



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

IMAN – HOW TO MAINTAIN IMAN AFTER RAMADAN

Alhamdulillah, we have experienced a beautiful month where Allah has Guided us in the straight path. How was our iman being nurtured during Ramadan?

- It's a Blessed month
- Shaytan is locked up
- People were fasting – which leads to taqwa (2:183)
- People are starting to pray, and when you pray , you will be getting guidance and preventing yourself from disobedience to Allah (29:45)
- Mosques were full and many people were devoting themselves in worshipping him.
- People were reciting the Qur'an constantly.

So, in fact we were like angels – constantly trying to worship Allah. Even when Allah commanded us not to eat and drink and having sexual intercourse (between husband and wife) during the day, we obey – simply because Allah has Commanded us to do so. No ifs and no buts.

Therefore, our iman in general is boosted in Ramadan by the above factor. After Ramadan, many people would have gone back to the old ways, some to an unacceptable level, as if Ramadan has never come. We must ensure that our iman is maintained inshaAllah. It will never be the same compared to our iman in Ramadan but at least we have to strive to reach an acceptable level so that we are constantly able to worship Him. Until we die, striving must be continuous.

According to Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah, eemaan (faith) is "belief in the heart, words on the tongue and actions of the body." This includes three things:

1. Belief in the heart
2. Words on the tongue
3. Actions of the body

As this is the case, then it will increase and decrease. That is because the degree of belief in the heart differs from one person to another. Believing in what someone tells you is not the same as believing something that you see with your own eyes.

Believing in what one person tells you is not the same as believing what two people tell you, and so on. Hence Ibraaheem (peace be upon him) said:

“ ‘My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead.’ He (Allaah) said: ‘Do you not believe?’ He [Ibraaheem (Abraham)] said: ‘Yes (I believe), but to be stronger in Faith’” [al-Baqarah 2:260]

Eemaan may increase with regard to belief, contentment and tranquillity in the heart. A person may experience that in himself when he attends gatherings of dhikr where he hears a lesson. Remembering Paradise and Hell increases eemaan to the point where it as if you can see them with your own eyes. But when a person is negligent and leaves those gatherings, this certain faith is reduced in his heart.

Eemaan in the sense of words may increase similarly. Whoever remembers Allaah a few times is not like one who remembers Him one hundred times. The latter is far better in eemaan.

And the one who does an act of worship in a perfect manner will have more faith than one who does it in an imperfect manner.

The same applies to righteous deeds. If a person does good deeds physically more than another, the one who does more will have more eemaan than the one who does less. This is stated in the Qur’aan and Sunnah – I mean the fact that eemaan may increase and decrease. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We have fixed their number (19) only as a trial for the disbelievers, in order that the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) may arrive at a certainty [that this Qur’aan is the truth as it agrees with their Books regarding the number (19) which is written in the Tawraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] and that the believers may increase in Faith [al-Muddaththir 74:31]

“And whenever there comes down a Soorah, some of them (hypocrites) say: “Which of you has had his Faith increased by it?” As for those who believe, it has increased their Faith, and they rejoice.

But as for those in whose hearts is a disease (of doubt, disbelief and hypocrisy), it will add suspicion and doubt to their suspicion, disbelief and doubt; and they die while they are disbelievers [al-Tawbah 9:124-125]

According to a saheeh hadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “I have never seen any women lacking in reason and faith who have a more negative impact on the mind of a serious man than you.”

Thus eemaan increases and decreases.

Signs of weak Faith:

- Committing sins and not feeling any guilt.

