



IMAAN BUILDER 1: FEARING FOR ONE'S IMAAN

Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

Welcome to our new “Imaan Builder” series, the aim of which is to present guidelines and advice from the Salaf pertaining to the development and maintenance of one's Imaan. Without further words, let us proceed straight away to the first Imaan Builder: Ibn Battah on Imaan being fear and hope.

IMAAN BUILDER 1: FEARING FOR ONE'S IMAAN

Stated Ibn Battah in his work, "al-Ibaanah 'an Sharee'at il-Firqat in-Naajiyah" (2/756-759):

Chapter: Imaan is Fear and Hope

And then the fear of the intelligent (sensible) ones amongst the Believers, and then their fear of nifaaq (hypocrisy) for the one who felt comfortable and secure about his own soul. This was what the Qur'aan was revealed with and what the Sunnah came with.

Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic said:

Those whom they call upon [like Iesa (Jesus) - son of Maryam (Mary), Uzair (Ezra), angel, etc.] desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord (Allâh), as to which of them should be the nearest and they [Iesa (Jesus), 'Uzair (Ezra), angels, etc.] hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment. Verily, the Torment of your Lord is something to be afraid of! (Israa 17:57)

And Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic said:

Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (charity in Allâh's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them. (Sajdah 32:16)

And He said:

Is one who is obedient to Allâh, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)? Say: "Are those who know equal to those who know not?" It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allâh's Signs and Verses). (Zumar 39:9).

And the same in is many of the verses in the Qur'an.

1055. [Isnaad] → from Anas, who said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) entered upon a youth who was approaching death due to illness and said, "How do you find yourself?". He replied, "I hope in Allaah and I fear my sins". So the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said, "Never does this come together (i.e. the two qualities) in the heart of a servant in this circumstance (i.e. near death) except that Allaah gives him what he hopes and secures him from that which he fears".

1056. [Isnaad] → from Yazeed bin Haaron who said: It reached me from Abu Idress al-Khawlaanee that he said, "There is no one on the face (of the earth) who does not fear for his Imaan, except that it will depart (from him)."

1057. [Isnaad] → from Hishaam bin Hujayr who said: I heard al-Hasan (al-Basree) saying, “By Allaah, no one has passed by (before us) or has remained except that he feared nifaaq (hypocrisy) for himself. And no one felt secure from it except a Munaafiq”.

1058. [Isnaad] → from Ayyoob as-Sakhtiyaanee who said: I heard al-Hasan (al-Basree) saying, “By Allaah, never does any [true] Believer on the face of the earth enter into the morning or the evening except that he fears nifaaq for himself. And no one feels secure from nifaaq except a Munaafiq.”

1059. [Isnaad] → from Tareef bin Shihaab who said: I said to al-Hasan, “There is a people who claim there is no nifaaq, and nor do they fear nifaaq.” Al-Hasan said, “By Allaah that I have the knowledge that I am free of nifaaq is more loved to me than the earth filled with gold.”

1060. [Isnaad] → from al-Haarith bin Mu'aawiyah who said: I was sitting in a gathering in the presence of Abu ad-Dardaa and he was warning us from ad-Dajjaal on that day. So I said, “By Allaah something other than Dajjaal is more fearful to me than ad-Dajjaal”. He said, “And what is more feared in your soul than Dajjaal?”. I said, “I fear that my Imaan is taken away from me, while I am unaware.” He said, “Your mother belongs to Allaah! (a exclamatory phrase). O son of al-Kandiyah, do you see even a hundred people who fear the likes of what you fear? O son of al-Kandiyah, do you see even fifty people who fear the likes of what you fear? O son of al-Kandiyah, do you see even ten people who fear the likes of what you fear? O son of al-Kandiyah, do you see even three people who fear the likes of what you fear? By Allaah, never does a man feel secure and relaxed about his Imaan being stripped away from him, except that it is stripped away from him, and then he finds he has lost it.”

1061. [Isnaad] → from Umm ad-Dardaa who said: Abu ad-Dardaa used to say often, “When a man passes away upon a righteous condition, then may it be enjoyment for him, and would that I was in his place”. So I said, “O Abu ad-Dardaa, much of what you say means this”. So he said, “And you have not known O foolish ones, that a man awakes a Believer and then enters the evening a Disbeliever?” She (Umm ad-Dardaa) said, “And how is that?” He said, “The removal of his Imaan without him even realising it. That I die upon that (i.e. the one who passes away upon a righteous condition) is more enviable to me than remaining (alive) upon fasting and prayer.”

