

ARTICLE

Reality of Iman (حقيقة الايمان)

Meaning and Understanding of Iman (faith)

Extracted, summarized and graphic illustrations from

The Reality of Islam

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LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF CONTENTS.....	2
OPENING STATEMENT	3
I. REALITY OF IMAN.....	6
MEANING OF WORD IMAN	6
DEFINITION.....	6
<i>Bases of Iman are six</i>	9
IMAN IS "SAYING" AND "ACTION"	9
OUTWARD ACTIONS ATTEST THE INWARD IMAN	10
IMAN "INCREASES" AND "DECREASES"	11
THREE LEVELS OF IMAN	13
<i>Comprehensive Iman - الايمان المحمل</i>	13
<i>Obligatory / Detailed Iman - الايمان الواجب</i>	14
<i>Complete Iman - الايمان الكامل</i>	14
THREE COMPONENTS OF IMAN	14
<i>معرفة - Knowledge:</i>	15
<i>التصديق - Attesting</i>	15
<i>الالتزام - means commitment</i>	15
II. DIFFERENCES OF AHLUS-SUNNAH WITH OTHER SECTS	17
<i>Murjia (مرجعة):</i>	17
<i>Khawarij (خوارج):</i>	17
<i>Ahlu-Sunnah (اهل السنة):</i>	17
<i>Chart explains difference in understanding of Iman:</i>	17
REJECTION OF MURJIA (مرجعة)	18
<i>Hadiths that says "من قال أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله"</i>	19
<i>Explanation of Salaf</i>	20
<i>جمع بين اطراف و عدلة</i>	21
<i>Understanding the reality of affirmation</i>	23
REJECTION OF KHAWARIJ (خوارج)	24
<i>Daleels of Khawarij</i>	25
<i>Explanation of Salaf</i>	26
<i>Refutation of Khawarij saying Iman is composite and leaving one element means its not Iman</i>	27
<i>Refutation of Khawarij saying person committing major sin is a disbeliever</i>	30
REFERENCED HADITHS	30

Opening Statement

إن الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه و نستغفره ونتوكله إليه ، ونعوز بالله من شرور أنفسنا و سيئات أعمالنا ، من يهده الله فلا مضل له و من يضلل فلا هادي له ،
Indeed all praises are due to Allah, we praise Him, we seek His help, we ask for His forgiveness, and we rely solely on Him. We seek His refuge from the evil in our souls and from our wicked deeds. Whoever Allah guides, no one can misguide. And whomever Allah misguides, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah, He is One, with no partners, and I testify that Mohammad (pbuh)¹ is His Messenger and His slave.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer”².

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا - يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا
“O People fear Allah, as he should be feared, and always speak the truth. He will direct you to righteous deeds and He will forgive you for your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great achievement.”³

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "The best speech is the Book of Allah and the best guidance and example is that of Muhammad (pbuh). - And the worst of all things are the newly invented things (in religion), for every innovation is error and misguidance."⁴ and in another narration, "every newly invented matter (in religion) is a bid'ah and every bid'ah is a dalaalah (misguidance) and every dalaalah is in the (hell) Fire."⁵

Whoever introduces into this affair of ours something that we have not commanded, it is to be rejected."⁶ The Prophet (pbuh) said: مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا
"Whoever commits an act that does not conform with our matter (religion), then it will be rejected of him"⁷.

Hence, Allah (swt) said: قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ - Say (O Muhammad to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you..."⁸.

Allah (swt) further said: إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ - "The true religion with Allah is Islam"⁹. And then further explained it by saying: وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ - "And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers"¹⁰.

¹ (pbuh) is commonly used abbreviation for peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

² Quran, Chapter 4:1 An-Nisa (The Women)

³ Quran, Chapter 33:70-71 Al-Ahzab (The Confederates)

⁴ Reported by al-Muslim

⁵ Reported by At-Tirmithi

⁶ Reported by Al-Bukhari and al-Muslim

⁷ Sahih - Tafsir Ibn Khatir

⁸ Quran, Chapter 3:31 Al-Imran (The Family of Imran)

⁹ Quran, Chapter 3:19 Al-Imran (The Family of Imran)

¹⁰ Quran, Chapter 3:85 Al-Imran (The Family of Imran)

Opening Statement

Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) and His followers submitted to this deen, and Allah (swt) commanded: **فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ** - "Say: "I have submitted myself to Allah (in Islam), and (so have) those who follow me"¹¹.

Hence, Allah (swt) declared: **كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ** - "You are now the best people brought forth for (the guidance and reform of) mankind"¹².

Allah (swt) said: **تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ** - "You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah"¹³. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "He among you who witnesses an evil, let him change it with his hand, if he cannot do that, then by his tongue, if he cannot do even that, then with his heart, and this is the weakest faith."¹⁴. And Allah (swt) said: **وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ** - "...And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression..."¹⁵

And the Prophet (pbuh) said: **من كذب على متعمدا فليتبوا مقعده من النار** - "Whoever intentionally lie on me he should find his place in hell fire"¹⁶. And Allah (swt) said: **فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ** - "So who is more unjust than he who invents a lie about Allah or denies His signs? Indeed, the criminals will not succeed"¹⁷.

And the Prophet (pbuh) said: **يحمل هذا العلم من كل خلف عدوله، ينفون عنه تحريف الغالين، وانتحال المبطلين، وتأويل الجاهلين** - "This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy ones of every generation - they will expel from it the alterations made by those going beyond bounds, the false claims of the liars, and the false interpretations of the ignorant"¹⁸.

When Allah (swt) gave prophet hood to Musa (as) and asked him to invite mankind to Tawheed and way of Allah (swt), he prayed to Allah (swt):

قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي
وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي
وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي
يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

20:25 [Moses] said, "My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance]. 20:26 And ease for me my task. 20:27 And untie the knot from my tongue. 20:28 That they may understand my speech

And we ask Allah (swt) to grand us same. Amen.

و صلي الله على سيدنا محمد و على آله و أصحابه و سلم - أما بعد :

¹¹ Quran, Chapter 3:20 Al-Imran (The Family of Imran)

¹² Quran, Chapter 3:110 Al-Imran (The Family of Imran)

¹³ Quran, Chapter 3:10 Al-Imran (The Family of Imran)

¹⁴ Reported by Muslim

¹⁵ Quran, Chapter 5:3 Al-Ma'idah (The Table Spread)

¹⁶ Reported by Bukhari and Muslim

¹⁷ Quran, Chapter 10:17 Yunus (Jonah)

¹⁸ Recorded by Ibn 'Adiyy, al-Khatib al-Bhaghdadī, Ibn Asakir, and others. It is reported from number of sahabah including Abu Hurairah, Ibn Masud, and Anas (ra). All of its reports have various levels of weakness, but they add up collectively to make this hadith hasan, as is indicated by al-Albani in Mishkat ul-Masabih (#248), and as expressed by al-Halabi in al-Hittah (p. 70).

I. REALITY OF IMAN

Meaning of word Iman

Word "Iman" (إيمان) is literally translated as Faith or belief, means "to know", "to believe" and "to be convinced beyond the least shadow of doubt". Faith, thus, is firm belief arising out of knowledge and conviction. And the man who knows and reposes unshakable belief in the unity of God, in His Attributes, in His Law and the Revealed Guidance, and in the Divine code of Reward and punishment is called Mo'min – مومن (faithful)¹⁹. The word Iman is based on word peace (الأمن) which means (الطمأنينة) tranquility. A truthful person is satisfied (يطمئن) with his news while a liar is not. Like they say in Arabic "الصدق طمأنينة والكذب ريبة", "truth is tranquility while lie is suspicion"²⁰. Hence, a Mo'min attains tranquility by believing in true faith and by putting his trust in Allah (swt). This faith (إيمان) on true deen (دين الحق) invariably leads man to be completely obedient to Allah (swt) and submit to His will.

Definition

The definition of Iman is that to testify all the news brought by the Messenger (pbuh) about the unseen God (Allah) and His attributes (as in الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ [al-baqara 2:3]), and complete obedience to the Shariah He (pbuh) brought.

The word Iman and Islam are often interchanged. The salaf agreed that if words Islam and Iman are mentioned together, then Iman carries the meaning of internal beliefs of heart and Islam is outwardly actions. However, if they are mentioned independently, they carry meaning of both. Hence, if word Islam is mentioned independently, it carries meaning of both Islam and Iman. This is proved from vast numbers of verses of Quran and Hadith. If they (Islam and Iman) are mentioned together, as in Hadith Jibreel:

In the famous Hadith Jibreel, as the Prophet (pbuh) explained:

عن أبي هريرة قال كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بارزا يوما للناس فأتاه جبريل فقال ما الإيمان قال الإيمان أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه وبلقائه ورسوله وتؤمن بالبعث قال ما الإسلام قال الإسلام أن تعبد الله ولا تشرك به شيئا وتقيم الصلاة وتؤدى الزكاة المفروضة وتصوم رمضان قال ما الإحسان قال أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك...