- Having a hard heart and no desire to read the Quran.
- Feeling too lazy to do good deeds, e.g. being late for salat
- Neglecting the Sunnah.
- Having mood swings, for instance being upset about petty things and bothered and irritated most of the time.
- Not feeling anything when hearing verses from the Quran, for example when Allah warns us of punishments and His promise of glad tidings.
- Finding difficulty in remembering Allah and making dhikr.
- Not feeling bad when things are done against the Shariah.
- Desiring status and wealth.
- Being mean and miserly, i.e. not wanting to part with wealth.
- Ordering others to do good deeds when not practising them ourselves.
- Feeling pleased when things are not progressing for others.
- Being concerned with whether something is haram or halal only; and not avoiding makroo (not recommended) things.
- Making fun of people who do simple good deeds, like cleaning the mosque.
- Not feeling concerned about the situation of Muslims.
- Not feeling the responsibility to do something to promote Islam.
- Liking to argue just for the sake of arguing without any proof.
- Becoming engrossed and very involved with dunya, worldly things, i.e. feeling bad only when losing something in terms of material wealth.
- Becoming engrossed and obsessive about ourselves.

SYMPTOMS OF WEAK OR LOW IMAN

The disease of an ailing Iman has many symptoms, which include:

Committing Sins

Some people insist on committing the same sins over and over again. As a result, repugnance of sins is slowly withdrawn from their heart to the point that they commit these sins openly as described in this Hadith:

"All of my followers will be forgiven except those who commit sins openly. Such is the case of a man commits a sin at night and **Allah** had his sin concealed till the morning comes. But, he says openly: 'O so and so, I did such and such yesterday.' Allah had covered his sin, but he uncovered the veil of Allah from it." (Related by Al-Bukhari).

Hardening of the Heart

The person reaches a stage where he feels that his heart has turned into a solid rock that is not affected by anything. Allah says: "And yet, after this, your hearts hardened and became like rocks, or even harder." (Al-Baqarah, 2:74). A hardened heart is not affected by anything - even seeing people die and attending funerals would not move it. The person with a hardened heart may even carry a corpse and bury it, yet, he walks in the graveyard as if he were strolling between pine trees!

Performing Acts of Worship Poorly

Such a person remains absent-minded during prayers and while reciting the Qur'an. He also does not contemplate upon the meaning of the supplications he is making. As a result, he recites them in a monotonous tone void of any reflections. He does not think for a moment about the value of these supplications. He forgets that: "Allah does not accept the supplication from an inattentive, heedless heart." (Related by Al-Tirmidhi).

His acts of worship are reduced to hollow movements with no spirit behind them. Allah describes the hypocrites: "And they do not remember Allah but little." (Al-Nisa', 4:142).

A hard hearted person remains indifferent when he does not perform some good deeds and misses those times of worship that have more reward in them. His lack of interest to earn rewards is obvious. Delaying Hajj when he is capable of performing it, missing congregational prayers in the Masjid, and even the Jumu'ah prayer are a few examples of this. The Prophet **sallallahu alayhe wa sallam [pbuh]** said: "People will continue to withdraw to rows behind the first one until Allah puts them in a back place in Hell." (Related by Abu Dawud).

Furthermore, he does not feel remorse if he misses obligatory duties and does not try to perform the different Sunnah prayers or invocations that he misses. He ignores them, convincing himself that they are only Sunnah!

Lack of Tranquillity

His breast gets tightened, his mood changes, he feels as if he is carrying a heavy load, and he becomes annoyed quickly because of minor things. He gets pestered by the behavior of the people around him and he does not forgive them easily. He harbors malice towards fellow Muslims over insignificant issues. The Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam has described Iman to be forgiveness: "Iman is patience and forgiveness." (Related by Al-Tirmidhi). In another Hadith, the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam described the believer in the following manner: "He makes friends and is befriended and there is no goodness in (one who) does not make friends or is not befriended." (Related by Al-Tirmidhi).

Verses of the Qur'an Have No Effect Upon Him

The promises, warnings, commands, prohibitions, and descriptions of the Day of Judgment do not make his eyes flood with tears, or his heart quiver, or his soul shiver. Consequently, he gets bored and tired when he listens to the recital of the Qur'an!

