
📖 Lesson 1: Eemaan Consists of Speech and Action

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

All Praise is due to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds and Prayers and Peace upon His Messenger, Muhammad.

This lesson will help us to have a proper understanding of the definition and meaning of Eemaan. What is eemaan? How do we understand it? Etc.

الإيمان قول وعمل

"Eemaan consists of Speech and Action"

This is the saying of the Salaf regarding this topic, and this statement needs further clarification and explanation.

What is "Speech" and what is "Action"? What is meant by them? How did the Salaf explain this?

When we say eemaan is speech, we mean two things:

- the speech of the heart
- the speech of the tongue

When we say eemaan is action, we mean three things:

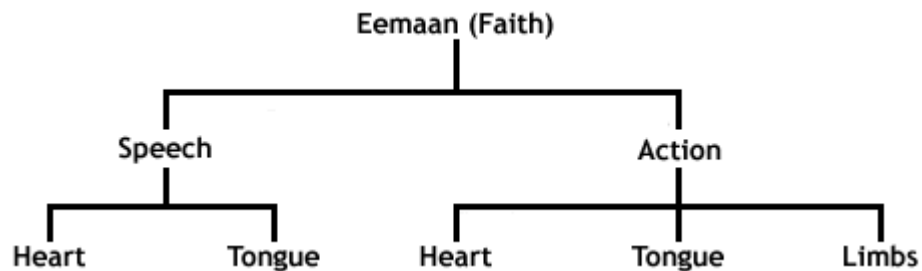
- the actions of the heart
- the actions of the tongue
- the actions of the limbs

For this reason we find that the Scholars of the Salaf (such as Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Taymiyyah etc.) have statements similar to the following:

الإيمان قول القلب واللسان
وعمل القلب واللسان والجوارح

Eemaan is the speech of the heart and tongue, and the actions of the heart, tongue and limbs.

The following diagram should help us to see this more clearly:



We will now explain precisely what each one is:

As for the **speech** aspect of eemaan:

The speech of the heart: This actually refers to the belief of the heart with respect to Allaah and the other pillars of eemaan (such as the Angels, Books, Messengers, Qadr, the Last Day etc.). In other words it refers to the knowledge that the heart contains and its firm belief in this knowledge. So this would include Tawheed and its two categories of Ruboobiyyah and Asmaa was-Sifaat because both of these are related to knowledge. (The other category of Tawheed, al-Uloohiyyah will come later under the **Action** section).

The speech of the tongue: This refers to the tongue's confirmation of what the heart contains. In other words the tongue professes what the heart contains. When a person says with his tongue; "I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, alone without any partners and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger" then he is confirming what is in his heart. So note how the **speech of the tongue** still relates to knowledge.

As a summary of this first section on **Speech**, we should notice that it relates to knowledge and the specific details of faith such as having the correct belief in Allaah, His Tawheed and the matters of the Unseen, such as Hellfire, Paradise, the Bridge over Hellfire etc. and the hearts belief and conviction in these things.

As for the **action** part of eemaan:

The actions of the heart: This refers to the various states and feelings of the heart such as love, fear, hope, sincerity, reliance, submission etc. So you should now realise that the heart is firstly, a place of knowledge and belief (and this is its speech as discussed above) and it is also a place for these feelings and emotions which actually constitute its worship (and these are known as the actions of the heart). You should also now realise how Tawheed ul-Uloohiyyah comes under the **actions** aspect of eemaan. Because these acts of worship should only be for Allaah and for no one else.

The actions of the tongue: This refers to things such as dhikr (remembrance of Allaah), enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, seeking forgiveness from Allaah, etc. This is because these are acts of worship which are performed by the tongue. Notice how this also relates to Tawheed ul-Uloohiyyah because these actions should be for Allaah alone. And notice also, just like the heart, how the tongue has two roles; firstly, to affirm what is in the heart with respect to its belief, so the tongue says what is in the heart (i.e. its belief in Allaah etc.) and secondly to perform the various acts of worship which are specific to it such as remembrance of Allaah, enjoining good and forbidding evil, seeking forgiveness. So this is very similar to what we discussed for the speech of the heart and the actions of the heart.