Narrated Abu Huraira:

One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, "What is faith?" Allah's Apostle replied, 'Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.'

Then he further asked, "What is Islam?" Allah's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah 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 (perfection)?" Allah's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you..." (Sahih Bukhari, Book #2 Iman, Hadees # 47.)

¹⁹ Towards Understanding Islam, Al-Mawdudi

²⁰ Haqiqatul Iman, Dr Tariq AbdelHaleem

Definition

ثم قال حدثني أبي عمر بن الخطاب قال بينما نحن عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم إذ طلع علينا رجل شديد بياض الثياب شديد سواد الشعر لا يرى عليه أثر السفر ولا يعرفه منا أحد حتى جلس إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فأسند ركبتيه إلى ركبتيه ووضع كفيه على فخذيه وقال يا محمد أخبرني عن الإسلام فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الإسلام أن تشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وتقيم الصلاة وتؤتي الزكاة وتصوم رمضان وتحج البيت إن استطعت إليه سبيلا قال صدقت قال فعجبنا له يسأله ويصدق قال فأخبرني عن الإيمان قال أن تؤمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله واليوم الآخر وتؤمن بالقدر خيره وشره قال صدقت قال فأخبرني عن الإحسان قال أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك قال فأخبرني عن الساعة قال ما المسئول عنها بأعلم من السائل قال فأخبرني عن أمارتها قال أن تلد الأمة ربها وأن ترى الحفاة العراة العالة رعاء الشاء يتطاولون في البنيان قال ثم انطلق فلبث مليا ثم قال لي يا عمر أتدري من السائل قلت الله ورسوله أعلم قال فإنه جبريل أتاكم يعلمكم دينكم

Ibn Umar said: My father, Umar ibn al-Khattab, told me: One day we were sitting in the company of Allah's Apostle (pbuh) when there appeared before us a man dressed in pure white clothes, his hair extraordinarily black. There were no signs of travel on him. None amongst us recognized him.

At last he sat with the Apostle (pbuh) He knelt before him placed his palms on his thighs and said: Muhammad, inform me about al-Islam. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: Al-Islam implies that you testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, and you establish prayer, pay Zakat, observe the fast of Ramadan, and perform pilgrimage to the (House) if you are solvent enough (to bear the expense of) the journey. He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth. He (Umar ibn al-Khattab) said: It amazed us that he would put the question and then he would himself verify the truth.

He (the inquirer) said: Inform me about Iman (faith). He (the Holy Prophet) replied: That you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil. He (the inquirer) said: You have told the truth.

He (the inquirer) again said: Inform me about al-Ihsan (performance of good deeds). He (the Holy Prophet) said: That you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, for though you don't see Him, He, verily, sees you.

He (the enquirer) again said: Inform me about the hour (of the Doom). He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: One who is asked knows no more than the one who is inquiring (about it). He (the inquirer) said: Tell me some of its indications. He (the Holy Prophet) said: That the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and master, that you will find barefooted, destitute goat-herds vying with one another in the construction of magnificent buildings.

He (the narrator, Umar ibn al-Khattab) said: Then he (the inquirer) went on his way but I stayed with him (the Holy Prophet) for a long while. He then, said to me: Umar, do you know who this inquirer was? I replied: Allah and His Apostle knows best. He (the Holy Prophet) remarked: He was Gabriel (the angel). He came to you in order to instruct you in matters of religion. (Sahih Muslim, Book #1 Iman, Hadees #1)

Iman was defined by the Holy Prophet (pbuh) as:

- That you affirm your faith in Allah,
- in His Angels,
- in His Books,
- in His Apostles,
- in the Day of Judgment, and
- you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil.

And Islam was defined as:

- to testify (Tawheed),

Definition

- prayers (Salat),
- charity (Zakat),
- to fast in Ramadan,
- pilgrimage (Hajj)

Allah (swt) explained in Quran:

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا
سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

2:285 The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination."

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ
وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

4:136 O you who have believed, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray

In another place, the Prophet (pbuh) defined Iman as: "Faith (الإيمان) has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the, removal of what is injurious from the path: and modesty is the branch of faith", as mentioned earlier.

Here the Prophet (pbuh) expanded the definition of Iman to include all what encompasses in practical Islam. Thus, he included all the actions as part of Iman.

Allah (swt) also defined complete Iman as:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ
وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى
الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْفُونَ بَعْدَهُمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُتَّقُونَ

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous" [al-baqara 2:177].

These definitions are more for terminologies. Otherwise both Islam and Iman are intertwined, as practically essence of belief at heart produces an obvious outward action, i.e. if some one believes he is thirsty then he will drink water, otherwise he is not really thirsty.

Bases of Iman are six

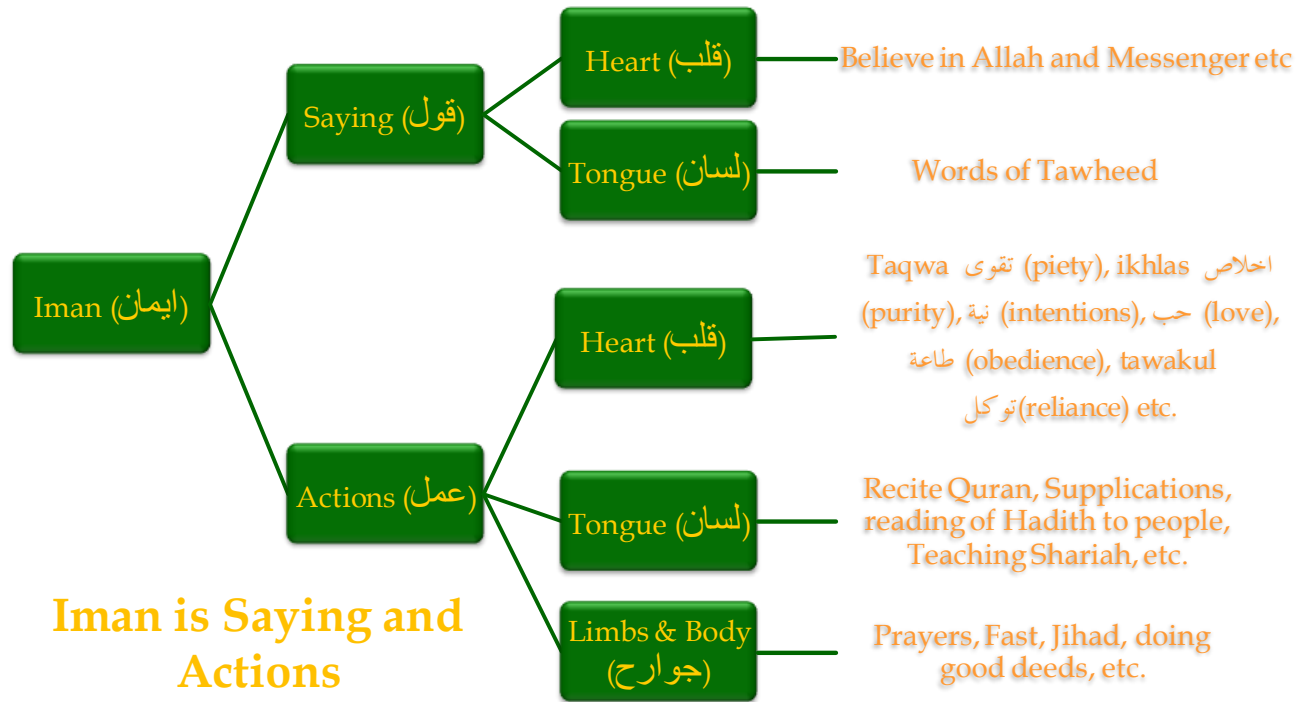
1. Believe in Allah, Tawheed
2. Believe in His Angles
3. Believe in His Messengers
4. Believe in His Books
5. Believe in Qadar of Allah, that Allah has power over good or bad
6. Believe in Judgment Day

and they are the foundations and principles with which all messengers were sent. The Iman (faith) of any person is incomplete without believing in these six, and if some denies any of these he stands outside the boundaries of faith.

Iman is “saying” and “action”

Iman “إيمان” is both, first “قول” - saying then “عمل” - action.