He is Negligent in Remembering Allah

This simple act of devotion becomes heavy upon him to the point that when he raises his hands in supplication, he hastens to fold them up quickly to conclude it. He is not eager to repent to Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, and to make invocations to Him for his needs. Allah describes the hypocrites: "And when they stand up to pray, they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allah but little." (Al-Nisa', 4:142).

He Does Not Get Angry When the Commandments of Allah Are Violated

This is because the glowing light of honor in his heart has been extinguished and as a result, his limbs have become numb to repudiate evil. So he does not bother to enjoin good or forbid evil. This is due to a weak heart as indicated by the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam: "Temptations are presented to the heart, one by one. Any heart that accepts them will be left with a black stain, but any heart that rejects them will be left with a mark of purity, until the hearts become one of two types: a dark heart that has turned away and become like an overturned vessel, and a pure heart that will never be harmed by temptation for as long as the earth and the heavens exist." (Related by Muslim).

So the desire of enjoining good and forbidding evil disappears from a sick heart. Good and evil are the same to it.

Rather, the person may even be happy to hear about the corruption that is being committed on earth. His unfortunate soul forgets that the sin upon him is the same as the sin upon the person who witnessed the evil and approved of it, as the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam said: "When a sin is committed on earth, the one who witnessed it and hates it is like one who was absent from it, and the one who was absent from it but was pleased with it (after he found out about it), it is like he witnessed it. (Related by Abu Dawud)

Since being pleased with the sin is a deed of his heart, it makes the sin upon him equal to the sin of the one who witnessed it.

He loves to be in Gatherings and be Engrossed in Talking

He tries to impose his views on others and likes the discussion to center around him. Gatherings in which idle talk takes prominence are considered like slaughter houses from which the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam warned us when he said:

"Watch out for the slaughterhouses (meaning) gatherings." (Related by Al-Bayhaqi).

He is Arrogant

He likes people to stand up for him when he enters to meet them because feeling great gratifies his diseased soul. the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam said: "The one who is pleased that the slaves of Allah stand up for him, then let him be assured of his place in the Fire." (Related by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad)

Mu'awiyah Ibn Abi Sufyan entered upon two companions of the Prophet, Ibn 'Amir stood up and Ibn Zubayr sat down. Seeing this, Mu'awiyah said to Ibn 'Amir: "Sit down, because I heard the Messenger of Allah say: 'The one who loves that another man stand up for him, then let him rest assured of his sitting place in the Fire.'" (Related by Abu Dawud).

A similar example is that he will get angry at a person who applies the Sunnah and starts shaking hands with people on his right hand side. Also, when he enters a gathering, he is not satisfied unless someone else, already sitting, gets up so that he may sit in his place despite the fact that he is forbidden to do so by the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam:

"Let not a man make another one stand for him then sit in his place." (Related by Al-Bukhari).

Stinginess and Greed

Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala has praised those who spend their wealth for good causes and at the same time blamed those who are miserly. In the Qur'an Allah has praised the Ansar for the way they gave preference to the Muhajirun (Muslims who migrated from Makkah) over themselves: "But they (Ansar) give them preference over themselves even though they were in need of that (the booty). And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful." (Al-Hashr, 59:9).

Allah has clarified that the successful ones are those who protect themselves against stinginess. Without doubt, weakness of Iman is born from stinginess as the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam said: "Iman and covetousness can never come together in the heart of a slave." (Related by Al-Nasa'i).

Concerning the dangers of stinginess and its effects upon one's soul, the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam explained it to be: "Beware of covetousness, because the ones before you perished because of covetousness. It induces them to be miserly so they became misers and it induced them to break the ties (of kinship) so they broke it and induced them to commit sins so they committed sins." (Related by Abu Dawud).

