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# The Pillars of Faith

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# Introduction To The Pillars Of Faith

## Belief

We all believe in something. We believe in issues relating to our lives, family, careers and wealth. We have beliefs as to what makes a better society and what makes a worse one. We live our lives according to principles and ideals which may be called a 'belief' in something. For the greater question of our creation and purpose in life, we have beliefs we also hold. Those beliefs may be correct or incorrect. Some people believe in one Creator, some in multiple deities and yet others who believe in no Creator. Even the latter group will believe in something else in place of a god, even if they don't consciously realise it.

It is our set of ideals and principles which guide us and determine our speech and actions. People who value their family above all else will make certain decisions, sacrifice certain things and prioritise others. The same can be said for people who value money, or their careers above all else. The same can be said about those who hold religious beliefs. On the Day of Judgement it will become clear what people used to worship:

### Prophet told us:

***"On the Day of Resurrection, a call-maker will announce, "Let every nation follow that which they used to worship." [Al-Bukhari]***





## Actions of the Heart

Our beliefs are the convictions we have in our hearts. Thus, belief is from the actions of the heart and it is our hearts that Allah looks at and judges. This is because our hearts are the foundation from which speech and actions stem from.

### Prophet told us:

***“Beware, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound and if it is corrupt the whole body is corrupt, and hearken it is the heart.” [Sahih Muslim]***

## The Foundation of Belief

The foundation of Muslim’s belief is based on the six pillars of faith. These pillars are mentioned both in the Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet. In the Prophetic narration where the angel Jibril came and sat with the Prophet and asked him to define faith. The Prophet answered by mentioning the following six pillars. They are:

- **Belief in Allah**
- **His Messengers**
- **His Angels**
- **The Day of Judgement**
- **His Divine Books**
- **The Divine Decree.**

To reject or disbelieve in even one of these six pillars is akin to disbelieving in all of them. Therefore, someone who rejects one of these six pillars cannot be considered a Muslim.



# #1 Belief in Allah

The first pillar of faith is belief in Allah as the One true God. This means that we believe with full certainty and conviction that Allah is the Lord and King of everything in existence. He alone created everything and controls it. Therefore, He alone is worthy of being worshipped.

**Allah says in the Qur'an,**

***"So it will be, because it is God alone who is the Truth, and whatever else they invoke is sheer falsehood: it is God who is the Most High, the Most Great." [22:62]***

Let us break down what belief in Allah is and how to understand it.

The first step is to believe in the existence of a Creator. We instinctively know of the existence of a Creator or greater being. Deep down, in times of real need and vulnerability, we sense the need to turn to one who is greater than us. Even those who claim not to believe in god, will call out to Him in their times of need or instinctively look up to the sky when they require help.

Logically, **we know that God exists**. Everything we see around us in the universe must have come from somewhere. It needs a creator.

The question is what came first? For example, if we say the sun came before the moon, did it create the moon? If so, then who created the sun?

Whichever way we frame this question we require an initial creator. That creator has to be all powerful and already in existence, otherwise the creator would be weak and therefore not God.

The Big Bang Theory for example which is often used by those who don't believe in God still asserts that the universe started from a small superforce. Yet who created the superforce?

Furthermore, we see the universe in all of its glory, from the sun and moon, to the stars and clouds, seas and rivers, mountains and trees, the countless species of plants, animals, birds and fish, can all of this exist without a Creator?

Let us just look at how complex our own bodies are, from the way we think and use our brains, to the way our hearts beat and pump blood around our bodies. Logically, if we were to enter into a five star hotel with an amazing lobby, plush rooms, delicious food and every comfort, and then were told that this wasn't designed or built by anyone, it just appeared. We wouldn't believe this. How then can we believe that the earth and heavens in all their glory came from nothing.

**Allah says in the Qur'an,**  
***“Were they created without any agent? Were they the creators? Did they create the heavens and the earth? No! They do not have faith.” [52:35-36]***

Islam tells us that Allah is the Creator and therefore we believe in His existence. We see many cases of people who call out to God and their supplications are answered. Throughout history, civilisations have always believed in gods in whatever form. It is only in relatively recent history that people have come to a different explanation.

