

SUMMER IMMERSION

CERTAINTY IN TRANSMISSION



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SESSION 6

“Al-Īmān Yamānī” “الإِيمَانُ يَمَانِي”

- The short phrase occurs inside several longer aḥādīth. Imām al-Suyūṭī extracted only this mutawātir(mass-transmitted) bit for his collection.
- Main narration today: Abū Hurayrah (RA), Sahih al-Bukhārī.

Socio-Behavioral Angle

- Prophet ﷺ contrasted temperaments tied to livestock:
 - Camel (or large-cattle) people → boastfulness (فخر) & conceit (خِيَلَاء). Camels are described as proud and angry animals that can trample or crush skulls if angered or threatened.
 - Sheep keepers → calmness & composure. Sheep are mild, gentle, and responsive to their shepherd, though they can be mischievous.
 - Living creatures around us shape us; even animals rub off on human temperament (*mizaj*).
- Geography influence (Ibn Khaldūn’s Muqaddimah):
 - Climate, rainfall (abundance or dryness), geolocation (e.g., in respect to the equator), food, and profession → societal “DNA.” Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddimah* is a master sociological text explaining how these factors form the temperament of cultures and societies.
 - Traits persist even after migration; only partially refined by new surroundings, as some traits will always remain.

Yemen's Special Mention

- Linguistic layer: “Yaman” shares root with yumn(بركة, blessing) & yamin(right-hand side). The Rukn Yamani (corner of the Kaaba towards the south) is an example of this proximity.
- Tafsīr possibilities:
 - “Īmān is blessed (yamānī) & so is ḥikmah,” just as the land of Yemen is blessed.
 - People of Yemen will embody pure faith & wisdom,” indicating their pure sense of Iman and beautiful characteristics like zeal, enthusiasm, desire to sacrifice, and willingness to put away differences for Allah. They have a sense of receptiveness towards Iman.
- Historical support:
 - Pre-Islamic Yemen changed hands multiple times, with a large portion under Persian rule during the Prophet's time, governed by Badam.
 - Story of Kisrā: When the Prophet ﷺ sent a letter to Kisra (Persian emperor) via his governor in Bahrain, Kisra angrily tore it up, deeming the Prophet ﷺ a mere subject. The Prophet ﷺ prophesied that Allah would tear up Kisra's country and rule just as he tore up the letter. Kisra then ordered Badam to arrest the Prophet ﷺ. When Badam's officers arrived, the Prophet ﷺ informed them that Kisra had been killed by his own son that very day. Upon verification, the news was confirmed. Kisra's son killed him by drinking a poisoned medicine his father had intentionally left, suspecting his son's betrayal. This led to chaos in Persia. Badam, the governor of Yemen, subsequently accepted Islam, demonstrating early Yemeni receptivity.

- Fertile regions: Yemen, despite being a hot area, has many extremely fertile regions. The incident of the nation of Saba' and the bursting of their dam, mentioned in the Qur'an, highlights how Allah had given them lush and green lands filled with gardens and orchards extending from Yemen north to Sham. This fertility metaphorically parallels "lush" and "green" faith and wisdom.

Power of Şuhbah

- Company shapes us—humans or even animals. Who we keep ourselves with has a definite impact on who we become. For example, staying with arrogant people can compel one to boast to keep up.
- Wrong assumption: "I will influence my friends on their turf." More likely their environment changes me, leading one to revert to old ways or worse.
- The wisdom is to bring others to **positive** environments (e.g., environments of *deen*) and work on them there, rather than trying to change them in their dominant environment. This ensures one never has to give up a piece of oneself.

Dynamics of Ego & Boastfulness

- Continuous need for limelight pushes some to reckless business or personal decisions, even if they are not intelligent ventures, simply to generate publicity and attention. This craving for constant spotlight can lead to their ultimate downfall.
- People may even "boast" about illnesses or problems when lacking real achievements, carrying their sicknesses like a badge to appear braver, stronger, or more significant.

- Humble people downplay success, attribute it to Allah's grace, opportunities, help from others (mentors, coaches, business partners), or good advice from parents. They know not to take anything for granted or attribute all success to themselves, allowing their success to grow without making them unpleasant.

Character (Akhlāq) ≠ Natural Temperament Alone

- Temperament (born with) vs. Behavioral default (modifiable). We are born with certain temperaments (e.g., jolly, stern, playful, easily excited/angered), which generally stay with us. However, our behavioral traits—how we act in certain circumstances—can and should be changed.
- Shar'iah asks us to channel innate traits, not erase them. For example, a person with a short fuse is not judged for feeling angry, but for how they control and channel that anger, how it affects their speech and treatment of others. Similarly, an easygoing person is judged on whether their complacency prevents them from acting when action is required for *deen* or *dunya*. Sharia teaches us to temper and balance our tendencies.
 - 'Umar (RA): kept his natural strong personality and quick anger, but after accepting Islam, he redirected his anger to disobedience of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. He trained himself to submit immediately to Allah's commands.
- Real *tazkiyah* (purification of the self) path:
 - Recognize raw nature through brutal self-diagnosis ("What is my default reaction?"). Avoid the mistake of using "that's just who I am" as an excuse for negative behavior.
 - Practice restraint and re-channeling (e.g., biting one's tongue at an insult). The first attempts will be extremely difficult, going against every cell in one's body, but done for Allah's sake.

- Repetition and consistency until effort ↓ (difficulty decreases slowly) → then until behavior becomes effortless and automatic.
- Continue past “it’s easy” stage; aim for “it’s who I am.” This means it becomes a habitual practice and eventually one's nature (*akhlaq*).
- The Prophet ﷺ was the perfect example of channeling human emotions like anger and frustration, never speaking anything displeasing to Allah. His life, and the lives of the Companions and pious predecessors (Salaf Saliheen), serve as models for how to channel human emotions and uphold character through life's challenges. Our Iman is not complete until we work on our character; the greater the development of character, the greater the Iman.

Hadith #10

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا

The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best character

- Faith-perfection is measured by excellence in character. Iman cannot be completed until character is perfected, and character cannot be perfected until a person works on and builds their Iman.
- Potential additions:
 - وَخَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ
 - “and the best of you are those who are best to their women.”
- Emphasizes private-sphere akhlāq, not public show.

Layers of the word Khuluq

- خَلَقَ (khalq) - Physical creation
- خَلْقَة (khilqah) - Physical constitution, physical form and shape
- خُلُق (khuluq) - Moral constitution / behavioral default, personality traits, what a person does as their default behavior and as a matter of their nature. This distinguishes between putting on an act and truly being someone.

- Camel incident: The Prophet's camel, Al-Qaswa, stopped moving, and the Sahaba thought it had become stubborn (khala'at al-Qaswa). The Prophet ﷺ clarified, “مَا خَلَّاتِ الْقَسْوَى، وَمَا ذَاكَ لَهَا بِخُلُقٍ” (“No, it hasn't become stubborn, nor is it its nature/character to be stubborn”). This showed that even animals have default behaviors, and in this case, it was due to Wahi (revelation) descending.

Practical Path to Better Akhlāq

- Brutal self-diagnosis (“What is my default reaction?”). Be honest about one's nature and how it is being channeled (good or bad), avoiding excuses like “that's just how I am.” Sharia teaches tempering tendencies.
- Small controlled experiments (e.g., bite tongue at first insult).
- Consistency until effort ↓ (difficulty decreases) → then until behavior becomes effortless and automatic.
- Continue past “it's easy” stage; aim for “it's who I am.” This means practicing until the desired behavior becomes one's habitual practice and ultimately, one's nature.