A greedy person also has a weak Iman. He scarcely spends anything for the sake of Allah even if he is called to donate in charity when his Muslim brothers are hungry and afflicted by hardships. There is nothing clearer in this matter than the Book of Allah: "Behold! It is you who are called to spend freely in Allah's Cause: but even among you are such as turn out to be niggardly! And yet, he who acts niggardly in Allah's Cause is but niggardly towards himself: for Allah is Rich, and you are poor. And if you turn away from Him, He will cause other people to take your place, and they will not be the likes of you." (Muhammad, 47:38)

He Falls into Doubtful Matters

When he performs an action, he does not ask if it is an act of righteousness, but rather will it earn him any sin or not. This is exactly what the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam informed us of: "But he who falls into doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all about grazing therein. Truly, every king has a sanctuary, and Allah's sanctuary is His prohibitions." (Related by Muslim).

When such people ask for a fatwah (Islamic ruling) about something, and find out that it is forbidden, they do not give up. They want to know how severe the prohibition is. How many sins does he earn if he commits it? He is not concerned to stay away from evil and sinful deeds, rather he is inclined to take the first step towards haram things by belittling the burning effects of sins which run him the risk of committing haram, and remove the screen between him and the sin. This is why

the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam said: "Know that some people from my Ummah will come on the Day of Judgment with good deeds like the white mountains of Tihama, but Allah will make them scattered dust." Thawban said, 'O Messenger of Allah, describe them to us, so that we may not be one of them without knowing it!' He said, "They will be your brothers, and from your people, and they will take from the night as you do (meaning prayers, etc.), but they are a people who, when they were alone with the prohibitions of Allah, violated them." (Related by Ibn Majah).

So, you will find him engulfed in forbidden things without any protection or shielding, and this is more evil than the one who commits them but with some reluctance. These people commit sins with ease as a result of their ailing Iman and do not see their act to be an evil one. This is how Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud radhiallahu anhu described the way a believer and a hypocrite perceive sins: "A believer sees his sins as if he were sitting under a mountain, fearing it might fall upon him, while a sinner sees his sins as a fly passing over his nose, so he gets rid of it with his hand." (Related by Al-Bukhari).

Belittling Good Deeds

There is lack of concern on the part of the sick at heart to perform small deeds of righteousness contrary to what the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam has taught us when he said: "Do not belittle any small act of kindness even if it is to pour water from your bucket into the vessel of the one who asks for it or to talk to your brother with a cheerful face." Related by Ahmad.

So, acts that appear to be minor should not be underestimated. Hence, meeting a fellow Muslim with a smiling face and removing trash and dirt from the Masjid - even as little as a straw - entails great rewards. It may be that a small deed becomes a reason for the forgiveness of major sins. Allah thanks His slave for these small deeds and forgives him. The Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam said: "Once, a man saw the branch of a tree in the middle of a road. So, he said, 'By Allah, I will remove this from the path of the Muslims so they may not be hurt.' For this action, he was put in Paradise." (Related by Muslim).

Mu'adh Ibn Jabal was once walking with someone. He removed a pebble from the way. The man asked Mu'adh why he did that. Mu'adh answered him: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah sallallahu alayhe wa sallam say: "One who removes a stone from the way has a good deed written for him, and one for whom a good deed is written shall enter Paradise."' (Related by Al-Tabarani).

Not Caring About the Affairs of Muslims

A person with a sick heart does not react to the needs of Muslims by making supplications, giving charity, or offering assistance. He does not care if his brothers are afflicted by a hardship in any part of the world such as being overwhelmed by the enemy, being persecuted, or being stricken by disasters. It is enough for him that his conditions are good! This is because of his ailing Iman; A believer is the opposite of that as described by the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam: "A believer feels pain for the believers, just as the body feels distress over what is troubling the head." (Related by Ahmad).

He is Deprived of the Friendship of Brothers

The Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam said: "Two persons who became friends for the sake of Allah do not separate except because of a sin committed by one of them." (Related by Al-Bukhari in Al-Adab Al-Mufrad).

This is a proof of the evil effects of sins: it breaks the ties of brotherhood. This alienation that a person finds between himself and his brothers is sometimes the result of a decline in Iman which results from committing sins. So the love others have for him dwindles.