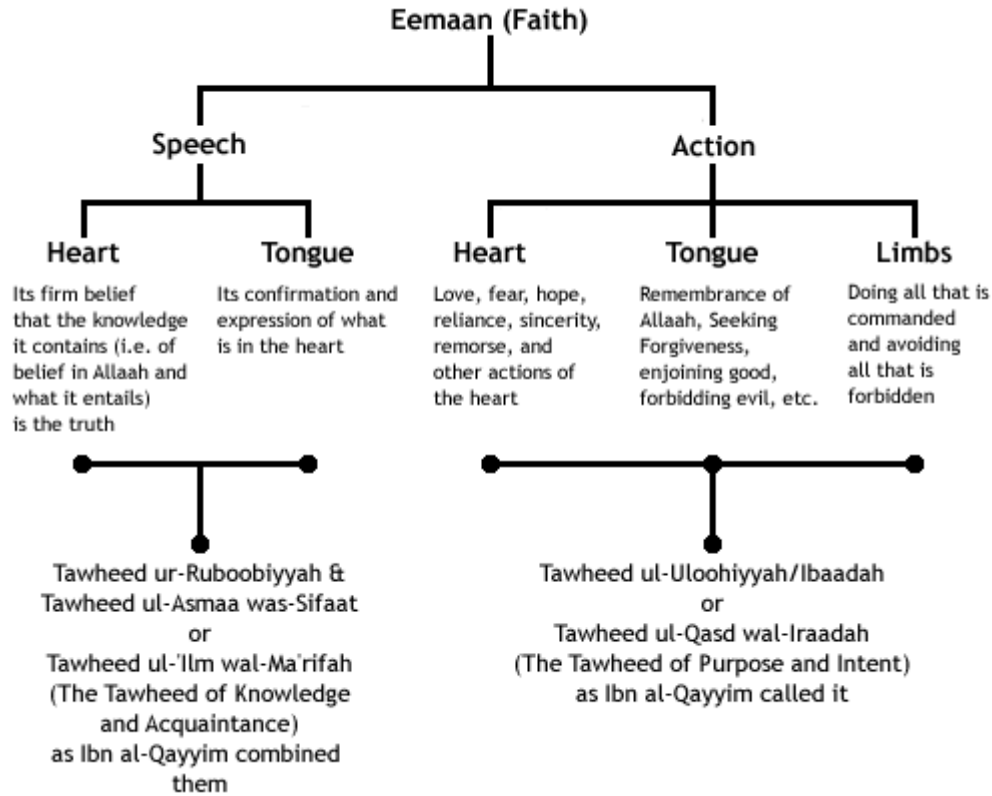
The actions of the limbs: And this refers to doing all the commanded things and keeping away from all the forbidden things. And this refers to the physical acts of worship, such as prayer, fasting, giving zakah, performing pilgrimage, removing something harmful from the floor, not stealing, not cheating, not backbiting, not disobeying parents etc. and the other acts which are physical in nature. Notice how the actions of the limbs are also related to Tawheed ul-Uloohiyyah in that they should be performed for the sake of Allaah alone.

As a summary of this Action aspect of eemaan, we should realise that it relates to the actual acts of worship, whether internal or external, of the heart, tongue or limbs.

At this stage we should, inshaa allaah have a good understanding of the definition and meaning of eemaan. We should also be able to see how it relates to the three categories of Tawheed, two of which are related to Knowledge and Belief and the third of which is related to Actions. For this reason Ibn al-Qayyim understood Tawheed to be of two types:

- The Tawheed of Knowledge and Acquaintance (which would be both Tawheed ur-Ruboobiyyah and Asmaa was-Sifaat, because they are both knowledge-based)
- The Tawheed of Purpose and Intent (which is Tawheed ul-Uloohiyyah or Ibaadah because it is related to the sincerity of the actions, what is the reason and motive behind them, who are they done for etc.)