1062. [Isnaad] → from Thaabit al-Banaanee, from Mutarrif bni Abdullaah bin ash-Shikheer, that he used to say, “O Allaah, accept from me just a single day's fasting. O Allaah accept from me, just a single prayer. O Allaah accept from me just a single good deed.” Then he would say, “Verily, Allaah accepts only from the Muttaqeen” (Maa'idah 5:27).”

End Chapter.

COMPREHENSION

1. Recall that Imaan is speech and action and that action is of two types: that of the heart and that of the limbs.

2. Recall that the presence of tasdeeq and a small amount of the action of the heart (such as inqiyaad or istislaam and the likes), along with the expression of the shahaadah upon the tongue enters one into Imaan. Following that the actions of the heart tied to the actions of the limbs cause increase in Imaan.

3. The actions of the heart are the basis of the actions of the limbs – and hence their development and cultivation is vital for security and safety on the day of judgement – in other words to ensure that you fulfil the obligatory perfection of Imaan – on account of which you enter Paradise without entering Hellfire first.

4. Amongst those actions of the heart are fear and hope, both of which propel a person to act upon the orders and refrain from the prohibitions. And amongst the greatest elements of these actions is actually fearing the dissipation, or gradual passing away of Imaan. When one does not even have this quality, then naturally, his Imaan (i.e. actions of the heart) will gradually pass away – and hence the actions of the limbs which naturally follow, as they are tied to the actions of the heart. And the explanation of that is as follows:

5. Imagine you are given a million gold coins to look after in your home for a determined period. No doubt, this is a great treasure, but also a great responsibility, which will bring great fear and stress upon you. So while you away from home, at work for example, or travelling, or merely popping out for a few minutes – the fear of the loss or theft or disappearance of that gold will be not just at the back of your mind, but at the front of it. Until even if you are in your home, sitting comfortably, relaxed, then still this fear is in the front of your thoughts, since you fear its loss, or theft or disappearance or wastage. And if you do not put the right measures in place to ensure it is well looked after, then perhaps it will start to disappear, bit by bit – and you do not even realise.

6. Fine, then Allaah has bestowed upon us Imaan, which after our initial utterance on the tongue, along with tasdeeq (assent) in the heart, and the initial basic action of the heart that was present that propelled us to utter the shahaadah – so after that which constitutes the asl, basis, of Imaan, we have our treasure of Imaan – which is actually both the actions of the heart and limbs (and which the Extremist Murji'ah expelled from Imaan, though the Mainstream Murji'ah included the actions of the heart in general, but excluded the actions of the limbs). Hence, if we do not fear the loss of this Imaan (which is action in the heart and on the limbs), then by Allaah, it will slowly dissipate, until all we are left with is a hardened heart which is devoid of any actions, and hence following from that, the limbs are without action, fruitless and barren.

7. Hence, what the Salaf stated, namely, that Imaan is fear and hope, is an indication of the way in which the Salaf safeguarded their Imaan, from two angles: a) fearing its loss and wastage without even realising and b) not feeling secure with oneself, thinking that

one's actions will be accepted, and that one's Imaan will not actually decrease, but rather hoping that Allaah may accept even a single deed from us.

8. Additionally, in the fact that the Salaf would actually hope for Allaah to accept even a single deed from them is indicative of another important lesson. And that is that the weightiness of action, does not lie in the abundance of action, but the abundance of the actions of the heart underlying the action, such as sincerity (ikhlaas), love (mahabbah), fear (khawf) hope (rajaa'), submission (khudoo') and so on. For two people may perform the same action outwardly, but they are rewarded differently, based upon the levels of the actions of the heart they have in them, at the time of the commission of the act. And hence, the Salaf would fear the rejection of their actions, not knowing whether they had brought an abundance of sincerity, and love and hope and so on, and thus feared nifaaq.

We ask Allaah, the one who accepts from the Muttaqeen, that He nourishes us all with an abundance of fear and hope, that helps to cultivate and preserve the actions upon which our entrance to Paradise and safety from the Fire lies. Ameen.

Prayers and peace upon the Prophet Mohammad, his family, his companions and whoever follows his way until the Hour is established.