Showing Grief and Fear When Afflicted by a Hardship or When in Difficulty

Such a person is often found to be shaky in offering obligatory duties, unbalanced, absent minded, lost, and fidgety. He is not able to face reality with unwavering limbs and a firm heart. All of this is due to ailing Iman.

If the Iman were strong, he would have been firm and faced the greatest of hardships with strength and steadfastness.

Disputing and Arguing Unnecessarily

Much engagement in these habits hardens the heart as the Prophet said: "A people never went astray after being upon guidance except through disputes." (Related by Ahmad).

So, argumentation without proof and proper intention takes one away from the Straight Path. These days, most people argue falsely and without knowledge or guidance. It is enough for them to leave this bad habit after knowing what the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam said: "I guarantee a house in the outskirts of Paradise to the one who gives up arguing even if he were on the right side." (Related by Abu Dawud).

Attachment to Worldly Life

He is so materialistic that he feels anguish when something of this life, like wealth, honor, status, etc, is taken away from him. He feels as if he has been injured badly because he did not get what others did. His feeling of injury becomes stronger and he feels rejected on seeing his Muslim brother get something of this world which did not reach him. Envy takes root in his heart so he wishes that this bounty be taken away from his brother. This is what the Prophet sallallahu alayhe wa sallam warned us against: "Never can Iman and envy come together in the heart of a slave." (Related by Al- Nasa'i).

His Speech is Void of the Etiquette of the Qur'an and Sunnah

The signs of Imart are absent from him. You will barely find in this person's speech quotations from the Qur'an, or Sunnah, or the sayings of the early pious generations of Muslims.

These are some of the symptoms of a weak faith. By becoming aware of the symptoms, one has made the first step towards the remedy.

What causes weakness of faith:

Three broad categories include

1. Failing to seek knowledge on a constant basis.

Many of us have abandoned reading the Qur'an and Hadith on a daily basis and when we do we seldom reflect on its message or seek guidance. Our minds are not focused on the virtue of its message. We starve ourselves in the knowledge of deen by allowing our attention to be diverted by feasting on daily talk shows on TV, or other forms of destructive activities for the passing of time. We miss out on that breeze of Iman that softens hearts.

2 Living in an environment surrounded with sin is conducive to weakening the faith.

In this environment temptation exists, continuously at every point. We need to guard our prayers and our Iman. We are not as Allah conscious as we ought to be, we allow ourselves to be swayed and distracted by temptations. We have been devoid of a faith-filled environment for too long. We've become de-sensitised and lost sight of the world of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We are oblivious to the good as taught by the Prophet

(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). -- Moral and spiritual values that elevate man are replaced by the worldly pleasures of today's society. We fail to protect our families and ourselves from acts of disobedience and often we accept them as the norm.

And seldom do we turn to Allah swt in repentance (taw bah). This is our ignorance, our weakness.

And last but not the least,

3. Preoccupation with our worldly life, while neglecting the hereafter.

Our day to day activities centre around our material world - our business, our work, our money, our bills, the sizes of our homes, our cars, and so on. These take preference both in our minds and speech. This preoccupation with the world enslaves our hearts.

We have allowed the diseases of the heart to flourish such as vanity, pride, fame, glory. We tend to get lost in these illusions, fooled by the worldly glamour and fail to illuminate our hearts with Allah's Noor.

We remain pre-occupied with our worldly life.

Allah says in

Surah Al Hijr 15:3

“Leave them to eat and enjoy, and let them be preoccupied with (false) hope. They will come to know!”

And Allah swt created us only for His Ubudiya, for His worship alone, as His slaves but today we have become slaves to this duniya, this world, slaves of our desires and ambitions, slaves to wealth.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “He is doomed, the slave of the dinar and the slave of the dirham” (Reported by al-Bukhari, no. 2730),

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) further said: “Every nation has its fitnah (trial or temptation), and the fitnah of my Ummah is wealth.” (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 2336). So this eagerness to acquire wealth weakens Iman. This is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) meant when he said: “Two hungry wolves sent against the sheep do not do more damage than what a man's eagerness for wealth does to his religion.” (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2376). That is it leaves him injured or dead as far as his Iman is concerned.

