

# IMAN AND GOOD DEEDS

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SAHIH IMAN SERIES

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# **IMAN AND GOOD DEEDS**

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## PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

There are three distinct stages in Islam, viz (i) Faith in Heart (**Iman**), (ii) Deeds by limbs (**Islam**) and (iii) Complete attention towards Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) / **Tasawwuf (Ihsan)**.

If someone does good deeds without Iman in his heart, he will not be treated as Muslim. If a person has Iman in his heart but is involved in sins, he will be called a sinner. If a person has Iman in his heart and also does good deeds only for the sake of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and His Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), he will be called a true believer and a person of Ihsan.

There are differences of opinions of scholars on the issue of Iman and good deeds. Some say belief and good deeds together are Iman. Some say that Iman and good deeds are different from each other. This book discusses this issue in detail in the light of Quran, Ahadith and opinions of Aimmah.

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## IMAN IN HEART

If a person believes in heart that 'There is no god except Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and Mohammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) is Allah's Apostle and surrenders himself to the will of Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), meaning decides to obey Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) as per the teachings of Quran and Sunnah, he is Muslim for all practical purposes.

If the person does not believe in Shahada in his heart, he is not Muslim.

If a person believes in heart and also proclaims the Shahada by his tongue, this is better.

If a person, immediately after proclaiming Shahadah, also starts fulfilling Islamic obligations, like learning (or doing) Salah, fasting, giving charity (Zakah), etc., this is still better.

A person who is good at Iman (belief) and Islam (deeds), his example is of a person who is wearing minimum Islamic dress along with required undergarments.

If a person is excellent in his deeds and as per Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) commandments, doing all his deeds seeing Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) from his eyes, he comes under the category of Ihsan. His example is the person who is wearing the traditional Islamic dress along with Amama (Emama). He is the person of Ihsan.

If a person wears a gown go to a place or Mosque where minimum Islamic dress is required, and then goes naked where naked people are allowed, his example is that of hypocrite (*Munafiq*).

Some people may object that the Shaikh has given a strange example to explain issues. They should know that there is nothing bad or good in explanations. We have to chose an example with which the issue is understood by one and all easily. If they still feel not comfortable, they should read the following Hadith.

**It is in Hadith** - Ummul Momineen Aisha (رضي الله تعالى عنها) narrated that the Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) said, 'the people will be gathered barefooted, naked and uncircumcised (on the Day of Judgment).' I said, "O Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)! Will the men and the women look at each other?' He said, 'The situation will be too hard for them to pay attention to that.' (**Bukhari**)

Therefore, it is a good idea to understand the issue in its proper perspective rather than paying attention towards the examples given.

If a person is wearing only cloths that cover half of his upper body and not wearing anything down from his waist, he will be called naked even though half of his body is covered with costly cloths. This is the example of the followers of Muslim sects / groups whose deeds may be good, but whose basic faith is not correct. The good deeds of these people will not help them in any way on the Day of Judgement. This is the reason Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, out of 73 sects, only one will get salvation and the rest will be thrown into hell fire.

If a person chooses to cover his body only from belly button to knees in a towel in front of the people, but does not care much about covering his body parts fully as per the Islamic dress in spite of the fact that he is financially capable to buy all kinds of cloths, his example is that of a person who has bare minimum Iman, but he does not have much good deeds or probably, he is a sinful person (*Faasiq*).

**It is in Hadith** - It is narrated by Anas (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'Whoever said 'There is no god except Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ)' and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of a barley grain will be taken out of Hell. And whoever said 'There is no god except Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ)' and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of a wheat grain will be taken out of Hell. And whoever said 'There is no god except Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ)' and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of an atom will be taken out of Hell. (**Bukhari**)

What is the meaning of Iman equal to the weight of barley grain, wheat grain, mustard seed or an Atom? This is described in the following Hadith.

**It is in Hadith** - The Apostle of Allah (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said : 'Whoever among you sees an evil (un-Islamic) action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action); if he cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking out); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by at least hating it and believing that it is wrong), and that is the weakest of faith (equal to the weight of a grain or Atom). (**Muslim**)

The following Hadith clarifies three distinct stages in Islam, ie, (i) Faith in Heart (Iman), (ii) Deeds by limbs (Islam) and (iii) Complete attention towards Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) / **Tasawwuf (Ihsan)**."

**It is in Hadith** - Abu Huraira (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated that one day while the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was sitting in the company of some people, (the angel) Jibreel (عليه السلام) came and sat and asked, 'What is Iman?' Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) replied, 'Iman is to believe in Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.' Then he

further asked, "What is Islam?" Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) replied, "To pray Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan.' Then he further asked, 'What is Ihsan (Tasawwuf)?' Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) replied, 'To pray Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) as if you see Him, and if you cannot see him then you must consider that He is looking at you.' (Bukhari, Muslim and others)

**It is in Hadith** - Anas bin Malik (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated that 'once Mu'adh (رضي الله تعالى عنه) was along with Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) as a companion rider. Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, "O Mu'adh bin Jabal. Mu'adh (رضي الله تعالى عنه) replied, "*Labbaik and Sa'daik*. O' Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)!" Again the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, 'O Mu'adh! Mu'adh (رضي الله تعالى عنه) said thrice, "*Labbaik and Sa'daik*, O' Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)!" Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, There is none who testifies sincerely that '**There is no god except Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) is Allah's Apostle**, except that Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ), will save him from the Hell-fire.' Mu'adh (رضي الله تعالى عنه) said, "O' Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)! Should I not inform the people about it so that they may have glad tidings?' He replied, 'When the people hear about it, they will solely depend on it.' Then Mu'adh (رضي الله تعالى عنه) narrated this Hadith just before his death, being afraid of committing sin (by not spreading the knowledge). (Bukhari, Book #3, Hadith #130)

The above Ahadith clearly establish that, to belief in heart is sufficient for a person to be declared Muslim and he becomes eligible to enter Paradise.



