

## THE PILLARS OF FAITH

### The Constituents of Belief

A true Muslim, is characterized by his firm and solid faith and belief. It is the basic motive, which affects all aspects of his life. It is the driving force of his faith, that keeps on prodding a Muslim to remain active and moving all the time. It is for the sake of transmission and dissemination of this faith that Allah Almighty instituted the chain of his apostles and messengers, His books and revelations. The inhabitants of this earth may be divided into two groups. "One is the group of believers who by adopting good faith lead a life of peace and bliss in this world and deserve the eternal bounties and blessings of Allah in the World Hereafter." "The other is the group of people, who, by adopting a wrong faith, lead a life of deprivation and failure in this world and deserve the divinely ordained ordeal in the after-life." "The person of the Messenger of Allah Hadrat Muhammad (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) alone is the source of all knowledge and understanding about divine commandments and prohibitions. He has defined and elaborated all the aspects of the right faith before the human kind." These are: Belief in Allah [Allah Almighty]; belief in the angels of Allah; belief in the Books of Allah; belief in the Messengers of Allah; belief in the Last Day; and belief in divine predetermination. Those who abide by these pillars of the faith, inculcate them, in their minds and behaviour, strive to fulfil their requirements, and maintain the purity of their faith, can successfully withstand the fatal effects of *shirk*. They will be blessed with success and well-being in this world and will deserve the blessings of Allah in the world hereafter. To highlight the impact of adherence to the true faith one story is worth narration here: "The story goes that in the ancient times there lived a tyrant king who was so arrogant as to claim to be God himself. A wizard was attached to his court. One day the wizard said to the king: O my Lord! I have become too old and the days of my life are numbered. I wish that this art of wizardry survives in your court after me. So please arrange some clever and intelligent young man for me whom I could teach my art. The king arranged for an intelligent young boy to become his disciple. There was a church located in the way to the wizard's home. A monk lived there. One day while passing by that church, the young boy sat in the company of the monk there and listened to his talk. His preaching fascinated him so he used to sit in his company every day. On the one hand the monk taught him about the belief in one God and principles of religion and on the other hand the wizard taught him the art of wizardry. It so happened that one day a terrible beast attacked the village in which the boy lived. The horrified

villagers closed themselves in their homes. The boy thought that this is an occasion to test the veracity of the preaching of the monk and that of the wizard. So he took a stone and prayed to Allah the Almighty that if the monk is true please destroy the beast with this stone. With this prayer he struck the beast with that stone which killed it." Next day he told the story to the monk who became very pleased and held the boy in high esteem. He addressed the boy with these words: O my son! God will enable you to show his great tokens to the world through your hands but He will also put you on trial for your faith. At the same time, the monk advised him, not to disclose to anybody that he taught him to believe in one God and to worship Him. If this becomes known the king will give you harsh punishment. Thereafter the boy began curing the sick by the command of Allah, cured the lepers by mere touch of his hands and restored sight to the blind. One blind courtier in the king's court heard of this charisma of the boy and came to him with a lot of gifts and money. He asked him, "if you can restore my eyesight I can give you all my wealth." The boy replied, "I do not cure. It is Allah who cures. I affirm the belief in Him I can pray to Him to cure you." The courtier affirmed the belief in Allah Almighty and with the prayer of the boy for him the courtier regained his eyesight. The next day when the courtier came to the court the king was astonished to see him as a man of sight. He asked, "how it happened." Because the courtier had become a believer he replied forthrightly: It is my Creator who has restored my eyesight. The king asked is there any Creator of you other than me? He said, "quite tranquilly that Allah the Almighty was the Creator of both you and me." The king became very furious and ordered him to be put in prison. He was tortured a lot to reveal the source of his conversion. So he was forced to tell him the address of the boy. The king sent his army to arrest the boy and bring him to the court. He was also tortured a lot until he was forced to reveal the address of the monk. The king ordered that the monk should be brought to him. The king ordered him to renege from his religion but he refused. So the king ordered that he be cut into two pieces by a saw. The courtier was then asked to give up his belief and when he refused he was also cut into two pieces by the order of the king. In the end, the boy was also called for and ordered to give up his faith. When he refused he asked his soldiers to take him to the summit of a mountain and there ask him to forsake his belief. If he does so bring him back to me. If not, then throw him down the summit. The boy prayed to Allah to save him from destruction. So the mountain began shaking and all the soldiers fell down. The boy came back safely to the king's court. The king asked: "where are my soldiers?" The boy replied my God saved me from them. Hearing this king became very furious and ordered other soldiers to take him in a boat to the middle of the river and ask

him if he still insists on his belief. If he says no tilt the boat so he drowns in the river. Then the boy again prayed to Allah for his safety. Allah accepted his prayer and the boat capsized along with the soldiers, but the boy was saved. After this happening the boy thought that he was now the last believer left on the surface of the earth. The monk and the courtier have already been martyred. Since I am the lone custodian of belief, it is my responsibility to transmit it to others. How to do it? He thought out a way of doing it. He went to the king and told him: "If you want to kill me I let you know a technique to do it." The king was surprised to know that the young man was willing himself to embrace death. The king asked: "what is your technique?" "The boy suggested to him to assemble all the population of his city in a big plain. Then put me on a crucifix so that all people see me. Then put an arrow in your bow and then reciting loudly "By the name of Allah who is the Creator of this boy" strike that arrow into my body and it will surely kill me. The king approved it. The whole population assembled in a plain, the boy was put on a crucifix and was struck with an arrow in the desired way. He was dead. But as soon as he was dead the whole population cried out: "We believe in the Creator of this boy, we believe in the Creator of this boy." Thus happened what the king wished to prevent (Muslim).

## Belief in Allah

*Imaan billah* [Belief in One God] is the first pillar of faith. In the tradition of Jibril's encounter with the Messenger of Allah the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied:

« أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ، وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ، وَرُسُلِهِ، وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ، وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ » Faith means belief in Allah; in His angels; in His Books; and in His messengers (Muslim). Belief in Allah is the essence of Islam and the first pillar of the Islamic faith. *Imaan billah* means that a Muslim must affirm that Allah is the Creator of the whole universe. He is the creator of everything and there is none to create anything. He is the giver of life and death. He alone causes the benefit and loss. He alone deserves the submission and devotion of all. Moreover, it is also essential to believe that the divine entity is endowed with all virtues and immune from all defects.

\* \* \*