There are three main causes for the decrease in ones iman. A persons iman is sure to take a fall when he loses certainty in the above six beliefs. These beliefs when properly settled into the heart play an important role in a believers life. When a person says, performs, or believes something, which is Islamically known as kufr (disbelief), their iman will be effected in a very negative way. And the final reason for the downfall of iman is performing any type of shirk. These three things all lead to sin, which is what prevents the iman from increasing.

It is a duty of every Muslim to keep his or her iman in check. This means one must constantly guard his or her iman and observe whether it has increased or decreased and for what causes. If it has decreased, one must work to increase it before it falls low enough to destroy the heart. There are many ways to increases ones iman and it involves increasing in righteous deeds and refraining from sins, as well as staying away from sinful activities and people who encourage such activities.

The first thing one should do is renew his or her faith by reciting La ilaha illallah, the meaning of which is: There is no deity except Allah, as the Prophet (sallallahu alaiyhi wa sallam) advised. A person must also believe in all the aspects of La ilaha illallah and this is done through gaining knowledge. Knowledge is one of the most essential key factors in increasing ones iman. It leads to certainty in the heart, assurance in the mind, and peace felt by the soul. Allah has said in His Holy Revelation:

It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. (Surat al-Malaaikah 35:28)

An increase in knowledge leads to acknowledging Allah in every moment of ones life through taqwa, which leads to a firm iman. The type of knowledge we are discussing is knowing that Allah is One and has no partners, wives, children, or equals. It is knowing Allah through His beautiful Names and Attributes; that Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that it contains. He is the Preserver, as well as the One Who destroys. He gives life and takes it whenever He wills. His knowledge encompasses all things and nothing can ever be hidden from Him.

And with Him are the keys of the invisible. None but He knows them. And He knows what is in the land and the sea. Not a leaf falls but He knows it, not a grain amid the darkness of the earth, nor anything wet or dry but (it is noted) in a Clear Record. (Surat al-Anaam 6:59)

He hears the cries of His servants all at once and is not confused by the countless different number of voices and languages and He is Ever Responding. He is the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Giver of Bounties. He forgives whomever He wills and punishes whomever He wills. He is the Just, the Merciful, and does no wrong to His creation. He sees all things. Not a black ant on a black stone on a

black moonless night is hidden from His sight. To Him belongs all praise and glory! He is the Most Great, the Incomparable!

A person who has knowledge of Allah is no way like a person who simply states La ilaha illallah and knows nothing else about its meaning and its impact in the life of a true believer.

Likewise, a person who has knowledge about Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaiyhi wa sallam) and his life, noble characteristics, truthful teachings, and exemplary actions and has faith in what he informed his Ummah concerning the torment and bliss in the grave, the Last Day, the Reckoning, the questioning of ones deeds, the scale, the bridge, the rewards of Paradise, and the torments of Hellfire is unlike the person who has no such knowledge or belief. A person with this knowledge will have a purpose and goal in life, which is to obey Allah to the best of his ability and remind himself of the rewards and punishments he may earn depending upon his iman and his deeds.

There is no doubt that knowledge plays a big role in increasing the iman of a weak heart and Allah says it beautifully:

Are those who know, equal to those who know not? (Surat az-Zumar 39:9)

The second key factor, which affects the iman are ones deeds. They can either decrease the iman and weaken the heart and soul or increase it, as well as strengthening the heart and soul. Once a person gains knowledge about something, he should accept it and put it into practice. If a person accepts the forbidden as forbidden and the permissible as permissible, but refuses to act upon it, thereby disobeying Allah and committing sin, not to mention hurting his own soul, he has suppressed his iman. The basis of iman is to accept and practice.

