

There are certain essential prerequisites of this concept of *Iman*, viz.

1. **Iman** or true belief is a precondition for the acceptance of a man's deeds by Allah the Almighty. This is illustrated by an event that occurred to the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).

خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبْلَ بَدْرٍ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ بِحَرَّةِ الْوَبَرَةِ أَدْرَكَهُ رَجُلٌ قَدْ كَانَ يُذَكِّرُ مِنْهُ جُرْأَةً وَنَجْدَةً، فَفَرَحَ أَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حِينَ رَأَوْهُ، فَلَمَّا أَدْرَكَهُ قَالَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: جِئْتُ لِأَتَّبِعَكَ، وَأُصِيبَ مَعَكَ، قَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «تُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ؟» قَالَ: لَا، قَالَ: «فَارْجِعْ، فَلَنْ أَسْتَعِينُ بِمُشْرِكٍ»، قَالَتْ: ثُمَّ مَضَى حَتَّى إِذَا كُنَّا بِالشَّجَرَةِ أَدْرَكَهُ الرَّجُلُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ كَمَا قَالَ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ، فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَمَا قَالَ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ، قَالَ: «فَارْجِعْ، فَلَنْ أَسْتَعِينُ بِمُشْرِكٍ»، قَالَ: ثُمَّ رَجَعَ فَأَدْرَكَهُ بِالْبَيْدَاءِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ كَمَا قَالَ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ: «تُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ؟» قَالَ: نَعَمْ، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «فَانْطَلِقْ» (مسلم).

(Translation of meaning) When he was proceeding for the Battle of Badr a pagan, brave and courageous, met him and offered to fight along with him. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) asked him, whether, he believed in Allah and His Messenger. He said no. Then the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) told him not to accompany him, as, we do not need the support of any polytheist. Then after some time, he came back and repeated his wish. The Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) gave him the same reply. Then he came for the third time and this time he replied to the question of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) in the affirmative. So the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said it is all right and you may accompany us” (Muslim). Allah declares, in the holy Quran:

﴿وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا﴾ (النساء: ١٢٤)

(Translation of meaning) “And whosoever of the males and females does pious deeds being a believer then they will all enter the Garden and will not be denied their right in the least” (An-Nisa: 124).

In another place He declared:

﴿وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا﴾ (الإسراء: ١٩)

“and whosoever aspired for the Hereafter and strived for it, worth striving being a believer then the striving of all of them shall be appreciated [by Allah]” (Al-Isra: 19).

2. **Iman** is by no means limited to oral affirmation. While in Madinah the chief of the hypocrites named Abdullah Bin Ubai Bin Salool visited the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) often to praise him in his face and exaggerating his belief and expressed commitment to his obedience and following. But all this was merely exhibition. Coming out of the Prophet’s place he started condemning him and inciting people not to obey the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). And, similarly, his entire group pretended to affirm their *Iman*, Islam and obedience to the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) but all were disbelievers in their heart. It is with reference to such people that Allah pronounced in the Quran:

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ۝١٤٥ ﴾ النساء: ١٤٥

(Translation of meaning) “Verily, the hypocrites shall be in the lowest panel of the Hell and you will not find any supporter for them” (Al-Nisa: 145). Allah further declared:

﴿ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ۝١ ﴾ المنافقون: ١

(Translation of meaning) “And whenever the hypocrites come to you and say we testify that you are the Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) , and Allah knows that you are His messenger, and Allah testifies that the hypocrites are liars” (Al-Munafiqoon: 1).

3. **True** belief leads to good deeds and encourages the performance of more and more good deeds. Belief and action are but the two sides of the same coin. This is the reason why *Iman* and action have been mentioned together sixty times in the holy Quran. Just as the good deed is a complement of belief similarly good deed is a token of true belief.

The prohibition of intoxicants is an interesting episode in the history of Islam. The Companions of the Prophet were the same persons who were born in the society of the Age of Ignorance [*Jahiliyyah*] where drinking

was common and who were given to drinking. But when the following verses regarding the prohibition of drinking were revealed all of them gave it up:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۝٩٠ الْمَائِدَةُ: ٩٠﴾

(Translation of meaning) “O those who believe! Verily, the wine, gambling, installations and the arrows are dirty works of Satan so you avoid them may be you attain succeed. So will you keep away from them?” (Al-Maedah: 90).

At another place its mentioned as:

﴿فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْهَوْنَ ۝٩١ الْمَائِدَةُ: ٩١﴾

(Translation of meaning) Will ye then have done? (Al-Maedah: 91).