- “قول” - Saying in the sense of believing at heart or saying it with tongue, like proclaiming “لا إله إلا الله”.
- “التصديق” - The Saying of heart can be understood from the verse - وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ - “And the one who has brought the truth and [they who] believed in it - those are the righteous”^[39:33].
- Saying of tongue is testifying that “there is no god but Allah” and all that goes with it. As Allah (swt) said, وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ - “I have believed in what Allah has revealed of the Quran”^[42:15]
- “عمل” - Action in the sense of both at heart and by limbs. The action of heart includes intention and piety, while the action of limbs would be helping in good cause and refraining from bad.
 - Action of heart can be defined as Taqwa تقوى (piety), ikhlas إخلاص (purity), نية (intentions), حب (love), طاعة (obedience), tawakul توكل (reliance) etc. As Prophet (pbuh) said, بالنية بالنية - “The reward of deeds depends upon the intention”^[Sahih Bukhari, Book 2:51]. Or as Allah (swt) said: وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ - “And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah.”^[al-baqara 2:165]
 - Action of tongue is to recite Quran, supplications or reading of Hadith to people. Action of limb is praying, fasting, zakat, jihad, doing good deeds, stopping injustice etc.



Majority of Imams agreed on the definition that Iman is saying and action, including Malik, Shafie, and Ahmed. However, Imam Abu Hanifa slightly differed from majority on the definition of Iman. Abu Hanifa regarded believing to be part (ركن) of Iman, and acting (عمل) upon them is “mandatory” or “obligatory” (شرط).

Although their definitions are merely a theological debate, the end result is same. i.e. actions must accompany believes. The difference in Ahnaaf is that they see “actions” as outside the definition of Iman. But the fact remains that both of them regarded actions as mandatory, and all the punishment and reward is based on these actions.

All agrees that there are certain actions that must be done and there are certain actions that must be refrained from in order to find success in Day of Judgment, and that “خلود في النار” (staying out of hellfire) mandates righteous actions.

One of the sects that deviated from this definition is Murjia (مرجئة) sect. The word Murja’ee comes from “Irajah” means to delay. They say Iman is only “saying” and action is not necessary. Hence, if one says it from the tongue and yet do not practice it ever --- it is considered enough to be defined as Iman. It is commonly said that Murjia is the mudhab (مذهب) of Kings who says the Kalima from tongue but takes no action.

Outward actions attest the inward Iman

A minimum level of action is necessary to attest the level of Iman that can save a person from Hell fire. A complete inaction simply means no Iman exists in the heart.

Ibn Taymiyah said that there is consensus amongst Muslims that whoever doesn't testify faith (by saying testimony of faith) is not a believer, but there is difference of opinion on leaving four mandatory actions (Salah, Zakat, Sawm, Hajj). Whereas when we say that Ahlus-Sunnah agreed that a sinner cannot be declared non-believer we mean that sins like adultery, drinking alcohol, otherwise declaring non-believer for the fundamental actions (leaving four mandatory actions) have known difference of opinions [al-Iman].

This refers to Khawariji (خوارج) and Mutazilah (معتزلة) who says all actions are part of Iman, and leaving any action mean loss of Iman, and doing a major sin take one out of Iman. Mutazilah said it on the basis that Iman is saying/action but it remains constant and no increase/decrease can occur in Iman. This led them to assert that any reduction in 'action' will in turn result in reduction in 'Iman'. That is why they declared a sinner will remain in hell for ever, and Khawariji declared such as non-believer.

Murjia (مرجئة) and Jahmiyah (جهمية) said that all 'actions' are outside 'Iman' and they are obligatory (شرط) for completion of Iman, however, none of them called it mandatory for the health of Iman. While Murja'ee insists that Iman is just attestation at heart and no action is necessary.

Ahlu-Sunnah (اهل السنة) said that Iman is 'sayings' and 'actions', and that absence of certain 'actions' completely wipe out Iman, such as the basic four (Salah, Zakat, Sawm, Hajj).

Ibn Taymiyah said in Al-Iman, that “اعمال” actions themselves are not the foundation of Deen (or اصل الدين) but they provide evidence for it. They (actions) attest existence of Iman at heart. A complete inaction represents no Iman at heart, as it is not possible that a person believed in Allah (swt) and held the right aqeeda (belief) and then he/she never followed any commandment from Allah (swt).

Imam Shatbi (امام شاطبي) said in al-muwafiqat that this is why the Shariah has stipulated that the outward actions (ظاهر) are attestation of inward belief (باطن). If outward action (ظاهر) is incorrect, then the same will be assumed for inward belief (باطن). The same principle is applied in Fiqh, and worldly dealings and experiences also suggest same²¹.

Hence, to attest that Iman is rooted in heart one has to observe mandatory actions (واجبات), this gives evidence that this person has at least the level of Iman necessary to save him from hell fire. But if a person completely does not observe mandatory actions (واجبات) then it gives evidence that he doesn't even have lowest level of Iman.

Iman “increases” and “decreases”

Iman increases by doing good deeds and following commands of Allah (swt), while decreases by doing bad deeds or sins. As salaf said “يزيد بالطاعة و ينقص بالمعصية”. Ibn Taymiyah said in his book “Iman” that various verses of Quran and Hadith suggest that Iman increases and decreases²².

Allah (swt) said:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

8:2 The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely

²¹ Haqeeqat ul Iman - Chapter 2 - Dr Tariq AbdelHaleem

²² Book of Emaan, Ibn Taymiyah (English Trans, ISBN 1-874263-6505)

Iman “increases” and “decreases”

Also, Quran 2:173. 48:4. Also the Prophet’s hadith that Iman has more than 70 branches (as mentioned earlier). Also,

أول من بدأ بالخطبة يوم العيد قبل الصلاة مروان فقام إليه رجل فقال الصلاة قبل الخطبة فقال قد ترك ما هنالك فقال أبو سعيد أما عن طارق بن شهاب وهذا حديث أبي بكر قال هذا فقد قضى ما عليه سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول من رأى منكم منكراً فليغيره بيده فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه فإن لم يستطع فبقلمه وذلك أضعف الإيمان

The Prophet said: “He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith.” (Sahih Muslim, Book 1 Iman, #79)

And there are numerous verses of Quran and Hadith to that extend.

Hanafis disagreed with majority of Ahlu-Sunnah that Iman increase and decrease, as they considered action to be outside Iman (see our earlier explanation). Iman at-Tahaawee said in his book Al-Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah: “Eman (Faith) is, at base, same for everyone, but the superiority of some over others is due to their fair and awareness of Allah, opposition to their own desires, and their choosing what is more pleasing to Allah”²³. However, the literal meaning of Quranic verses and various traditions of the Prophet (pbuh) seems to suggest that Iman increases and decreases.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ

48:4 It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith.

What is more important that we pay attention to what causes Iman to decrease and avoid it, and learn what increases the Iman and adopt it. The main reason for understanding the increase and decrease in Iman is to identify the minimum level of Iman that is needed to protect ourselves from hellfire.

Also, the Murja’ee (مرجع) sect said the Imaan doesn’t increase or decrease and its constant in nature, which perhaps goes well with their definition of Iman, i.e. Iman is merely saying it from tongue and no actions is needed. While the Khawarij (خوارج) said the same as Murja’ee but adds that leaving any part of Iman makes the person Kafir, or non-believer.

Ibn Taymiyah said that the level of Iman for everyone doesn’t stay the same as constant. i.e. it increases or decreases.

Some of the reasons that Iman can increase or decrease can be classified as following:

- **Knowledge:** A person may not be aware of a certain aspect of Deen and thus he did not practice this aspect. However, once it came to his knowledge he practiced it.

Allah (swt) said: **إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ** - “Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge”^[35:28]

وَأِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ - “And when they hear what

²³ Sharh al-Aqeedah at-Tahaawiyah

has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, "Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses"^[5:83].

- **Deeds:** The iman will increase with the good deeds. As the certainty grows towards the understanding of Deen his faith also grows stronger that leads him to increase his good deeds. He may do more charity, or additional prayers. He may start to educate himself in matter of deen to the next level. Similarly, on the downside a person may join company of bad friends; they may influence him to do bad deeds, waste his time in wasteful activities, do gambling, or drink alcohol, hence reducing his iman by committing to bad deeds.

Three levels of Iman

Hence, the Iman can be categorized in three levels:

- Comprehensive Iman - الايمان المجمل
- Obligatory / Detailed Iman - الايمان الواجب
- Complete Iman - الايمان الكامل

Comprehensive Iman – الايمان المجمل

This can be defined as the core of Islam and it's believes, which is Tawheed. Generally means to believe in the "Message" of Allah that He send through his Prophet, without any hesitation or ambiguity.