In other words, there is no contradiction when we say that some of the Salaf understood Tawheed to be of two types (like Ibn al-Qayyim) and others understood it to be of three types, because Ibn al-Qayyim simply combined two of the categories of Tawheed and made them into one category - so in essence it is the same understanding. If we go back and revise the diagram we showed earlier, we can include this point in it as well:



Important Note: Be aware that using the terminologies Speech of the Heart , Speech of the Tongue , Actions of the Heart etc. is to help us to understand the **solid principles and concepts** that are found in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. And by using these terminologies we have not innovated any principle or concept into the religion. Rather these terms are simply identifying and labelling the actuals and principles and concepts found in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, to help us to understand them easily. So don't be fooled by the meanderings of the foolish!

Now we will move onto another related issue to further increase our understanding.

If we have understood that eemaan consists of these five things (and that we cannot remove any one of them from the definition and understanding of eemaan), i.e.

- the speech of the heart
- the speech of the tongue
- the actions of the heart
- the actions of the tongue
- the actions of the limbs

then we should realise that it is possible for eemaan to "**increase and decrease**" and that for any Muslim or Believer, it will not remain constant. This is because, from year to year, or month to month, or week to week, or day to day, or hour to hour or even minute to minute, a persons

strength of belief changes, his feelings of love, fear and hope decrease or increase, his level of sincerity to Allaah changes, how much he remembers Allaah, seeks his forgiveness or enjoins good and forbade evil changes, how perfect he performed his prayers, how many voluntary good deeds he did, all of this changes and therefore a persons eemaan will always be "increasing or decreasing." It will be increasing or decreasing for numerous reasons and factors. For example, a persons success or failure in facing the trials that Allaah has decreed for him A person s persistence or abstinence from sins and other forbidden actions, and so on.

For this reason we will go back and revise our statement so it now becomes:

الإيمان قول وعمل
يزيد بالطاعة وينقص بالمعصية

Eemaan Consists of Speech and Action, it increases with (acts of) obedience and it decreases with (acts of) disobedience

And this what the Salaf used to say.

Now we shall mention some proofs for all of this - and this is the way of the Salaf - to always mention the proofs and to stick to the Qur aan, the Sunnah and the Aathaar (sayings) of the Companions and of the two generations after them.

The Speech of the Heart:

Allaah said,

When the hypocrites come to you (O Muhammad SAW), they say: "We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allâh." Allâh knows that you are indeed His Messenger and Allâh bears witness that the hypocrites are liars indeed. [Munaafiqoon 63:1]

Here the hypocrites are treated as liars, even though they expressed with their tongues their testification that Muhammad is indeed the Messenger of Allaah. When someone testifies to something then there must be two conditions present: a) The hearts firm knowledge of, belief, and certainty in that for which it is testifying, b) the tongue s expression of that which the heart is certain of.

So the hypocrites were liars because their tongues uttered something different to that which their hearts contain. Another proof for the Speech of the Heart is the saying of Allaah,

They were that day, nearer to disbelief than to Faith, saying with their mouths what was not in their hearts. And Allâh has full knowledge of what they conceal [Aali Imraan 3:167]
See also al-Fath 48:11

So what we understand as Speech of the Heart is explained in the Qur aan

The Speech of the Tongue

Both of the above two verses are also an indication of the requirement of the Speech of the Tongue .

The Actions of the Heart, Tongue and Limbs

The Qur'aan is overwhelming with descriptions of the acts of worship, whether related to the Heart, Tongue or Limbs and the purpose here is to be brief and not prolong the discussion. See for yourself how Allaah describes, the love, fear and hope of the believers, their enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, their remembrance of Him and seeking forgiveness from Him and also their physical exertion in worshipping Him, such as constancy in prayer, fasting, etc.