Once we believe in the existence of God, we believe in Him being the Creator, Lord and King of all that exists. He is the one who gives life and death, He has complete and full knowledge and wisdom and everything is under His control. He is perfect in every way and removed from every weakness and deficiency. Once we believe in this, we believe that He alone should be worshipped. Worship in all of its forms is dedicated to Him. Therefore, we pray to Him, supplicate to Him, take oaths in His name, sacrifice to Him, hope for His reward and fear His punishment and so on. We don't divert any of this or other acts of worship to any living or dead being, to any idol or celestial body.

He has no partner, helper or child. He is alone, unique and perfect.

Once we believe in this, we believe in all the names and attributes of God that we find in the Qur'an and Prophetic teachings. We believe that they describe God and allow us to learn about Him, which then enables us to worship Him better. His names are perfect and complete and do not resemble His creation in any way.

**Allah says,**  
***“There is nothing like Him:  
 He is the All Hearing, the All  
 Seeing.” [42:11]***

There are many benefits in our belief in Allah. The greatest of these benefits is recognising our Lord and Creator and fulfilling His rights of worship. We know who the one true God is and therefore we understand our purpose in life, and know that there is another life which is everlasting and greater that Allah has prepared for the believers. Therefore, even if this life is difficult and hard, full of trials and problems, Allah has prepared for his believing servants an eternity of reward and bliss.

It makes no sense then for us to live our lives aimlessly with no direction and with no greater purpose. This in turn, allows us to live our lives in this world with contentment and inner peace. We don't oppress others or harm them even if it seems that we can escape blame for it, as it will count against us when Allah holds us to account. We always try to do good and live according to what Allah wants from us, knowing that He will reward us abundantly for this.





**Allah says,**

***“To whoever, male or female, does good deeds and has faith, We shall give a good life and reward them according to the best of their actions.” [16:97]***

Allah then blesses us with His mercy, forgiveness and guidance. We are guided by Allah to what is best for us even if sometimes we don't see this. Allah then has mercy upon us, forgives us when we sin, blesses us, our families and wealth, and gives us His divine care and protection.

The greatest reward is waiting for the believers in the next life. There, they will be granted Allah's mercy and His paradise. In Paradise, they will have every reward they can possibly wish for, and will experience no sadness, pain, illness or death.

However, even though belief in this first pillar of faith is the most important part of faith, the other five pillars are linked to it. We don't truly believe in Allah, if we don't believe in all of His prophets or His revelations. We don't truly worship Allah if we don't accept the Day of Judgement and the concept of reward and punishment. Therefore, it is important to learn about, understand and believe in **all** of the six pillars of faith.



## #2 Belief in the Angels

The second pillar of faith is belief in Allah's angels. The angels were created from light and are a hidden creation who were created to obey and worship Allah. They have no divine abilities but they are different from us and have a different role. They do not possess free will and only do as Allah commands them.

**Allah says in the Qur'an,**

***"...and those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary. They glorify Him tirelessly night and day." [21:19- 20]***

We don't know of their exact number but we know that they are vast in numbers. For example there is a House of Worship (Bait-ul-Ma'mur) in the heavens that the angels visit which give an idea of the extent of their numbers:

**Prophet said:**

***"Then I was shown Al-Bait-al-Ma'mur (i.e. Allah's House). I asked Gabriel about it and he said, this is Al Bait-ul-Ma'mur where 70,000 angels perform prayers daily and when they leave they never return to it (but always a fresh batch comes into it daily)." [Al-Bukhari]***

Our belief in the angels requires us to believe in their existence. We believe in the details that we have concerning them as mentioned in the Qur'an or by the Prophet. For example, the names of some of the angels, such as Jibril, Mika'il, Munkar and Nakir. We believe in the description of Jibril when the Prophet told us that he saw Jibril with six hundred wings covering the horizon.

We believe that they can take the forms of humans as Jibril did with the Prophet and as Allah mentions when he speaks about the angels who visited the Prophets Ibrahim and Lut.

We also believe in the description of their tasks such as worshipping Allah, obeying Him, praising Him and so on.

Additionally, we believe that certain angels have specific responsibilities such as Jibril being the angel entrusted with revelation. Mika'il is the angel of rain, Israfil the angel who will blow the trumpet to signal the Day of Judgement. There is angel of death, angels who are the guardians of the Hellfire, angels who record our actions and others who question the deceased in their graves.

