of deed. Whenever the deed is performed in the best way, the increase in Eemaan is greater because of it. And the quality of the action is increased in righteousness by sincerity and following of the Sunnah.

As for the type of action, those actions Allaah has ordered their performance are better than the optional ones. Some acts of obedience are better than others are - the greater the action, the greater the increase in Eemaan. As for the quantity of actions, Eemaan also increases according to it because action is itself a part of Eemaan so surely, when the quantity increases, so does Eemaan.

4. Abandoning sins, fearing Allaah: Whenever the urge to commit a sin is stronger, the increase in Eemaan by abandoning it is even greater. This is because suppressing a strong desire to sin is an indication of the strength of Eemaan present within the servant. He gives precedence to what Allaah and His Messenger like over what his own soul desires.

There are also many ways for one's Eemaan to decrease. Some of them are as follows:

1. Remaining ignorant of Allaah and His Names and Attributes.

2. Negligence and turning away from reflecting upon the Aayaat of Allaah, His rules, and His signs throughout the universes: This results in a sickness of the heart or its death due to being overcome with desires and false beliefs.

3. Committing acts of disobedience to Allaah: Eemaan decreases according to the type of action, its degree of sin, considering it to be insignificant, and the strength or weakness of one's urge to commit it.

As for the type of action and the degree of sin, then surely the decrease in Eemaan by committing major sins is greater than minor sins. It decreases, for example, more by the murder of an innocent person than stealing one's wealth. As well, it decreases more by committing two sins than only one, and so on.

As for considering a sin to be insignificant, this occurs from a heart that considers the One he is disobeying to be insignificant, having little or no fear of Him; this causes the decrease in Eemaan to be that much greater. Alternatively, the decrease in Eemaan is less when the notion to sin occurs to a heart that honors Allaah, fearing Him yet he just happened to make a mistake and sin.

The strength of the urge to sin also has to do with the decrease in Eemaan. If a person commits a sin while having only a weak urge or desire to do it, then his Eemaan decreases significantly more than one whose urge is much stronger. For this reason, a poor person behaving arrogantly, and an elderly man committing adultery is a greater sin than the arrogance of a rich and powerful man or a young man committing fornication, as in the Hadeeth,

ثلاثة لا يكلمهم الله، ولا ينظر إليهم يوم القيامة، ولا يزكيهم، ولهم عذاب أليم.

"There are three people whom Allaah will not even speak to, He will not look at them on the Day of Resurrection, He will not purify them, and they will have a painful punishment..."⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Recorded by Muslim (107) and at-Tabaraanee. Al-Haythamee and al-Mundhiree said the men in the chain of narrators are the quality of those in an authentic chain. Al-Albaanee declared it Saheeh in Saheeh at-Targheeb (1788).

He then went on to mention the three types of people including a grey-haired, elderly fornicator and a poor arrogant person due to the weakness of their urge to commit the sins.

4. Abandoning acts of obedience to Allaah: The decrease in Eemaan is according to the degree of the act of obedience. So if the level of obligation is of a higher degree, then the decrease in Eemaan higher. Perhaps one could lose Eemaan totally such as is abandoning prayer.

The decrease in Eemaan for abandoning acts of obedience is of two types: the type that the person could be punished for, such as leaving an obligation with no excuse; and the type that one will not be punished for, such as leaving an obligation due to a legislative or legitimate excuse; or leaving an optional act of obedience. Examples of the second type would be a woman leaving prayer due to her menses or a person leaving the optional forenoon (Duhaa) prayer, and Allaah know best.

CHAPTER 26
{PART FOUR}
Istithnaa Regarding Eemaan

Islaam & Eemaan

Istithnaa (making an exception) regarding Eemaan means to say, I am a believer inshaah Allaah (if Allaah wills).

The people have differed over whether one should add "...if Allaah wills." They are of three different beliefs.

1. Saying it is not to be done: This is the belief of the Murjiah and the Jahmiyyah and those like them. The basis of this statement is the belief that Eemaan is itself only one thing that a person knows within himself; it is only an acceptance of the heart. If a person says, "...if Allaah wills," then this would be a proof of doubting this acceptance, as they claim. For this reason, they refer to people who do make this exception as "Doubters."

2. Saying it must be done: This statement is based upon two beliefs.

First: The belief that Eemaan is something that a person dies upon; either a person is a believer or a disbeliever based upon what he dies upon. This is something within every person's future and unknown to them so no one could possibly be resolved upon and certain of. Many modern speakers hold this opinion. However, it is not known that any of the Salaf used to hold this opinion. They used to be of the second belief:

Second: The belief that complete Eemaan includes performing all commandments, avoiding all sins. This is something that no person can be certain about himself. If he claims this, then he is purifying himself and testifying that he is among the righteous. This would mean that he is testifying that he is from the people of paradise, which is not permissible.

3. Details must be explained: If adding, "...if Allaah wills," results from a doubt that not even the foundation of Eemaan exists within one's heart; then this is not permissible. Rather, it is disbelief because Eemaan is a conviction and doubt contradicts this conviction. If saying this results from a fear of purifying oneself and a fear of testifying that one has fulfilled complete Eemaan in statement, action, and beliefs; then this is a required fear. If saying "...if Allaah

wills," is for the purpose of seeking blessings by mentioning Allaah's complete control and will, and that whatever of Eemaan is present in one's heart is only by the will of Allaah; then this permissible.

Adding the Istithnaa for this reason does not contradict the actualization of Eemaan. Making such an addition has been made upon such matters that are certain such as Allaah's statement,

لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُؤُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ

"You will surely enter al-Masjid al-Haraam (the Masjid of the Ka'bah), if Allaah wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and (hair) shortened, not fearing (any body)." [Sooratul-Fath, 48:27]

With this explained it is clear that making an absolute judgment for or against Istithnaa regarding Eemaan is not correct. Rather, the previous details must be explained, and Allaah knows best.

May Allaah bestow peace and prayers upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his Companions.

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All praise and thanks to the One by whose favor righteous deeds are completed.

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