As soon as the Companions heard these verses they immediately broke their wine bowls and those who were about to drink desisted from it. This was the highest manifestation of the obedience of the commands of Allah and His Messenger (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). Very soon all of them hurried to their homes and drained all the wines which was stored in their homes till the drains of Madinah became filled up with wine and for many days the atmosphere was tinged with wine’s smell. This was just a miracle shown by the power of belief in a moment. This fiat could not be achieved by the mighty powers on earth even after launching beg schemes of prohibition and spending billions over them but they could never enforce prohibition.

4. **Belief** uproots the sins and contributes to their minimization. Among characteristic of *Iman* is that it keeps a believer away from sins. As the much *Iman* of a person grows the more he moves away from sins. There is a natural gap between belief and sinning. Similarly, there is natural attraction between belief and good deed. The power of belief nullifies all the enticements and incentives of sinful actions. Sometimes a sinner develops the feeling that after committing so many sins he has no longer left with any belief. This is wrong. Sins can only weaken one’s belief, not eliminate it altogether. If one determines to repent and keep away from sins he may regain and strengthen his belief.

There, goes the story of three men travelling together. When night came they searched for a place to pass the night. As soon as they entered a cave its mouth was closed by a huge boulder. The way of exit was thus blocked. They became very anxious. Then one of them thought that they should pray to Allah for forgiveness and seek His help on strength of their good deeds. Thus one of them rose to pray with reference to his good deeds. As a result, the boulder moved a little but still exit was not possible. The second man did the same and then the boulder moved a little more. Now, the third person began to pray and said: O Allah, you know that I had a cousin sister of me whom I loved too much. Once I wanted to establish body contact with her and enticed her in all possible ways but she did not submit. With the passage of time her household became poor and suffered from penury. Once she came to me for financial help. I promised to help her on the condition that she fulfil my old time desire. Under the compulsion of circumstance, she agreed. But just as, I was about to do it she told me tremblingly: O the slave of Allah, fear Allah and do not commit the illicit act. I left her even if I had great desire of her. I also forgave her the money which I had given her. O my God, if I did this act to seek your pleasure then please deliver us from this calamity. His prayer was accepted and the boulder moved away from the mouth of the cave and they came out of it. Now it was the force of belief which had kept that man away from committing the sinful act of adultery. Thus, if anybody is inclined to do something wrong he must realize that it will cause the displeasure of Allah and if he determines that, he will not do anything to displease Allah, then, he will never commit any sinful act.

5. **A believer** relies only on the divine power and divine succour. In the early days of Islam the pagans of Makkah came to the Abu Talib, the uncle of the *Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam)* and said: O Abu Talib, persuade your nephew [Muhammad] not to denounce our gods. Our households have been subjected to strife, due to, his preaching. If your nephew wants wealth we are willing to give it to him; if he wants to become our chief we are ready to make him our chief; and if he is suffering from any affliction we are prepared to manage the services of best of the doctors to treat him. In reply to them, whatever, the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, is a manifestation of the force of his

belief. He was not willing to barter his mission with their wealth. He told his uncle: O my uncle, if these people put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I would not desist from preaching my mission until, Allah gives victory to Islam or I perish in this process (Ibn Hisham).

There is another episode in history of the trial of the people of belief. This relates to the Companions of the Trenches. To punish the believers, for the crime of their belief, the pagans dug large pits and ignited big fire in them. When, the fire came, to full bloom the believers were thrown into the pits, but, they were so much confirmed in their belief, that, they preferred death but did not budge from their belief. It is in this context, that, Allah proclaimed in the Quran:

﴿قِيلَ اصْحَبِ الْأَخْذُودِ﴾ ٤ النَّارِ ذَاتِ الْوُفُودِ ﴿٥﴾ إِذْ هُمْ عَلَيْهَا قُعُودٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفْعَلُونَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ شُهُودٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَمَا نَقَمُوا مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا أَن يُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٨﴾ **البروج: ٤ - ٨**

(Translation of meaning) “*The Companions of the Pits were killed; filled [as the pits were] with fire of woods; as [the pagans] were sitting around them and were looking at the spectacle of what they were doing with the believers; and they did not take revenge from them except for their belief in Allah, the Mighty and Praiseworthy*” (Al-Buruj: 4-8).

Likewise, the episode of the sorcerers of the Pharaoh has been narrated in the Quran. The Pharaoh had collected them to counter Hadrat Musa (Alaihis Salam). They tried all their tricks. But when they saw the miracles of Allah they prostrated and became believers in Allah. Allah says:

﴿قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ ١٢١ رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ **الأعراف: ١٢١ - ١٢٢**

(Translation of meaning) “*They [the sorcerers] said: We believe in the Creator of the worlds; the Creator of Musa and Harun*” (AL-A’raf: 121-122).

The conversion of the sorcerers to belief displeased the Pharaoh, whom, threatened them of cutting their hands and feet and crucifying them. They replied:

﴿ قَالُوا لَا ضَيْرَ إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ ﴾ الشعراء: ٥٠

(Translation of meaning) “No hindrance. We are returning to our Creator” (Ash-Shuara: 50).