There can be no concession at this level of Iman. i.e. one must believe that Allah exists, and Allah is one and the He is the Creator. Or for example, Allah doesn't beget and he was no begotten. This is the concept of Tawheed and other Islamic believes.

These are core believes, and If a Muslim does not understand it or reject them and does not believe in them fully, then he is out of Islam. This does not include the Iman of detailed Shariah (as defined below) that may not be known yet (i.e to say at the time of Prophet the revelation was still coming, while the concept of Tawheed was firmly understood), but it definitely includes intention of believing in any law or faith that may become known to the person at later time.

This level of Iman does not increase or decrease. It is constant. And it must not be mixed with other obligatory duties, like prayers and fasting, which if one misses that mean he lacked the Iman at the time, but still remains a Muslim.

However, if one says he believes that Allah is one and He is the Creator, but he is not sure if Allah has children or not... then he certainly has broken the testimony, he is not to be considered in the Realm of Islam.

Following summarizes the Iman in beautiful words:

اليمان المجمل

آمنت بالله كما هو بأسمائه وصفاته و قبلت جميع أحكامه

I believe in Allah (as He is) with all His names and attributes and I accept all his commands.

اليمان المفصل

آمنت بالله و ملائكته و كتبه و رسوله و اليوم الاخرة والقدر خيره و شره من الله تعالى والبعث بعد الموت

I believe in Allah, and His Angels, in His books, in His messengers, in the last day and in the fact that everything good or bad is decided by Allah, the Almighty, and in the life after death.

Obligatory / Detailed Iman – الايمان الواجب

Following all obligatory duties as defined in Shariah Law and observing obligatory duties (واجب) while refraining from prohibited (حرام). These obligatory duties includes (but not limited to), establishing Salah (prayers), paying Zakat, fasting in Ramadan, performing Hajj (Pilgrimage), or be good to your parents and neighbors etc.

This level of Iman states that a Muslim,

- Do their obligatory duties (واجب) and
- Refrain from prohibited things (حرام).

The Obligatory duties may sometimes differ between Muslims. For instance, if one is rich and he has the means (اسباب) and strength to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) then performing Hajj becomes the part of his Obligatory Iman.

Obligatory Iman may increase or decrease, depending on individual's situation. A Muslim who fulfills all his obligations with (خشوع و خضوع) passion can certainly raise the level of his Iman.

Complete Iman – الايمان الكامل

This defines a complete Iman, that is, following all obligatory duties (واجب), and non-obligatory duties (مندوب و نوافل), and refraining from prohibited action (حرام) and avoiding hated (مكروه). The Prophets achieved it. The Companions (صحابه) came close. This can certainly be achieved with deep and thorough understanding of Islam and staying steadfast with it.

According to Ahlul-Sunnah the Detailed Iman (الايمان الواجب) and Complete Iman (الايمان الكامل) increases and decreases, but the Comprehensive Iman (الايمان المحمل) remains constant.

Three components of Iman

Now since we established that Iman is sayings and actions, and that it increase and decrease, we will identify the main components of Iman. Iman can be further explained as²⁴:

²⁴ Haqeeqat ul Iman, Chapter 3 – Dr Tariq AbdelHaleem



Components of Iman

معرفة - Knowledge:

- **معرفة - Knowledge:** No one can understand a subject until he has prior knowledge of it. How can a person testify on statement when he is not aware of it and does not know its details? Thus, one has to know and learn Tawheed first before he can believe in it.

التصديق – Attesting

- **التصديق – Attesting:** Means to attest that knowledge to believe in Allah and all His commands, Messengers and Guidance.

Some people mistakenly believed that Islam is only about attesting (that is saying shadateen شهادتين), and they further assumed that if a person brings you a news and if you say this news is truth, then attestation (تصديقي) is achieved. And they applied same understanding to Shariah meaning of attesting Iman.

The fact of matter is that just attestation doesn't provide proof for established Iman, as we stated previously, the actions must follow the sayings.

التزام – means commitment

- **التزام – means commitment:** or (أو الإقرار أو الطاعة و الانقياد) This is the most important component of Iman that is needed to save from Hell fire (خلود في النار). By having the Knowledge (of Deen) and attesting it that it's from Allah does not establish any one as believer. The attestation must be followed by serious commitments and actions.

A person believed in Allah (swt), accepted Allah (swt) as the creator and law maker, he then accepted Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) as his last messenger and admitted to His Shariah, and he doesn't reject anything from this Shariah and Deen. Then he show serious commitment by following and practicing it.

This can be further divided into two areas (see above figure 3a/3b):

- **Establish Commitment and Basic pillars:** Means that serious commitment to Deen of Allah is establish that will eventually force the heart to carry out Islamic Duties. These include believing *Tawheed* and also include complete rejection of *Kufr*, *Shirk* and *Taghoot*. Some *Madhabs* consider doing *Salat* as part of commitment. Abu Bakar Siddique included Zakat also in it.
 - This is a minimum requirement for establishment of Iman and to stay in the fold of Islam.
- **Perform Islamic Obligations and Actions:** This is where *Iman* increases and decreases. By doing more good deeds, following the *Sunnah*, and avoiding more sins *Iman* increases and vice versa. These are the things that are part of Obligatory Iman (الايمان الواجب).

Thus, one must full fill basic requirements of *Iman* to have knowledge, then attest it, and then to have serious commitment to act upon it.

II. DIFFERENCES OF AHLUS-SUNNAH WITH OTHER SECTS

Murjia (مرجئة):

MURJIA (مرجئة): believes that Iman only includes knowing (المعرفة) and testifying (التصديق). Declaring shahada (شها) - testimony of faith) is enough to have Iman. They do not consider commitment (الالتزام) to be part of Iman.

Khawarij (خوارج):

KHAWARIJ (خوارج): believes that Iman includes knowing (المعرفة) , testifying (التصديق) and commitment (الالتزام). The commitment includes both the intentions and actually carrying out all the obligatory duties. According to them any one missing out on any obligatory duty is out of Islam, and becomes non-believer. That is to say that if the Muslim is not perfect, he is not a Muslim, and as soon as he commits any sins, he becomes non-believer.

Ahlu-sunnah (اهل السنة):

AHLUS-SUNNAH (اهل السنة): believes that minimum level of Iman is knowing it (المعرفة), testify it (التصديق) and have commitment to perform all duties as required by Shariah, to save from hell fire. And this commitment is serious enough that forces him to make action to fulfill his obligatory duties. As a complete inaction mean no level of Iman exists. And if a Muslim fails to perform some of his obligatory duties, the fact is that he remains a Muslim, even though that he will be judged by Allah for not full filling them. And the Obligatory Iman may increase or decrease depending upon the individual's situation and his heart and only Allah alone can judge his situation.

Chart explains difference in understanding of Iman:

	Ahlu Sunnah	Murjia	Khawarij
Iman is only in heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, it includes knowing, testifying, and commitment to act upon it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, only Murjia claims this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No.
Iman is saying and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, they say that iman means to know, to testify and to have serious commitment that forces an action. This also includes rejecting shirk, kufr and thaghoot. Some included Salat as part of Iman. Abu Bakar included Zakat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, they saying Iman is only in heart, no action is necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes. But they added that it includes all actions, and missing one action destroys the whole of Iman.
Iman increase or decrease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, they say by doing more good deeds and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, since actions are not part of Iman, it is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No, they say Iman is constant and leaving any

Rejection of Murjia (مرجئة)

	<p>increasing knowledge can increase level of Iman.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A complete non-action means no Iman exists. 	always constant.	action will destroy whole iman.
No Sin can harm iman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No, sin can reduce level of Iman. ■ Also Shirk is unforgivable sin, and actions of Kufr may take one out of Iman, especially if they are committed by declaring them as allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Yes. They say Allah forgive every sin, so no sin can harm Iman. So no matter what sin is committed, person remains in fold of Islam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No, any sin harms Iman. Hence, they often label sinners as non-believer.

Then whoever believe that a person with correct belief (عقيدة) is to be considered Muslims (that he doesn't have to do actions), then such is definition of Murjia (مرجئة) sect. They believed Iman to be just simply belief in heart (اعتقاد) and did not count action to be part of it.

Whereas Khawarij (خوارج) declared the sinner as non-believer. They gave sin (معصية) status of kufr (كفر). The truth of the matter is, if a sinner involved in sinful deeds, he remains in the fold of Islam, except that if he declare the sin as allowed (حلال). However, if he considered the sin to be prohibited (حرام), but still engaged in it due to his uncontrolled desire, he is still considered within the fold of Islam.