By increasing good deeds and obedience, one nears himself to Allah, increases his iman, and purifies himself. He is less likely to fall into his base desires and worldly pleasures, keeping himself safe from the evils of society by strengthening his soul and weakening his nafs.

A person with low iman should begin by performing the obligatory duties imposed on him, such as performing the five daily prayers at their fixed times and fasting. He should stop committing major sins and eventually begin performing more voluntary and permissible acts of worship and obedience and refrain from minor sins and disliked acts to the best of his ability. When a person refrains from as many sins as possible and does as many good deeds as he can, most importantly his obligatory duties, he weakens Satan against him, which gives him a bigger chance of success. Allah says:

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and do not make your deeds vain. (Surah Muhammad 47:33)

One should make sure that everything he does will only benefit him both in this world and in the hereafter. There is no point in doing something that will cause hurt to ones soul and add more weight to ones evil deeds. It is very important and beneficial to follow the Sunnah. The Prophet (sallallahu alaiyhi wa sallam) was the best of mankind and Allah chose him to show us our ways. If we follow him, we are sure to succeed in both worlds, Insha Allah. But if we reject his way and follow our own lusts or the way of the kuffar, we will only destroy ourselves. To be sure that ones deeds will increase the iman, one should do only that which Allah and His Messenger (sallallahu alaiyhi wa sallam) have taught and in that way, one can be safe from bidah and misguidance.

The third key factor to increasing ones iman is remembrance and contemplation. Remembrance refers to the remembrance of Allah, His Names and Attributes, His Greatness, Power, and Majesty, and the fact that He is the Most High. He is the Only One Who deserves to be worshipped, thanked, and depended upon. Allah is the Lord of Kindness and the Most Generous. He should be praised and glorified constantly as a part of remembrance. The Prophet (sallallahu alaiyhi wa sallam) said that the most beloved and weighty phrases of dhikr (remembrance) are La ilaha illallah Subhannallah, Alhumdulillah, and Allahu Akbar. There are many others like these, which should also be recited. The Prophet (sallallahu alaiyhi wa sallam) said, The difference between a person who glorifies his Lord and the one who does not remember his Lord is like that between the living and the dead. The remembrance of Allah increases iman and brings peace into the heart. There is none more truthful than Allah in speech and so Allah confirms:

Who have believed and whose hearts have rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest! (Surat ar-Rad 13:28)

Along with praising and glorifying Allah, one should be regular in reciting His Holy Speech, the Quran, and ponder upon their meanings and use them as a guide and a healing in ones life.

And we reveal of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe(Surat al-Isra 17:82)

The Quran contains the Truth about monotheism, Allahs promises of success to the true believers and warnings of punishment to the hypocrites and disbelievers. It contains commandments and prohibitions, inspiring stories of the previous prophets and their nations, and codes of the best conduct and behavior. The words of the Quran bring hope into a persons life. They enlighten the heart and open up a path of righteousness for those searching for the truth.

Will they not then ponder on the Qur'an? If it had been from other than Allah they would have found therein much incongruity. (Surat an-Nisaa 4:82)

The iman will increase when one connects with Allah through His Holy Revelation and this should lead one to acting upon his Lords Word.

They only are the (true) believers whose hearts feel fear when Allah is mentioned, and when the revelations of Allah are recited unto them they increase their faith, and who trust in their Lord. (Surat Al-Anfaal 8:2)

Remembering the Hereafter is also a cure for weak iman. When one is one hundred percent certain of the Last Day, Paradise, and Hellfire and feels fear of the mere thought of standing before the All-Powerful Creator and be questioned and judged for each of his thoughts, sayings and deeds, he is bound to think twice before committing an act of disobedience. One should remember the Day of Judgement often, which is repeatedly mentioned in the Quran to remind mankind that he will surely be returned to his Lord.

