10839 - Pillars of faith and branches of faith

the question

How do we reconcile the idea that eemaan (faith) means “belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, the Last Day and the Divine Decree, both good and bad,” with the hadeeth in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Eemaan (faith) has seventy-odd branches…”?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Faith in the sense of belief is based on six principles, which are mentioned in the hadeeth of Jibreel (peace be upon him), when he questioned the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who said: “Faith means to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and the Divine Decree, both good and bad.” (Agreed upon).

Faith which includes good deeds of various kinds is that which has seventy-odd branches. Hence Allah called prayer eemaan in the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“And Allah would never make your faith [eemaan] (prayers) to be lost (i.e. your prayers offered towards Jerusalem). Truly, Allah is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind” [al-Baqarah 2:143]

The mufassireen said: “your faith (eemaan)” means your prayers towards Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), because the Sahaabah used to pray towards al-Masjid al-Aqsaa before they were commanded to face the Ka’bah in their prayers.