Here we note that sin can be of two types, either it's a sin (أعمال المعصية) or it's an action of Kufr (أعمال الكفر). Ahlus-Sunnah maintained the difference between them. They said to declare one non-believer (كافر) either the person has corrupt believes (that makes his disbeliever) or he engaged in actions of Kufr, because his action attest his belief in heart. However, they did not considered actions of sin (أعمال المعصية) as Kufr, until the person engage in sinful deed considered it to be prohibited (حرام). Yet if the person declares the sin to be allowed (حلال), then he engaged in altering the Shariah of Allah (swt) and hence considered disbeliever (كافر). These involve sins as adultery, drinking alcohol, gambling etc.

Rejection of Murjia (مرجئة)

Murjia (مرجئة) sect is concentration around three main points²⁵:

- **Belief in heart (اعتقاد):** Firstly, the understanding of Iman, that they take it as belief in heart (اعتقاد) without any necessity to do actions. Ibn Taymiyah identified three types of Murjia (مرجئة):
 - Those who say Iman is only attestation at heart.
 - Those who say Iman is only verbal endorsement from tongue. These are mainly Karamia (الكرامية).

²⁵ Haqeeqat ul Iman, Dr Tariq AbdelHaleem

Rejection of Murjia (مرجئة)

- Those who say Iman is attestation at heart and also verbal endorsement from tongue. These is famous in Ashaira (الأشاعرة),

We have already discuss Ahlus-Sunnah position on these, that Iman is saying and action, and it increase and decrease, and that it include commitment (السترام) that forces an action to fulfill Islamic obligations.

- Secondly, who ever say “لا إله إلا الله” (there is no god but Allah) from tongue he is believer and he will enter paradise. They based it on hadith like, الجنة، ذلك على ذلك إلا دخل الجنة، - “There is none among the bondsmen who affirmed his faith in La illaha ill-Allah there is no God but Allah) and died in this state and did not enter Paradise” [Sahih Muslim, Book 1, #172]

There are various hadith with similar topic which they used to make their belief that by proclaiming these words from their tongue they will be saved from hell fire, and they do not have to follow them with any other action.

- Thirdly, if one has Iman, no sin can harm it. They based it on verses in which Allah’s forgiveness is mentioned, such as: - “إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ” - “Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful” [5:39]

“من قال أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله”

Some of the Hadith that said whoever said ‘there is no god but Allah’ enters paradise are below:

- “It is narrated on the authority of Uthman that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said. He who died knowing (fully well) that there is no god but Allah entered Paradise” [Sahih Muslim, Book 1 Iman, # 39]
- حدثنا عبادة بن الصامت قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من قال أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأن محمدا عبده ورسوله وأن عيسى عبد الله وابن أمته وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم وروح منه وأن الجنة حق وأن النار حق أدخله الله من أي أبواب الجنة الثمانية شاء - “It is narrated on the authority of Ubadah b. Samit that the messenger of Allah (pbuh) observed: He who said: "There is no god but Allah, He is One and there is no associate with Him, that Muhammad is his servant and His messenger, that Christ is servant and the son of His slave-girl and he (Christ) His word which He communicated to Mary and is His Spirit, that Paradise is a fact and Hell is a fact," Allah would make him (he who affirms these truths) enter Paradise through any one of its eight doors which he would like.” [Sahih Muslim, Book 1 Iman, #43. Also similar in Sahih Bukhari]
- عن عبادة بن الصامت أنه قال ---- سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول من شهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله حرم الله عليه النار - “On the authority of Ubadah b. Samit who said. ---- I heard the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) say: He who testifies that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, Allah would prohibit the fire of Hell for him.” [Sahih Muslim, Book 1 Iman, #45]
- حدثنا أنس بن مالك عن معاذ بن جبل قال كنت ردف النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ليس بيني وبينه إلا مؤخرة الرحل فقال يا معاذ بن جبل قلت لبيك رسول الله وسعديك ثم سار ساعة ثم قال يا معاذ بن جبل قلت لبيك رسول الله وسعديك قال هل تدري ما حق الله على العباد قال قلت لله ورسوله أعلم قال فإن حق الله على العباد أن يعبدوه ولا يشركوا به شيئا ثم سار ساعة

- قال يا معاذ بن جبل قلت لبيك رسول الله وسعديك قال هل تدري ما حق العباد على الله إذا فعلوا ذلك قال قلت الله ورسوله أعلم قال أن لا يعذبهم
 "It is reported on the authority of Anas b. Malik that the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) addressed Mu'adh b. Jabal as he was riding behind him to which he replied: At thy beck and call, and at thy pleasure, Messenger of Allah. He again called out: Mu'adh, to which he (again) replied: At thy beck and call, and at thy pleasure. He (the Holy Prophet) addressed him (again): Mu'adh, to which he replied: At thy beck and call, and at thy pleasure, Messenger of Allah. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) observed: If anyone testifies (sincerely from his heart) that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His bondsman and His messenger, Allah immuned him from Hell. He (Mu'adh) said: Messenger of Allah, should I not then inform people of it, so that they may be of good cheer? He replied: Then they would trust in it alone. Mu'adh told about it at the time of his death, to avoid sinning." [Sahih Muslim, Book 1 Iman, #51. Similar in Sahih Bukhari]

- عن معاذ بن جبل قال كنت ردف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على حمار يقال له عفير قال فقال يا معاذ تدري ما حق الله على العباد وما حق العباد على الله قال قلت الله ورسوله أعلم قال فإن حق الله على العباد أن يعبدوا الله ولا يشركوا به شيئاً وحق العباد على الله عز وجل أن لا يعذب
 "It is narrated on the authority of Mu'adh b. Jabal that he observed: I was riding behind the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on donkey known as 'Ufair. He (Mu'adh) observed: He (the Holy Prophet) said: Mu'adh, do you know what right has Allah over His bondsmen and what right have His bondsmen over Him? Mu'adh added: I replied: Allah and his Messenger know best. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) remarked: The right of Allah over His bondsmen is that they should worship Allah and should not associate anything with Him, and the right of His bondsmen over Allah, Glorious and Sublime, is that He does not punish him who associates not anything with Him. He (Mu'adh) added: I said to the Messenger of Allah: Should I then give the tidings to the people? He (the Holy Prophet) said: Do not tell them this good news, for they would trust in it alone." [Sahih -]

Explanation of Salaf

Ahlu-Sunnah looked at these hadith beyond its obvious meanings and analyzed with all other hadith and verses of Quran to deduce the comprehensive meanings of these injunctions.

- Iman Shatbi explained in al-muwafiqat that hadith is the exegesis of Quran. Hence, it should be looked same way as Quran with rules of what came first and what came second (تقديم و تاخير) to identify Naskh and Mansookh (ناسخ و منسوخ - repeal and replacement of Devine Laws)[see page Error! Reference source not found.Error! Bookmark not defined.]. Similar to Quran, hadith too had traditions from earlier time before specific sharie ruling came.
- Then in these hadith, there are those that say whoever died and "knew" there is no god but Allah, and those that say whoever witness "with conviction" there is no god but Allah then Allah will prohibit hell fire on him. If one put all of these Hadith together, they will make a list of various rules of its own. Hence, Ahlu-Sunnah doesn't just look at obvious meaning of one hadith or few hadith, but they take into consideration all other hadiths, verses of Quran and apply rules of what came first and what came after to understand the hadith.
- One group of Salaf held the opinion that these hadith are from time of beginning of Islam when Shariah wasn't completely descended and focus was more on Tawheed. Hence, if someone died in this time but he did not pray or either fast (as those commands were not descended at that time), then was no sin on him. Similarly, if he consumed alcohol and died before the ruling for prohibiting alcohol came, then there was no sin on him as he was not obligated (مكلف) to do so.

- Another group of Salaf including (etc زهروي، سفيان سوري) mentioned by Hafiz Manzari (in ترغيب و ترهيب) held the opinion that these hadith were mainly from time of beginning of Islam when invitation to Islam was only for accepting Tawheed, but when the detail Shariah rulings came, these were repealed (منسوخ). Another group of salaf held opinion that these were not repealed and it includes all branches of deen and obligations as part of saying shadatain (testimony of faith).

جمع بين اطراف و عدلة

One of the most important principles (اصول) is “جمع بين اطراف و عدلة” that we collect all evidences around it and then do the analysis. Hence, while looking at the hadith individually, one need to observe hundreds of other Prophetic traditions that explains these hadith as well. Once we collect all of them together a comprehensive picture will emerge and it will allow us to deduce the correct understanding. Some other hadiths are below:

- Hadith that relating to founding principle of Islam where Prophet has said that Islam is based on 5 pillars, e.g.