6. **Belief** and trial. It is a practice of Allah the Almighty to differentiate the true, from the false by a process of test and trial. He tests the men by awarding facilities and inflicting hardships to distinguish the true [believers] from the fake [the hypocrites]. Allah the Almighty declares in the holy Quran:

﴿ أَلَمْ أَحْسِبِ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

فَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٣﴾ ﴾ العنكبوت: ١ - ٣

(Translation of meaning) “Have the people guessed that they will be spared by saying that we have believed and they will not be tried? And We have tested those who were before them; verily, Allah must know those who spoke truth and those who were liars” (Ankabut: 1-3).

It is narrated by Hadrat Mus’ab Bin Sa’d (RadhiAllahu Anhu) through his father that he asked the Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) : “Who will be tried most?” The Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) replied

«الْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْأَمْثَلُ فَالْأَمْثَلُ، فَيُبْتَلَى الرَّجُلُ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ، فَإِنْ كَانَ دِينُهُ صُلْبًا اشْتَدَّ بَلَاؤُهُ، وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ رِقَّةٌ ابْتُلِيَ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ، فَمَا يَبْرَحُ الْبَلَاءُ بِالْعَبْدِ حَتَّى يَبْرُكَهُ يَمْشِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مَا عَلَيْهِ خَطِيئَةٌ» (الترمذي ، ابن ماجه)

(Translation of meaning) First the Apostles of Allah and then after them others according to their ranks. A man is tried according to his faith. If his faith is firm his trial would be harder. If his faith is weak his trial will be lighter (Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah).

The episode of the trial of Hadrat Khubaib Bin Uday (RadhiAllahu Anhu) became very famous. He was a captive of the pagans of Makkah. When, they were going to hang him to death saw sought a little time to perform two rak’ats of salat. He performed two rak’ats very lightly and then addressed those people thus: Had you not thinking that I am afraid of death I would have prolonged my salat. The pagans took him to the

hanging board and asked him: O Khabeeb don't you wish that Muhammad were in your place and you were among your family members? Hadrat Khubaib (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) retorted: Never, never. I would not like to live while the *Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam)* is stuck with a thorn in his foot.

In this way he became a martyr in the cause of his faith. The same thing happened to Hadrat Sumayya (*RadhiAllahu Anha*) and her folk. When the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) passed by them while the pagans were torturing them he said to them: Forbear O Al Yasir. Allah has promised you the Garden (Ibn Hisham). When faced with trials a believer forbears and trusts only Allah the Almighty. And this is what is desired by Allah the Almighty. Thus Allah has proclaimed:

﴿يَتَّيِّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (آل عمران: ٢٠٠)

(Translation of meaning) “O those who believe, be firm and support each other and mobilize for jihad and fear Allah may be you succeed” (*Al Imran: 200*). The *Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam)* said: “Forbearance is half of faith” (Abu Naim). Perseverance in good deeds reinforces the faith and minimizes the chance commitment of sins. Allah has pronounced:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ﴾ (الأنفال: ٢)

(Translation of meaning) “Verily, the believers are those whose hearts tremble when he is invoked and when his verses are recited to them they increase their belief; and they rely on their Creator” (*Al-Anfal: 2*). In another place Allah Almighty says:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾ (آل عمران: ١٧٣)

(Translation of meaning) “The people who if told that [their enemies] have amassed an army against them so be afraid of them, it only

increases their belief and they said Allah is enough for us and he is our best support” (Al Imran: 173).

Once Hadrat Hanzalah (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) came out of the company of the *Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)* and encountered Hadrat Abu Bakr (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) on the way.

Addressing Abu Bakr Hanzalah (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) said: don’t you know Hanzalah has become a hypocrite? Hadrat Abu Bakr (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) said: *Subhanallah*, how is it possible? What are you saying? Then Hadrat Hanzalah (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) narrated his inner condition in these words: When we are in the company of the Prophet (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and he is discoursing on the heaven and hell we develop a peculiar condition in our heart. But when we get engaged in our worldly business we don’t feel the same condition. Hadrat Abu Bakr (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) Became constrained on hearing this and told him I have the same feeling. Then they both came to the Prophet (*sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and narrated their inner condition to him. The *Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)* smiled and said: By that entity Who is the custodian of my soul, if the condition which you feel while you are in my company persists with you all the time then angels will be shaking hands with you on your beds and in your way. But O Hanzala, this condition will be felt sometime and will not be felt on other times. This point was repeated by him thrice (Muslim). Hadrat Abud-Dardaa (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) used to say that it in the wisdom of the slave of Allah that he keeps watchful of his faith and belief. He must observe what deficiencies are there and he must assess whether his belief is increasing or decreasing.

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