Eemaan Increases and Decreases

From the Quraan:

The believers are only those who, when Allâh is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses (this Qur'ân) are recited unto them, they (i.e. the Verses) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone) [Surah Anfaal 8:2]

This is one of many verses mentioning the increase in eemaan. Others are 74:31, 48:4, 3:173, 9:124

From the Sunnah:

The hadeeth: *"The most perfect of people with respect to his eemaan, is the best of them in his manners."* (Bazaar, all of its narrators are reliable and al-Haithamee mentioned it in Majmoo az-Zawaa'id)

And the hadeeth: *"Whoever loves for Allaah (alone), hates for Allaah (alone), gives for Allaah (alone) and withholds for Allaah (alone), then he has perfected eemaan."* (Abu Daawood - saheeh).

These two hadeeth show that eemaan can be complete or incomplete and therefore it can go up (in order to be complete) and it can go down (so that it is incomplete). Notice how the first hadeeth contains actions of the tongue and actions of the limbs (speaking and behaving well with people) and how the second hadeeth contains both actions of the heart (loving and hating) and actions of the limbs (giving and withholding).

The hadeeth: *"Eemaan consists of seventy-odd branches, the highest of which is to testify None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and the lowest of which is to remove something harmful from the floor, and modesty is a part of eemaan."* (Bukhaaree, Muslim Abu Daawood, Ahmad, Ibn Maajah, and others.)

Did you notice how this hadeeth contains "speech" and "action"? It mentions the testification

None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah which is the speech of the heart and the speech of the tongue (To testify to something means to have firm knowledge of it - which is in the heart - and to believe that this knowledge is true and correct, and then also to speak with it so that you are testifying to it). And it mentions some actions, one which is to do with the limbs (removing something harmful from the floor) and one which is to do with the heart (modesty).

From the Salaf:

Al-Laalikaa'ee (d. 418H) reports in his Sharh Usool I'tiqaad Ahl is-Sunnah (5/958) that Abdur-Razzaaq (as-San'aanee) said: "I met sixty two Shaikhs, amongst them were: Ma'mar, al-Awzaa'ee, ath-Thawree, al-Waleed bin Muhammad al-Qurashee, Yazeed ibn as-Saa'ib, Hammaad bin Salamah, Hammaad bin Zaid, Sufyaan bin Uyainah, Shu'ayb bin Harb, Wakee' bin al-Jarraah, Maalik bin Anas, Ibn Abee Laylaa, Isma'eel bin Ayyaash, al-Waleed ibn Muslim and those I have not named, all of them saying: "Faith consists of speech and action, it increases and decreases."

Al-Laalikaa'ee also reports in his Sharh Usool I'tiqaad Ahl is-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah (5/959) that Uqbah bin Alqamah said: "I asked al-Awzaa'ee about eemaan, can it increase? He replied; Yes until it becomes like the mountains. I said: Can it decrease? He said: Yes, even until nothing remains of it. "

So this is proof, from the Qur'aan, Sunnah and the Salaf, that eemaan increases and decreases.

Inshaa'allaah this much is sufficient for a good understanding of this topic

All praise is due to Allaah, prayers and peace upon His Final Messenger, Muhammad, his family and his companions.

Try to answer the following questions to make sure you have understood all of this;

1. Give the definition of eemaan.
2. What is meant by speech and action
3. Explain each of the following: the speech of the heart, the speech of the tongue, the actions of the heart, the actions of the tongue, the actions of the limbs. Please give an example for each one aswell.
4. Why does eemaan increase and decrease.
5. Quote two verses of the Qur'aan which highlight the necessity of the Speech of the Heart .
6. Quote three verses of the Qur'aan to show that eemaan increases and decreases.
7. Quote two hadeeth to show that eemaan increases and decreases.
8. What is the link between Tawheed and the components of eemaan? (See if you can reproduce the diagram to help you answer this).

9. Finally, an astray sect appeared around the time of the taabi een who claimed that eemaan is constant, it does not increase or decrease. Do you know its name? The effects of the false understanding of this group are still present today so if you think over this lesson, can you recognise some of the signs of this misguided group and can you see how many groups and individuals still have some aspects of the understanding of this astray group?

See if you can answer all of these questions inshaa allaah. If you have follow up questions, you can ask them next time.

30th October 1997

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