In hadith Ibn Umar, Prophet (pbuh) defined Islam is based on 5 pillars, “1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle. 2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly. 3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity). 4. To perform Hajj. (i.e. Pilgrimage to Makkah) 5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan.” [See page 30, Sahih Bukhari]

- Same in Sahih Muslim in number of hadiths
 - In Hadith Jibreel Prohphet (pbuh) replied Apostle replied, "To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan". [Sahih Bukhari, See Reference Hadiths.]
 - Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira of Bedouin, and Prophet (pbuh) replied "Worship Allah, and worship none along with Him, offer the (five) prescribed compulsory prayers perfectly, pay the compulsory Zakat, and fast the month of Ramadan." [Sahih Bukhari, See Reference Hadith]
 - In Hadith of Muadh when Prophet (pbuh) sent him to Yemen, he asked him to invite them to Tawheed, then 5 prayers, then zakat. [Sahih Bukhari, See Reference Hadith]

- Then there are number of Hadith where the Prophet (pbuh) has reported Shirk as unforgivable sin, e.g.

- عن أبي الزبير حدثنا جابر بن عبد الله قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول من لقي الله لا يشرك به شيئا دخل الجنة ومن لقيه يشرك به دخل النار - "It is narrated on the authority of Jabir b. Abdullah: I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying: He who met Allah without associating anything with Allah entered Paradise and he who met Him associating (anything) with Him entered Fire." [Sahih Muslim, Book 1, #169]
- قال سمعت أبا ذر يحدث عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال أتاني جبريل عليه السلام فيشترني أنه من مات من أمتك لا يشرك بالله شيئا دخل الجنة قلت وإن زنى وإن سرق قال وإن زنى وإن سرق "I heard Abu Dharr narrating it from the Apostle (pbuh) that he observed: Gabriel came to me and gave me the tidings: Verily he who died amongst your Ummah

Rejection of Murjia (مرجئة)

without associating anything with Allah would enter Paradise. I (the narrator) said: Even if he committed adultery and theft. He (the Holy Prophet) said: (Yes), even if he committed adultery and theft." [Sahih Muslim, Book 1, #171]

■ Then there are number of other Hadith, e.g.

- أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا تدخلون الجنة حتى تؤمنوا ولا تؤمنوا حتى تحابوا أولا أدلكم على شيء إذا فعلتموه تحاببتم
Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) observed: You shall not enter Paradise so long as you do not affirm belief (in all those things which are the articles of faith) and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I not direct you to a thing which, if you do, will foster love amongst you: (i. e.) give currency to (the practice of paying salutation to one another by saying) as-salamu alaikum". [Sahih Muslim, Book 1, #196]
- عن جده جرير قال قال لي النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في حجة الوداع استنصت الناس ثم قال لا ترجعوا بعدي كفارا يضرب بعضكم رقاب بعض - "It is narrated on the authority of Jarir b. Abdullah that the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) asked him on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage to make the people silent and then said: Do not return to unbelief after me by striking the necks of one another." [Sahih Muslim, Book 1, #124]
- - عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال من حمل علينا السلاح فليس منا ومن غشنا فليس منا
"It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) observed: He who took up arms against us is not of us and he who acted dishonestly towards us is not of us." [Sahih Muslim, Book 1, #182]

■ As a general rule, we can not give preference to one hadith over another. We take all of these hadith collectively and apply (تطبيق) them to deduce (استنباط) the rulings.

■ This collection of hadith and numerous others added the following:

- Worship Allah 'alone'
- Pray prescribed prayers
- Pay compulsory zakat
- Fast the month of Ramadan
- Pilgrimage to Makkah
- Do not do Shirk and do no associate partners to Allah (swt)
- Afirm your believes
- Foster love among each other
- Do not harm or kill each other
- Don't take up arms against other muslims
- Don't be dishonest with other muslims

■ Hence, it becomes evident that affirmation (إقرار) of testimony of faith (شهادتين) is not merely verbal, but in essence it means that one must submit completely to Allah (swt) to worship him alone, and reject all kind of

shirk, and disassociation of other false deities, and accept Tawheed of Allah (swt). i.e. what Allah (swt) meant when he said:

- “So whoever disbelieves in taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it”^[2:256]

Thus, whoever proclaimed “there is no god but Allah” but continued to do shirk and associate partners to Allah (swt) in various aspects then this person never really entered in Islam.

The purpose of affirming (إقرار) from tongue is that this person agrees to reject Taghoot and shirk in order to accept the Tawheed of Allah (swt), and agrees that he will fulfil the commands of Allah (swt). This is no different then any other contract, e.g. if person enters in to contract to buy a car, then he has to pay the money and take ownership of the car, but he never pay and take ownership, then this contract is not executed.

Thus, Allah (swt) said about such people, وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ - “O you who have believed, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn from him while you hear [his order].”^[8:21], إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَكُوَيْلٌ لِّمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا - “And do not be like those who say, "We have heard," while they do not hear”^[8:22], وَاللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ - “Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason (those who do not understand).”^[8:23]

These people say from their tongue that they hear, but they don't obey the order of the Messenger. And Allah (swt) gave us strong instructions to ‘follow’ the guidance of the Prophet (pbuh) that يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ - “O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you...”^[8:24]

- The affirmation (إقرار) from tongue is agreeing to abide by Shariah, and is a sign of entering into Islam. Hence, once a person proclaims then he is a mukalif (مكلف) and the rulings for him will be that of Muslim. As mentioned in Fathul-Bari by Ibn Hajr Asqalani that “whoever affirms the testimony of faith (شهادتين), then he will be given rulings of laws that for Muslims (in this world), and no law of non-believer can be applied on him, until and unless he comits an action that gives evidence of disbelieve”.^[Fathul-Bari p 46]

Understanding the reality of affirmation

In Islam intention (نية) is considered as main driver behind actions. The Prophet (pbuh) said

يقول سمعت عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه على المنبر قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول إنما الأعمال بالنيات وإنما لكل امرئ ما نوى فمن كانت هجرته إلى دينا يصيبها أو إلى امرأة ينكحها فهجرته إلى ما هاجر إليه

Narrated Umar bin Al-Khattab: I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration was for what he emigrated for.

Similarly, the commandments of Shariah are based on completion of affirmation that the affirmation is related to the intention and objective. By uttering words without any firm commitment behind them has no meaning and value. This is proven from vast number of text (نص). Allah (swt) said,

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ

63:1 "When the hypocrites come to you, [O Muhammad], they say, "We testify that you are the Messenger of Allah." And Allah knows that you are His Messenger, and Allah testifies that the hypocrites are liars".

Here the hypocrites already proclaimed the testimony and affirmed (إقرار) their faith, but their hypocrisy was proven from their way of living and their actions and associations. Though they did not reach the level of Kufr (disbelieves) in their dealings, however, their nifaq (نفاق) could not be hidden from the Messenger and the Allah (swt).

Mawdudi²⁶ said regarding this verse, that one should understand that an evidence or witness is composed of two things:

- First, the actual thing to which he bears witness
- Second the concerned person's own believe about the things he bears witness too.

So, we learn that there can be three situations:

- if thing itself is true and if the bearer of witness believes it to be right and true and his belief also correspond to what he says, then he is truthful in every way.
- if thing itself is false and if the bearer of witness believes it to be it to be right and true, then he would be considered truthful as he expressed his belief honestly, and liar in another way because he testified on the false.
- if the thing is true and the bearer of witness says it to be right and true but his own belief is opposed to it, he will be regarded as hypocrite because he is testifying to the right thing, and at the same time his own belief is contrary to what he is saying with the tongue.

Rejection of Khawarij (خوارج)

As we mentioned earlier, that Khawarij (خوارج)²⁷ believes that all actions are part of Iman and the Iman doesn't increase or decrease. Hence, if one part is missed (by either not believing or not performing an action) then entire Iman is wasted. And this person will not be called Mo'min, but he will be called non-believer until he repent.

²⁶ Tafheem, al-Mawdudi.

²⁷Khawarij (الخوارج) are the extreme opposite of المرجيه. The word الخوارج is a plural of خارج (which means departing or outside). The word خارجي means external, outer or foreign. The word خرج means to go out, to depart or to leave. In the context of الخوارج as sect, it means those who left then jammah (as the khawarij left Imam Ali). Khawarij has many names in Islamic History, such as i) الخوارج ii) الحارثية iii) الحرورية iv) الشره v) المارقة vi) النواصب. Imam Ibn Jawzi counted 12 names for الحرورية in his book Talbees Iblis. The word الخوارج is used in following context:

- o In general those who left the Jammah of rightly agreed imam (الامام المتفق و الامام الحق) to be Imam of Muslims.
- o Those who left Imam Ali and became to be known as Khawarij (الخوارج).

