

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

خطبة الجمعة

# Friday Sermon

*The Key and Its Ridges: Living Lā  
ilāha illa-llāh*

DELIVERED AT

Masjid Adam



ŞİFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC  
FOUNDATIONS &  
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

# The Key and Its Ridges: Living Lā ilāha illa-llāh

## The First Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ  
أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا  
اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَإِنَّ أصدقَ  
الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ  
بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

All praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him, we seek His help, and we seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from our sinful deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever He leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and His Messenger. To proceed: the truest speech is the Book of Allah, the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ, the worst of affairs are the newly invented matters, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ  
الرَّحِيمِ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي \* وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي \* وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي \* يَفْقَهُوا  
قَوْلِي \*

We praise Him, and we send blessings upon His noble Messenger. To proceed: I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed; in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. My Lord, expand for me my breast, and ease for me my task, and untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech.

**Sūrah Tā Hā (20:25 to 28)**

Dear brothers and sisters, **assalāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.**

## A Key That Has Ridges

The great Follower Wahb ibn Munabbih, may Allah have mercy on him, was once asked whether the statement lā ilāha illa-llāh is the key to Paradise. He gave an answer the believers have repeated ever since.

*Yes, it is the key to Paradise. But there is no key without ridges. If you come with a key that has the right ridges, the door will open for you; and if you come with a key that has no ridges, it will not.*

**Wahb ibn Munabbih**

Brothers and sisters, some people take a single hadith or a single verse and build upon it a conclusion the rest of the religion does not support, imagining that whoever merely pronounces lā ilāha illa-llāh with his tongue will walk into Paradise no matter how he lived. But the Qur'an and the Sunnah explain one another, and to know the truth of any matter we must gather what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ said about it as a whole. When we do that with this testimony, we find that it has conditions, ridges upon the key, and it is upon every one of us to make sure our key carries them, so that by the mercy of Allah the door is opened for us. And the first thing Allah commanded regarding this word was not merely to say it, but to know it.

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ

*So know that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and seek forgiveness for your sin.*

**Sūrah Muḥammad (47:19)**

## The First Ridges: Knowledge and Certainty

The first condition is knowledge, brothers and sisters. A person must understand what this testimony denies and what it affirms. He must know the false objects of worship he is rejecting, and he must have a correct knowledge of the Allah he is affirming, for no one can truly testify to what he does not know. And we know our Lord through His creation, through what He told us about Himself, and through what His Prophet ﷺ conveyed to us. There are Muslims today who repeat the Shahādah and pray five times a day, yet see nothing wrong in setting up a law and a way of life in place of what Allah has revealed. We should ask ourselves honestly what kind of testimony that is, when the tongue affirms Allah as the only God while the heart hands its obedience elsewhere.

The second condition is certainty, the opposite of doubt. Our hearts must be absolutely sure of the truth of what we testify, with no wavering after we have spoken it. Allah described the true believers as those whose faith does not flicker.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ \*

*The believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and then do not doubt, but strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is they who are the truthful.*

**Sūrah al-Hujurāt (49:15)**

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ tied this certainty directly to Paradise, so that the testimony without doubt becomes a passport to the Garden.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، لَا يَلْقَى اللَّهُ عَبْدٌ غَيْرَ شَاكٍّ فِيهِمَا إِلَّا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.

*I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. No servant meets Allah with these two, having no doubt about them, except that he enters Paradise.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Muslim 27 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

The scholars warned that the diseases of the heart, the doubts and suspicions a person lets settle in him, are more dangerous to his faith than his lusts and desires. A desire may be satisfied while the heart still knows it was wrong and repents, but a doubt left to take root can linger with no cure until a person slips out of the religion entirely, or keeps practising outwardly while his heart no longer holds true faith. The cure for doubt, after the guidance of Allah, is sound knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and so we should keep away from the sources of doubt, and from any companion, even a Muslim one, who is forever stirring uncertainty about Allah or the religion in a heart that lacks the knowledge to answer it.

And know, brothers and sisters, that the passing whisper of doubt is not itself the loss of faith. The Prophet ﷺ told us plainly where these whispers come from and how to answer them, so that no believer is crushed when Shayṭān tries his heart.

يَأْتِي الشَّيْطَانُ أَحَدَكُمْ فَيَقُولُ: مَنْ خَلَقَ كَذَا؟ مَنْ خَلَقَ كَذَا؟ حَتَّى يَقُولَ: مَنْ خَلَقَ رَبَّكَ؟ فَإِذَا بَلَغَهُ فَلْيَسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ وَلْيَنْتَهِ.

*Shayṭān comes to one of you and says: who created this? who created that? until he says: who created your Lord? So when he reaches that, let him seek refuge in Allah and stop.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 3276, Muslim 134 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

And do not imagine that the very discomfort you feel at such a whisper is a mark against you, for it is the opposite. Some of the Companions came to the Prophet ﷺ and said they found within themselves thoughts so grave that each of them felt it would be a calamity to even speak them aloud. He asked them, have you truly found that? They said yes. And he told them that this very thing, their horror at the thought and their refusal to entertain it, is clear faith. The fact that the evil whisper found no welcome in their hearts, and that they were afraid even to voice it, was proof of how deeply faith was rooted in them. So the believer is not the one who never hears a whisper; he is the one who slams the door upon it, seeks refuge in Allah, and turns back to certainty.

## Acceptance and Submission

The third condition is acceptance. After knowledge and certainty must come acceptance, with the tongue and the heart, of all that this testimony requires. Whoever refuses to accept it and its implications has not entered faith, and we must believe whatever Allah stated in His Book and whatever His Prophet ﷺ stated, without claiming the right to pick what pleases us and leave the rest. Allah condemned those who took the Book in part and discarded the rest. And He told us of a people whose ruin began the moment the word was offered to them and they turned away in pride.