When we look at the night, full of bright glittery stars, the shining moon and the sunset, as well as the mountains standing firm and the flowers blooming, we should feel Allahs Power and Majesty and contemplate over His creation. It is absolutely amazing and unimaginable as to how Allah created every single thing in existence and how the universe runs so smoothly by the will and control of its Creator. Contemplating over the creation is another way a person can increase his iman and grow closer to Allah.

Such as remember Allah, standing, sitting, and reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth, (and say): Our Lord! You created not this in vain. Glory be to You! Preserve us from the doom of Fire. (Surah Ali Imran 3:191)

Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anhu) reported that the Prophet (sallallahu alaiyhi wa sallam) said, Allah, the All-Mighty says, I treat my slave according to his expectations from Me and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I remember him in My heart. If he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a better and more noble gathering (i.e. of the angels). If he comes close to Me by one span, I go towards him a cubits length. If he comes toward Me a cubits length, I go towards him an arms length. And if he walks toward Me, I run toward him.

One of the most important things a person should be aware of when trying to increase his iman and at all times, is the vastness of Allahs mercy, compassion, and love. One should put hope and trust in Him. Remembrance of Allah is a key factor in increasing the iman, as are increasing ones Islamic knowledge and good deeds. Allah says:

Then, as for those who have faith and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace and as for those who disdain and are proud, He will punish them with a painful doom. And they shall not find

for themselves besides Allah any guardian or helper. (Surat an-Nisaa 4:173)

In the following verse, Allah emphasizes the importance of iman and doing good deeds along with ones belief:

There shall be no sin unto those who believe and do good deeds for what they may have eaten (in the past); so be mindful of your duty (to Allah) and do good deeds and again be mindful of your duty and believe and once again, be mindful of your duty and do good deeds. Allah loves the good! (Surat al-Maidah 5:93)

The life of the dunya is only a test for the creation and one day this test will end. It is the responsibility of each human and jinn to prepare oneself for the final scoring of the test by being mindful of ones duty towards Allah by following the guidance of the Quran and the Sunnah and keeping ones iman high. A weak iman will lead one to the Hellfire, while a strong one will lead one to the Gardens of Delight. The reason is because it is the iman that determines the actions of a person. A person with weak or even no iman will commit sin and cause Allah to be displeased, causing him to be thrown into the Hellfire to be punished. But a person with a strong faith will refrain from sins and perform good deeds, which will be the cause of Allahs pleasure and his entrance into Paradise.

In conclusion, Shaykh Muhammad Salih al-Munajjid wrote in his book, Some of our righteous Salaf said, It is a sign of the slaves fiqh (knowledge of the religion) that he concerns himself with enhancing the status of his iman when it experiences a decrease. Also, it is a sign of the slaves fiqh to know if his iman is on the increase or the decrease. Furthermore, it is a sign of ones fiqh that he knows why and where the evil whispers of Satan are coming from.

So after Ramadan, what can we do to enhance our iman inshaAllah?

1. Make du'a to Allah
2. Continue with fasting - especially the 6 days of Shawwal fasting and Mondays/Thursdays inshaAllah - to attain taqwa.
3. Continue to recite the Qur'an to obtain Guidance - with proper recitation and understanding.
4. Continue the tarawih prayer with tahajjud, and maintain obligatory prayers on time and with khushoo
5. Continue to be generous and make donations
6. Continue to remember Allah in mornings and evenings
7. Be with the right companions (43: 67)
8. Seek refuge in Allah from shaytan constantly
9. Attend circles of knowledge
10. Remind one another constantly - enjoin good and forbid evil (surah al Asr)

11. Remind ourselves that death may come at any time....and that there is no second chance - you can visit graves or the sick ones to remind ourselves to be grateful to Allah when you are healthy and that you still have time to repent and do good deeds.
12. Be patient at all times - in performing good deeds, in preventing ourselves from disobeying Allah and when tested by Allah. Remember that the more iman we have the more Allah's Tests will come - in order to purify us.

May Allah continue to Guide us and Maintain our iman till we meet Him in Jannatul Firdaus.