It has been said that Dhul-Khuwasira Tamimi (ذوالخويصرة التميمي) was the first Kharji. He put his own opinion based on his desire above the judgment of the Prophet (pbuh). Had he been patient enough, he would've witnessed that the judgment of the Prophet PBUH was the just. Those who followed Dhul-Khuwasira in hasting to judge were same who fought with Imam Ali (ra) and became popularly known as Khawarij (الخوارج). The Khawarij became part of Imam Ali's army even though he didn't accept them. However, when the decision to arbitrate took place between Muawiyah (ra) and Ali (ra), they became angry with Ali (ra). Later, when the decision of arbitrator came against

They also say that the person who commits a sin doesn't have Iman, and is considered non-believer. Because they did not distinguish between actions of disbelief (أعمال كفر) and actions of sins (أعمال معاصي). Because of this they declared a sinner (عاصي) as non-believer (كافر) until he repents. They also disagreed that sins are of two types, i) one that includes Shirk and ii) those that does not include Shirk. This is why they see a sinner as out of fold of Islam.

Daleels of Khawarij

They gave following reason for considering a sinner as non-believer²⁸:

1. They say Allah (swt) included every action as the part of Iman, and all actions are part of core Iman. If one leaves a single action, he eliminates part of Iman which invalidates his Iman all together. They give following evidences:

- “And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits – He will put him into the Fire to abide eternally therein, and he will have a humiliating punishment”^[al-Nisa 4:14]
- “... And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger – then indeed, for him is the fire of Hell; they will abide therein forever”^[al-Jinn 72: 23]
- “Yes, whoever earns evil and his sin has encompassed him – those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally”^[al-Baqra 2:81]

They took sin mentioned in these verses as absolute sin (that involves shirk) and understood “they will remain in hell forever” was because they are non-believer thus they remain in fire forever.

Mawdudi said²⁹ explaining this verse that this does not mean that every sin and act of disobedience will cause on to lieve in Hell for ever, but in view of the context in which this thing has been said, the verse means:: the one who does not accept the invitation to Tawheed given by Allah and His Messenger and does not refrain from polytheism will suffer in Hell for ever.

2. Similarly, they said that Allah (swt) explicitly mentioned that some sinner will remain in hellfire forever, hence, they aught to be non-believers. For instance, Allah (swt) said:

- “But whoever kills a believer intentionally – his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment.”^[al-Nisa 4:93]

3. The Prophet (pbuh) also mentioned number of sins and called these actions as Kufr (disbelief). Such as:

Ali (ra), The Khwarij parted with him. Ali (ra) later fought with them and destroyed their fitna all together but few of them managed to escape the justice

²⁸ Based on discussion on Khawarij in Haqeeqat ul Iman, Dr Tariq Abdelhaleem

²⁹ Tafheem verse 72:23, al-Mawdudi

- No person who claimed knowingly anyone else as his father besides (his own) committed nothing but infidelity. [Sahih Muslim, Book 1:118-121]
- Two (things) are found among men which are tantamount to unbelief: slandering one's lineage and lamentation on the dead. [Sahih Muslim, Book 1:128]
- Slave who fled the master is non-believer until he returns. [Sahih Muslim, Book 1:129]
- Do not return to unbelief after me by striking the necks of one another. [Sahih Muslim, Book 1:124]
- Abusing a Muslim is an outrage and fighting against him is unbelief. [Sahih Muslim, Book 1:122]
- When a man calls his brother an unbeliever, it returns (at least) to one of them. [Sahih Muslim, Book 1:116]

4. Similarly, Prophet (pbuh) called people who commit certain sins as non-believers. Such as:

- The fornicator who fornicates is not a believer so long as he commits it and no thief who steals is a believer as long as he commits theft, and no drunkard who drinks wine is a believer as long as he drinks it. [Sahih Muslim, Book 1:104]
- The took these sayings of Prophet (pbuh) this person is a Kafir (disbeliever) with same level as the one cursed by Allah (swt), as He said: *فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ* - "so the curse of Allah will be upon the disbelievers" [al-Baqara 2:89].
- Then they expanded on this and say even the Prophets (as) can do act of Kufr, and they claim that Adam (as) eating from tree was the act of Kufr, but he repented later on. As Quran said, *وَعَصَى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى* - "And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred." [Ta-ha 20:121] (نعوذ بالله من ذلك)

They said all verses in Quran proofs that without asking for repentance the sins can never be forgiven by Allah (swt); hence this sinner will enter the hellfire if he doesn't repent. Thus, they added if the person doesn't repent from his sin, then this makes the sinner equal to a disbeliever, and he will stay in hellfire for ever.

Explanation of Salaf

Contrary to this Ahlus Sunnah consider sinners to be given punishment by Allah (swt) for their sins (if Allah wills so), and that they will remain in Hellfire for a certain period of time. After the punishment is over, those who did not commit shirk against Allah (swt) will be taken out.

Khawarij made error in their conclusion of understanding the sin and kufr. Though they believe that those leave the jamat (جماعة) of Muslims is disbeliever, as the Prophet (pbuh) said those who leave the jamat took himself out of fold of Islam until he returns. But they added that jamat here means their jamat, and whoever leaves their jamat is not a believer. Hence, they say everyone is disbeliever except their jamat. This is merely their opinion and contrary to the hadith and teachings of the Prophet (pbuh).

Alhus-Sunnah explanation of Iman that Iman is saying and actions, and the relationship between action and saying is such that these actions provide unambiguous evidence of Iman. And minimum amount of action that is needed to prove unambiguous Iman is mandatory.

Also, that knowledge adds to the level of Iman and helps in reducing sins. Meaning that if person learns more about Islam and acts upon it to build good deeds it increases the level of his Iman, and subsequently reduces his desire to do sins. Doing sins doesn't eliminate Iman, but that it reduces the level of Iman.

See our earlier explanation of Iman in this topic.

Refutation of Khawarij saying Iman is composite and leaving one element means its not Iman

Khawarij said Iman is a composite or compound (مُرَكَّب) including all elements, and if one element is removed then it is not Iman³⁰. They gave example of lemon juice (السكرنجين) and said if one element is removed then it's not considered compound. Ibn Taymiyah refuted them and said their analogy of Iman as compound is incorrect, in fact, Iman is comprehensive matter (الجامعة الأمور), meaning it includes various characteristics (صفات) but it is not a composite. Then he explained that the reality of comprehensive is that it comprises of various matters (أمور) either they are (الأعراض) or (الأعيان)³¹. When some of the elements are abated (زائل) then some times the comprehensive nature ceased and some times it does not. Abatement of some elements doesn't not necessary diminish all of them. They gave example of ten or lemon juice. Their first example of ten (if one is lost out of "ten" then it's not ten), in reality, if one is lost out of ten, then nine still remains and they are not lost. Similarly, if one element of compound is lost it doesn't mean that other elements are also lost. What can be said in this context that name given to this compound is no longer valid and it can take another name, but the other elements are still existant (That is why making similarities of Iman to compound مُرَكَّب is a wrong example. Whereas Iman is really comprehensive consists of various matters الجامعة الأمور, and if one matter is abated others are still valid). This is to say if a tree loses some of its branches -- it is still called a Tree. Or if a human or animal loses any of their limbs -- they are still called same.

Importantly, the Prophet (pbuh) said that Iman has over seventy branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the, removal of what is injurious from the path: and modesty is the branch of faith. (Sahih Muslim, see page 30). Now if some one did not remove the hazard from the path doesn't mean he lost his entire Iman, even though that it is considered as disobedience.

What we say is abating some elements from composite, doesn't abate other elements, and what we can agree is that by abating some element the nature of composite still remains although its nature has changed. In other words, if some one doesn't do certain obligatory duties his Iman is certainly decreased, however, it will still be called Iman and it still valid until he does some act of disbelief or completely abates all practice all together.

This discussion can be further splitted into three points³²:

³⁰ This is the argument of Khawarij that if one element of Iman is lost then the entire Iman is destroyed, hence such a person is not a Muslim.