## IMAMS' OPINIONS

**Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad At-Tahaawee (843 - 935)** was a famous Islamic Scholar who followed Hanafi school of thought. He is famous for *Aqeedah At-Tahawiyyah*, a treatise on *Aqidah* that has been accepted by all four schools of thought (**Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali**).

Both Imam al-Maturidi and At-Tahaawee said Iman (faith) consists of "conviction in the heart and affirmation by the tongue.

Imam Al-Maturidi declared (on the authority of Imam Abu Hanifa) that the foundation of belief consisted only in conviction in the heart, the tongue's affirmation is a supplementary integral / pillar (*rukn zâ'id*).

The other three Imams, **Malik, Shafi'i and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal** said that Islamic belief consists of 'conviction in heart, affirmation by the tongue, and practice with the limbs.

**We believe that all Imams are correct.** We can understand their rulings as follows.

When we take Iman as conviction in heart, then Imam Abu Hanifah's statement and the statement of Imam At-Tahaawee is correct.

When we consider the best deeds of a human being, then the first thing that comes to our mind is 'Iman' (faith), which is followed by other deeds. In this case, Iman becomes part of all good deeds or all good deeds become part of Iman.

- (1) **It is in Hadith** - It is narrated by Abu Huraira (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and His Apostle (Mohammad ﷺ). The questioner then asked, 'What is the next (in goodness)? He replied, 'To participate in Jihad in Allah's (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) Cause.'" The questioner again asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, 'To perform Hajj mabrur (Pilgrimage to Makka which is accepted by Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and it is performed with the intention of seeking Allah's (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) approval only and not to show off and without committing a sin and in accordance with the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ).' (**Bukhari Book 2, Hadith 25**)

(2) **It is in Quran** - وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَجِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ (It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Apostles; to spend of your wealth, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing). (**Al-Baqara - 177**).

(3) **It is in Hadith** - Ibn 'Umar (رضى الله تعالى عنه) narrated that Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said : Islam is based on five (principles) - (i) There is no god but Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and Mohammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) is Allah's Apostle. (ii) To offer Salah (prayers) dutifully and perfectly. (iii) To pay Zakat. (iv) To perform Hajj. (v) To observe fast during the month of Ramadhan. (Bukhari Book 2, Hadith 7)

(4) It is in Hadith - It is narrated by Abdullah bin 'Umar (رضى الله تعالى عنه) that once Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) passed by an Ansari who was admonishing to his brother regarding Haya'. On that Allah's Apostle (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) said, "Leave him as Haya' is a part of Iman." (**Bukhari Book 2, Hadith 23**)

## **WHY PROFESSING OF SHAHADAH BY TONGUE AS WELL AS OTHER GOOD DEEDS ARE SEPARATED FROM IMAN IN HEART?**

It is because, there are certain circumstances for people when they cannot profess Iman openly fearing danger to their lives. This provision will help them to get salvation on the Day of Judgment.

When a person can profess Shahadah openly by his tongue and there is no threat to his life, then he should do it openly. If he does not do it, then his case is for Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) to decide on the Day of Judgment.

**It is in Hadith** - It is narrated by Abu Dhar (رضي الله تعالى عنه) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) said, 'Jibreel (عليه السلام) said to me, 'Whoever said there is no god except Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ)' among your followers and died, will enter Paradise.' The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) asked. 'even if he has committed illegal sexual intercourse or theft?' He replied, 'Even then.' (**Bukhari, Book # 54, Hadith # 445**).

The above Hadith emphasizes the importance of Iman over deeds. However, we should not think that being Muslims, we can commit sins. Remember, habitual/deliberate sinners are walking on the outer ring road of Islam, bordering Kufr.

Separating religion from day to day life or deliberately insisting on committing sins or making fun/mockery of established laws of Sharia or making fun / mockery of real Muslims are very serious issues that should not be taken lightly. The angels are recording every action. Watch out, you will not even know when you were declared as non-Muslim by Allah's (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) appointed angels.

When a person commits the sin and considers that what he has done is wrong, deplorable and he should not repeat it or correct himself as soon as possible, then he remains Muslim.

Followers of deviant sects disrespect, insult Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم), his family members and other dignitaries of Islam and insist that what they are doing is right. These actions take them far away from Islam. The only possible way for these sects to come back to the

fold of Islam and get salvation is, they should repent and renounce their wrongful beliefs and deeds and come back to the straight path of Islam.

If someone declares a Muslim as 'Grave worshiper' or makes fun of his Islamic faith and mislead innocent Muslims to take them away from the straight path of Islam, and declares himself to be Muslim, then he, along with his followers will be treated as hypocrites (*Munafiqeen*) on the Day of Judgment.

Similarly, there are some faith healers (*Aamileen*) in society who take the assistance of the souls of stars, trees, shayateen, etc., and mislead people claiming themselves as Sufi Babas and pious Muslims. These faith healers apparently have no Iman in their hearts.

In addition, there are some look alike Sufis in society who take advantage of innocent people in the name of *Tasawwuf*. People should identify such people and keep themselves away from them.