**BELIEF IN THIS PILLAR OF FAITH HAS MANY BENEFITS:**

- ✓ Firstly, it shows to us Allah's greatness, as if He has created the angels in this way and with all these abilities, He is surely far greater.
- ✓ Another benefit is we see the role that the angels play in our lives as Allah sends them to record our deeds and protect us, to supplicate for us at times and help us. This in turn, makes us thank Allah for His blessings upon us.

We love the angels for their worship of Allah.

**Prophet said:**

***"If Allah loves someone, He calls out to Jibril that Allah loves such and such a person so you too love that person. Jibril loves that person and calls out to everyone in the heavens, that Allah loves so and so, therefore also love that person. The inhabitants of the heavens then love that individual and acceptance is written for that person upon earth." [ Al-Bukhari]***



# #3 Belief in the Divine Books

The third pillar of faith is belief in Allah's divine books and revelations.

What is meant by this is the books that Allah revealed to His prophets and messengers. These revelations contained guidance and mercy for those nations and told them what they needed to in order to attain salvation. As Muslims, it is part of our faith to believe that Allah revealed such books and that they came from Him as guidance for mankind.

We believe in all of the revelations in general, and specifically the ones we know by name. They are:

- The Psalms (Zabur) revealed to the Prophet Dawud (David),
- The Torah revealed to the Prophet Musa (Moses)
- The Gospel revealed to the Prophet Isa (Jesus)
- The Qur'an revealed to the Prophet Mohammad

We believe that the Qur'an is the last of the scriptures and therefore takes precedence over the others. Therefore, what is contained in the old scriptures which conforms with the Qur'an we accept, and what doesn't, we reject.

We believe in what those previous scriptures brought of truth but that over time some of what was contained within them has been changed. All the scriptures called to the Oneness of Allah and to worship Him alone, but people changed their beliefs and scriptures and instead claimed incorrect beliefs, such as God having a son.





**Allah says in the Qur'an,**  
***“We sent to you the Scripture with truth, confirming the Scriptures that came before it, and with final authority over them.” [5:48]***

The Qur'an was revealed for all of mankind and as the final revelation until the Day of Judgement. It is the only scripture that Allah has preserved.

**Allah says in the Qur'an,**  
***“Indeed, We have revealed the reminder and indeed, We will preserve it.” [ 15:9]***

This is why there is only a single version of the Qur'an that all Muslims unite upon. It is preserved in the hearts of millions of Muslims all over the world and has been taught in this way from generation to generation.

The Qur'an is there so that we can seek guidance and mercy through it. We learn from its principles, take from its rulings and benefit from its stories.

The Qur'an is our written constitution and the Prophet explained it to us by his sayings and actions. By believing in this pillar of faith we acknowledge Allah's favour upon us that He didn't just command us to believe in Him without further instruction. **His revelation shows His divine care for us.**

We also see Allah's wisdom by sending His revelation to us, although the central message of worshipping one God has remained constant, Allah would send rulings appropriate for each nation, just as the Qur'an has rulings appropriate for people until the end of time.



# #4 Belief in the Messenger

The fourth pillar of faith is belief in Allah's Messengers. We believe in all of Allah's Messengers. A messenger is someone to whom Allah sends revelation and they must convey that revelation to others.

**Allah says  
in the Qur'an,  
"We sent a  
messenger to every  
community, saying,  
'Worship God and  
shun false gods."  
[16:36]**

The first Messenger Allah sent was the Prophet Nuh (Noah) and the last was our Prophet Mohammad. We need Messengers as they are our guides and role models. They teach us how to practically live according to Allah's commands.

Allah has prophets and Messengers. Every Messenger is a Prophet but not every Prophet is a Messenger. The difference between the two is:

- A Prophet is sent to a nation who already believes in Allah as a continuation of that message and with some changes in laws.
- A Messenger is a Prophet who is sent to a people who disbelieve.

All of the Messengers Allah chose were humans. Thus, they eat, drink, get sick and eventually die. They do not possess divine attributes but Allah gives them revelation and supports them by giving them miracles as signs for their people.

As Muslims, we believe in all of the Messengers, that Allah sent them all to their nations and that they conveyed the message given to them with honesty and integrity. None of them ever claimed divinity or that they should be worshipped instead of Allah.