³¹ الأعيان: is what you can see from the physical world (from عين what you see by the eye). الأعراض: is like the attributes and any thing that can be attached to الأعيان that is not part of it (عرض is what comes and goes - temporary)

³² Based on Haqeeqat ul Iman, Dr Tariq AbdelHaleem

1. If certain elements are abated, can this still be called with original name? This is based on Khawarij example of ten or lemon juice that if some elements are abated the composite is not same. (What they tried to say is if some elements of Iman are not there then it is not called Iman). The answer really depends on nature of things.
 - If the elements are of same kind or nature, then removing some of them still doesn't change the name they are given. For instance, if some water is removed from bucket of water, it is still called water, or if some wheat is removed from sack of wheat, it is still called wheat.
 - Also, some composite that are made up of other elements; if some elements are removed they are still called with same name. For instance, if part of mountain is caved, it is still called mountain. Or if some parts of city or town are demolished, they are still called city. Or if a limb of animal is broken and removed, it is still called animal.
 - Similarly, Iman is comprehensive matter as Prophet (pbuh) said it has more than seventy branches and lowest of them is to remove hazard from path. So if hazard from path is abated, it is still called Iman.
2. If some elements are abated, did it dissolve the entire composite (that is to say if some element of Iman is missed, does it invalidate the entire Iman?).
 - Again, we go back to Iman. Iman is comprehensive and includes various matters. Hence, if some elements are missing does it invalidate Iman? This depends on the nature of the element. For instance, if this element was part of Comprehensive Iman (الايما ن المجلل), then it will invalidate the Iman, such as if some one doesn't believe that Allah (swt) doesn't beget, then Iman is invalidated. However, on the other hand fasting is part of obligatory Iman (الايما ن الواجب) and if one doesn't fast, it certainly reduces the level of his Iman, but doesn't invalidate it.

Another important point is that if some one commits an act of disbelief then it also invalidates Iman. As we mentioned earlier, Iman includes both doing "actions" (of Shariah) and refraining from "actions" (of Kufr).

- Similarly, there are detail inscriptions in Hajj or Salah. There are some elements if they are missed, it invalidates these rituals, but there are others that don't. For instance, in fiqh of abu hanifa or malik, if some elements of salah are missed, they can be compensated by doing additional prostration at end of prayers (سجود السهو), however, if mandatory element (واجب) is missed, then salah is invalidated and must be repated.

Again, if some one did not do the salah in his entire life, then Companions of Prophet considered this person without Iman.

Here we can conclude that there is difference in comparing elements of physical things versus the detailed elements of Shariah inscriptions. Iman is not constant for every mukalif (مكلف), and it depends on time and situation.

- It depends how much Shariah has reached the mukalif (مكلف). In early Makkian life it was enough to testify that Allah is one and Mohammad is the Prophet, but later commands of Salah and fasting came. So, had he died at the time drinking alcohol then it was acceptable. However, in Madinian life it wasn't enough to just testify, by then details inscription of Shariah appeared, and Iman expanded to remainder of Shariah. Hence, it was compulsory for mukalif (مكلف) to observe rest of Shariah.
- It depends on physical, financial and other aspect of mukalif (مكلف). So, if some one is sick he doesn't have to fast in Ramadan, he can do later. Or if some one can not afford, he doesn't have to do hajj. Hence, the obligation (واجب) is not constant and it depends on the situation of mukalif (مكلف).

Hence, we can conclude that if mukalif (مكلف) has obligation based on his situation, then his Iman is also what is obligated (واجب) on him.

3. There are situations when some elements (of Iman or Shariah) are requisite for other elements, and other situations they are not requisite.

- For instance, believe in parts of Book (Quran) and rejecting parts, or believe in some Messengers (of Allah) and reject other. In this instance, believing in 'all' elements is a requisite for validity of Iman.

- - الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا
"Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His messengers and say, "We believe in some and disbelieve in others," and wish to adopt a way in between. Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. ." [Nisa 4:150-151]

Now, if some believed that Moses and Jesus are Prophet of Allah (swt), but he refused to accept Mohammad (pbuh) as the Prophet of Allah, then he is a disbeliever, as the requisite for belief is to believe in 'all' Prophets of Allah (swt).

Similarly, believing in parts of Quran and rejecting parts of Quran, also takes one out of fold of Islam, as it is a requisite to believe in entire Quran. [Al-Baqara, 2:85]

- Then there are situation when elements are not requisite of each other for validity of Iman. In such situation Iman (إيمان - belief) and Nifaq (نفاق - hypocrisy) are compounded in a person. For instance,
- Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: Prophet (pbuh) said "Whoever has the following four (characteristics) will be a pure hypocrite and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up.
 1. Whenever he is entrusted, he betrays.
 2. Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie.
 3. Whenever he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous.

Referenced Hadiths

4. Whenever he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner."^[Sahih Bukhari, Book Iman 2, #33]

- It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) observed: "Do not detest your fathers; he who detested his father committed infidelity."^[Sahih Muslim, Book Iman 1, #119]

Hence, a person with one of this quality has elements of both Iman and Nifaq, but it doesn't invalidate his Iman.

Refutation of Khawarij saying person committing major sin is a disbeliever

Khawarij said that person who commits major sin is a disbeliever.

Ahlu-Sunnah said that Allah (swt) may forgive all sins except the Shirk. Allah (swt) will not forgive sins of Shirk. A person who commits major sins is still a believer, and that he will be judged by Allah (swt) and receive his punishment in hellfire, but he will not remain in hellfire forever. Once his punishment is over he will go to paradise. As Allah (Sw) said,

- **إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا** – "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin"^[Nisa 4:48].

Referenced Hadiths

Islam is based on 5 pillars. The Prophet (pbuh) said,

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بني الإسلام على خمس شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله وإقام الصلاة وإيتاء الزكاة والحج وصوم رمضان

Narrated Ibn 'Umar:

Allah's Apostle said: Islam is based on (the following) five (principles):

1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle.
 2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly.
 3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity).
 4. To perform Hajj. (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca)
 5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan
- (Sahih Bukhari, Book #2 Iman, Hadees # 7)

This fact is emphasized when the Prophet (pbuh) said that Iman consists over seventy branches:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الإيمان بضع وسبعون أو بضع وستون حدثنا زهير بن حرب حدثنا جرير عن سهيل عن عبد الله بن دينار عن أبي صالح عن أبي هريرة قال شعبة فأفضلها قول لا إله إلا الله وأدناها إمطة الأذى عن الطريق والحياء شعبة من الإيمان

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: Faith has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah,

and the humblest of which is the, removal of what is injurious from the path: and modesty is the branch of faith. – (Sahih Muslim, Book 1 Iman, #56)

Also, the Prophet (pbuh) expressed on various occasions to perform prayers, Zakat, fasting and other Islamic duties that are essential part of following the Hukm of Allah (swt).

أن أعرابيا أتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حدثني محمد بن عبد الرحيم حدثنا عفان بن مسلم حدثنا وهيب عن يحيى بن سعيد بن حيان عن أبي زرعة عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه فقال دلي على عمل إذا عملته دخلت الجنة قال تعبد الله لا تشرك به شيئا وتقيم الصلاة المكتوبة وتؤدي الزكاة المفروضة وتصوم رمضان قال والذي نفسي بيده لا أزيد على هذا فلما ولى قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من سره أن ينظر إلى رجل من أهل الجنة فلينظر إلى هذا

Narrated Abu Huraira: A Bedouin came to the Prophet and said, "Tell me of such a deed as will make me enter Paradise, if I do it." The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Worship Allah, and worship none along with Him, offer the (five) prescribed compulsory prayers perfectly, pay the compulsory Zakat, and fast the month of Ramadan." The Bedouin said, "By Him, in Whose Hands my life is, I will not do more than this." When he (the Bedouin) left, the Prophet said, "Whoever likes to see a man of Paradise, then he may look at this man." – Al-Bukhari (Kitab Al-Jana'iz, B23, #480)

وحدثني عبد الله بن أبي الأسود حدثنا الفضل بن العلاء حدثنا إسماعيل بن أمية عن يحيى بن محمد بن عبد الله بن صفي أنه سمع أبا معبد مولى ابن عباس يقول سمعت ابن عباس يقول لما بعث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم معاذ بن جبل إلى نحو أهل اليمن قال له إنك تقدم على قوم من أهل الكتاب فليكن أول ما تدعوهم إلى أن يوحدوا الله تعالى فإذا عرفوا ذلك فأخبرهم أن الله قد فرض عليهم خمس صلوات في يومهم وليلتهم فإذا صلوا فأخبرهم أن الله افترض عليهم زكاة في أموالهم تؤخذ من غنيهم فترد على فقيرهم فإذا أقرؤا بذلك فخذ منهم وتوق كراتم أموال الناس

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

"When the Prophet sent Muadh to Yemen, he said to him, "You are going to a nation from the people of the Scripture, so let the first thing to which you will invite them, be the Tawheed of Allah. If they learn that, tell them that Allah has enjoined on them, five prayers to be offered in one day and one night. And if they pray, tell them that Allah has enjoined on them Zakat of their properties and it is to be taken from the rich among them and given to the poor. And if they agree to that, then take from them Zakat but avoid the best property of the people.""

– Al-Bukhari (Kitab at-Tawheed, v9, b93, #469)