Those who went to extremes with regards to their Prophets fell into worshipping others besides Allah. This was the case with the Christians who took the Prophet Isa and made him God's son. They did so because amongst other things they saw his virgin birth as a sign of divinity.

**Allah says,**  
***"Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him 'Be' and he was." [ 3:59]***



Allah is saying that with their logic, Adam has more right to be God's son as he was created from neither mother nor father.

True Prophets have signs. They are given miracles by Allah such as the staff of Musa or the splitting of the moon by the Prophet Mohammad. However, the Prophet also warned us against false prophets. These are people who claim to have been sent by God but are in reality frauds. The difference between a true prophet and a false one is that a true prophet will only speak the truth, his information will not be contradictory or contain falsehoods. The Prophet is the last of them.

We believe in the specifics we know about them such as their names, many of which are mentioned in the Qur'an, such as Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa and Isa. We believe that there were other Messengers whose names we don't know so we believe in them generally. We believe in all of their stories, what took place during their times and the miracles given to them as long as they are mentioned in the Qur'an or authentically from the Prophet.

All the Prophets are safeguarded by Allah from making mistakes in matters of revelation and religion. We believe that the Prophet Muhammad is the best of the Prophets and Messengers. Those who believe in him as the final Messenger of Allah are given the rewards of entering into Paradise before the other nations, of being witnesses over other nations and having more reward.

The Prophet will have special intercessions which are given to him on the Day of Judgement for his followers. Believing in this pillar of faith shows us Allah's mercy and care for us in that He sent Messengers who would show us and guide us to the straight path. Thus, we love all of these Prophets, respect and honour them and supplicate for them. We pray to Allah and ask Him to grant us their companionship in the highest levels of Paradise.





# #5 Belief in the Last Day

The fifth pillar of faith is belief in the Day of Judgement. It is called the Day of Judgement as it is the Day on which all of us will be judged for our actions in this life.

It is also called the Last Day as there will be no day after it, as it is when the people of Paradise and Hellfire enter into their respective abodes.

It has many other names too such as the Day of Accounting, the Hour and the Day of Return. All these names refer to the same day on which Allah will resurrect us all and hold us to account.

Belief in this pillar of faith is crucial. It is also something which gives us inner peace. It gives the assurance that no one will ever truly get away with doing evil, harm and oppression in this life, even if they are not punished for it in this world. Likewise, the believers who do good and benefit others, will be given their reward even if in this life they are not recognised or rewarded.

This pillar of faith is not just about the Day of Judgement. It includes believing in everything which takes place after death, up until and including the Day of Judgement. Therefore, belief in the Last Day means believing in the life of the grave, and how we will be questioned in our graves after death. Allah will place blessings in the graves of the good and punishment for those who did evil.

The Prophet told us that the good doers will be given a bedding in their graves from Paradise, clothing of Paradise, and a gate of Paradise will be opened into their graves so that they can see its beauty and smell its scent. Their graves will be illuminated and expanded for them. At the same time, for the evil doers, their graves will be restricted further, darkened and a gate of Hellfire opened into their graves so that they may see its horrors and smell its foul odours.

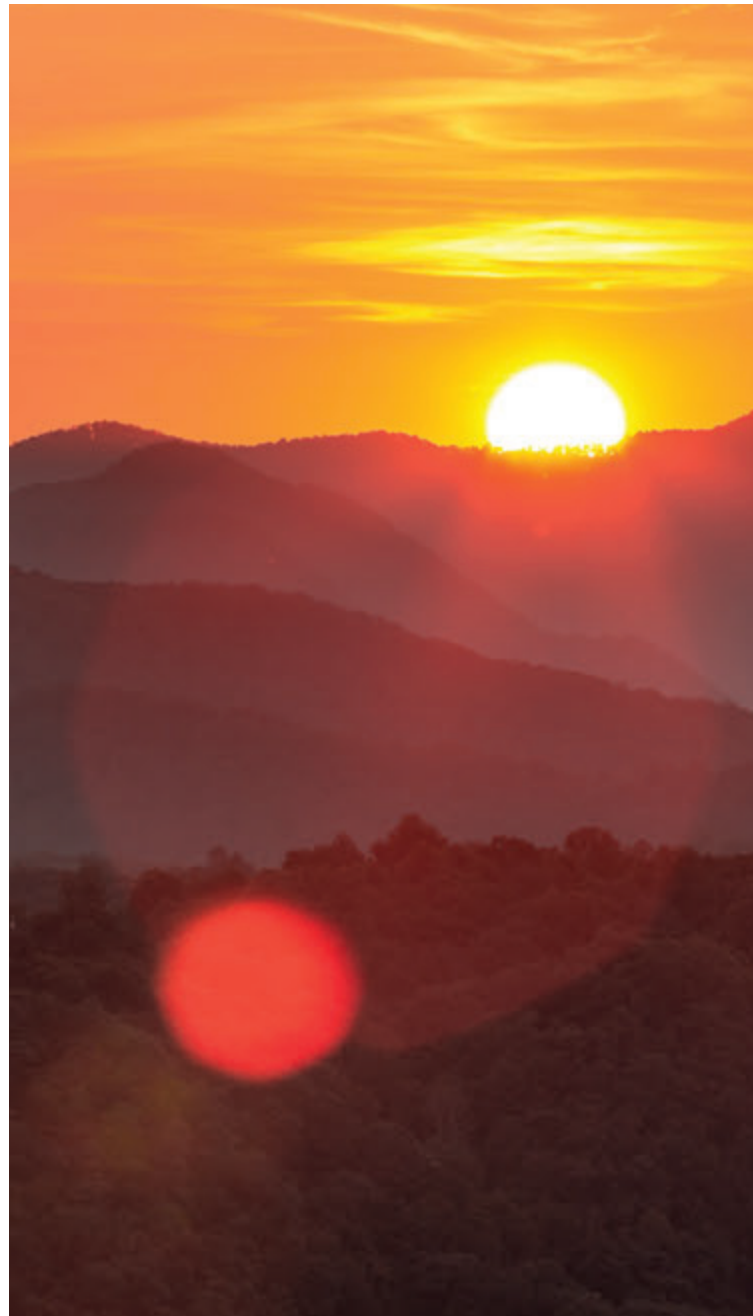
Belief in the Last Day also includes believing that Allah sent signs showing the nearness of the Hour. These signs are many and can be split into minor and major signs.

### The minor signs are such as:

- The death of the Prophet
- The splitting of the moon
- The loss of Islamic knowledge
- The spread of senseless murder
- An increase in earthquakes.

### The major signs are ten:

- The arrival of Imam Mehdi
- The Dajjal Will Come
- The Descent of Jesus
- The Emergence of Yajooj and Majooj
- The Smoke Will Appear
- The Emergence of The Beast
- The Sun Will Rise From The West
- Landslides
- The Fire Will Begin
- The Kaabah Will Be Destroyed



These are all signs to show people the truthfulness of the Day of Judgement and its nearness. Belief in this Day includes believing in resurrection. This means that all of creation on earth will die when the trumpet is blown to signal the Last Day, they will then come to life with the second blowing of the trumpet. That will be a day of terror and fear except for those to whom Allah gives safety.

**Allah says,**

***“People, be mindful of your Lord, for the earthquake of the Last Hour will be a mighty thing: on the Day you see it, every nursing mother will think no more of her baby, every pregnant female will miscarry, you will think people are drunk when they are not, so severe will be God’s torment.” [22:1-2]***

On that Day, people will stand before Allah and be held to account for their deeds. Those who believed and did good deeds will be given a great reward. They will have Allah’s mercy and His pleasure. They will be entered into Paradise for eternity. As for those who disbelieved and did evil deeds, they will incur Allah’s anger and wrath, and they will have His punishment and the Hellfire.

**Allah says,**

***“We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection so that no one can be wronged in the least, and if there should be even the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it out – We take excellent account.” [21:47]***

Thus, Allah will judge people as to their belief in Him and worship of Him alone. He will judge them in respect of their belief in the Messengers and obedience to them and their belief in the divine books and how closely they followed what was contained within them.

Also part of belief in the Last Day is belief in Paradise and Hellfire. We believe that Paradise is the final abode that Allah has prepared for the believers. It contains blessings and rewards, many of which have been mentioned in the Qur’an and by the Prophet. It contains what no eye has seen, no ear has heard nor what any mind can imagine. Its palaces are made from gold and silver, it contains rivers of milk, honey, water and wine. Its clothing is of silk and brocade. Its food and drink is unlike anything found in this world. Its inhabitants will suffer no pain, illness, sadness or death. They will be reunited with the believers from their loved ones, and their greatest reward will be to see Allah.

As for Hellfire, then it is the final abode that Allah has prepared for the disbelievers. It contains punishments and horrors, many of which are mentioned in the Qur'an or by the Prophet. Its inhabitants will be surrounded by Fire. They will have no relief or rest. Each time their bodies are consumed and destroyed by Fire, Allah will regenerate them so that the punishment may continue. Its food is thorny fruit which rips the throat and its drink is boiling oil which burns the body. They will wish for death in it but will not have it.

Belief in this pillar encourages us to worship Allah and obey, to stay away from His disobedience and to hold ourselves to account before we die and are judged by Him. It gives us contentment in knowing that there is a greater court and judge that will right all wrongs and give everyone their due rights.





# #6 Belief in the Divine Decree (Qadr)

The sixth pillar of faith is belief in divine decree. We believe that everything that happens has been decreed by Allah. Allah is Just and oppresses no one. His justice is perfect as Allah says in the Qur'an,

***"He does not wrong anyone by as much as the weight of a speck of dust..." [4:40]***

Allah's perfection necessitates that He is All Knowing and All Aware. For something to happen that is beyond His knowledge is a sign of weakness and imperfection, and Allah is far removed from this. Likewise, for something to happen or take place beyond Allah's control is also a sign of weakness and imperfection, and again Allah is far removed from this. Thus, we believe that Allah has a divine decree.

This belief means that we believe that Allah has complete knowledge of everything. Nothing can exist or take place unless He knows of it and He knows it in intimate detail.

He sees and hears all, and knows all. We believe that Allah has written everything down in the Preserved Tablet.

**Allah says,**

***"Are you not aware that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and earth? All that is written in a Record; this is easy for Allah." [22:70]***

The Prophet told us that Allah had written everything down fifty thousand years before the creation of the heavens and earth.

We further believe that everything that happens does so by Allah's permission and will. Nothing can happen unless He allows it to.

**Allah says,**

***"But you will only wish to do so by the will of God, the Lord of all people." [81:29]***

For something to happen which He doesn't allow suggests that He is not All Powerful and this is not from Allah's perfection. Part of belief in Allah's divine decree is that Allah created everything in existence.

This is an issue which many people misunderstand. Some people think that this then means that Allah likes evil or that He somehow approves of the evil people commit. However, this is not the case. Allah has allowed evil to take place but this does not mean He likes it or approves it. We believe that Allah created us to test us. That test means allowing us to make the choice between good and evil. Therefore, Allah created both but told us to choose the path of good, it is we who then make the choice to do evil by ignoring Allah's commands. We all know and acknowledge that we have free will.

We make decisions based upon that free will on a daily basis, from the smallest of things in choosing what to order in a restaurant to buying things, to choosing who to get married to. Thus, we can't use divine decree as a justification to sin or disobey Allah. Rather, Allah has made clear for us the path of good and evil and it is upon us to make the right decision. This is why Allah sent the Messengers and revealed His books.

**Allah says,**

***"They were messengers bearing good news and warning, so that mankind would have no excuse before God, once the messengers had been sent." [4:165]***

**Allah’s divine decree for us specifically can be broken down into three parts.**



- 1 The first is for our lifetime. The Prophet told us that when life is blown into a baby in the womb, its lifespan, provision, actions and outcome is written.
- 2 The second part is our year to year decree. This takes place on the Night of Decree (Laylat al-Qadr) as Allah says,

***“A night when every matter of wisdom was made distinct.” [44:4]***

- 3 The third part is our daily decree and what will happen on that day. Allah says about Himself,

***“Every day He is at work.” [55:29]***

Belief in this pillar of faith allows us to trust in Allah and that He has decreed for us what is best. The Prophet told us that every decree for the believer is good. If Allah decrees good for us we are grateful, and if He decrees hardship for us we are patient, and both are beneficial for us. By believing in Allah’s decree we remain humble and submissive before Allah, we become content with what Allah has decreed, trusting in His knowledge and justice.

***“How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him.” [Muslim, 2999]***



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