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ \*

*Indeed, when it was said to them: there is no deity except Allah, they were arrogant.*

**Sūrah aṣ-Ṣaffāt (37:35)**

The fourth condition is submission and compliance, which means fulfilling the demands of the testimony with our actions and not only our words. Allah made it a condition of faith itself that we submit to His judgement and the judgement of His Messenger ﷺ in our lives, with no resentment in our hearts toward what He decides.

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيَسْلَمُوا تَسْلِيمًا \*

*But no, by your Lord, they will not believe until they make you, O Prophet, the judge of what is in dispute between them, and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have decided, and submit in full submission.*

**Sūrah an-Nisā' (4:65)**

So our testimony must live in our hearts, our tongues, and our limbs together. In the heart there is love of Allah, fear of Him, and hope in Him. On the tongue there is the open declaration of the word and the speaking of truth. And in the limbs there is the doing of what the testimony demands. The scholars said that the least of this submission, below which there is no claim to faith at all, is the five daily prayers, for whoever abandons even these has crossed beyond the bounds of acceptable submission.

## Sincerity, Love, and Rejecting False Gods

The fifth condition is sincerity and truthfulness. When a person says the testimony, he must say it solely for the sake of Allah and for no other reason, not for the sake of his parents, his friends, or his community. This is something every one of us born into a Muslim family should reflect upon, that we are Muslims for Allah alone and not by mere inheritance. The hypocrites, by contrast, say the testimony without believing it, only to protect themselves or to gain something. And the Prophet ﷺ tied the sincere testimony, spoken truthfully from the heart, to salvation from the Fire.

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَرَّمَ عَلَى النَّارِ مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَتَغِي بِذَلِكَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ.

*Indeed Allah has forbidden the Fire for whoever says lā ilāha illa-llāh, seeking by it the Face of Allah.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 425, Muslim 33 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun 'Alayh

The sixth condition is love, love for Allah and love for His Messenger ﷺ. In Islam the love of Allah is shown by complete obedience to Him, and the true believer places no one as an equal to Allah in his love. Allah contrasted the believers, whose love of Him is greatest, with those who set up rivals beside Him and love them as Allah alone should be loved.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا  
لِلَّهِ \*

*And among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals to Him, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah.*

**Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:165)**

And the Prophet ﷺ taught that this love is the very taste of faith. If anything, brothers and sisters, comes between you and Allah and you let your love for it override His command, you have made it into something worshipped beside Him, whether it is wealth, or status, or your own desire.

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ: أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا.

*There are three qualities whoever has them will taste the sweetness of faith: the first is that Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anything besides them.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 16, Muslim 43 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

The seventh condition is the denial of every other object of worship. It is not enough to affirm Allah; we must also reject all that is worshipped beside Him, for the word itself begins with a negation before it affirms. Allah joined the two halves and called the result a handhold that never breaks.

فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ \*

*So whoever rejects false objects of worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold, which will never break. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.*

**Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:256)**

## The Word the Prophet Lived and Died Calling To

Brothers and sisters, the whole life of our Prophet ﷺ revolved around this single word. When he first stood upon the mount and gathered the leaders of Quraysh, he did not call them to wealth, or to power, or to a new system of taxes and trade. He called them to one word, saying: say lā ilāha illa-llāh and you will succeed. For the sake of that word he and his Companions were beaten, boycotted, starved, driven from their homes, and pursued across the desert. And his Companions held to it under

torture that would break mountains. When Bilāl, may Allah be pleased with him, was dragged out into the burning sand of Makkah and a heavy stone was laid upon his chest to make him renounce his Lord, he did not bargain and he did not waver. He answered them with one word repeated again and again: aḥad, aḥad, One, One. He understood what the testimony demands, that Allah alone is worshipped and Allah alone is obeyed, and no whip and no stone could move that handhold in his heart.

This is the word the Prophet ﷺ lived calling to, and it is the word he longed for every soul to die upon. So when we carry lā ilāha illa-llāh on our tongues today in safety and ease, let us remember at what price it was carried to us, and let us give it the honour in our actions that the Companions gave it with their bodies.

## Holding On Until the Last Breath

And the final condition, brothers and sisters, is that we hold to this testimony until we die, for it means nothing in the Hereafter if it is abandoned before the end. The Prophet ﷺ warned us that the heart is changeable, and that a person is judged by the state in which he leaves this world.

إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ، فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ  
الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا.

*One of you may do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is between him and it but a forearm's length, and then what is decreed overtakes him, so he does the deeds of the people of the Fire and enters it.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 6594, Muslim 2643 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

This should never make us despair, for the same hadith tells of one who does the deeds of the people of the Fire until he is but a forearm from it, and then the decree of good overtakes him and he ends upon the deeds of the people of Paradise. But it should keep us humble and watchful, for we may be practising today and be drawn away tomorrow by power, by wealth, by desire, or by the company of corrupt friends. That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, whose heart was the firmest of all hearts, still clung to the One who turns the hearts and taught us to ask Him constantly for firmness.

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ.

*O Turner of the hearts, make my heart firm upon Your religion.*

**Source:** Sunan at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** Tirmidhī 2140 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

So the means that keep a believer firm are these: the constant checking of oneself, the striving to grow better, the complete avoidance of places of corruption, the keeping of good company, the remembrance of Allah through the Qur'an and dhikr, and the steady asking of Allah to protect us from every evil man and every evil whisper. When we fulfil these conditions and guard these means, then by the grace of Allah we can look forward to meeting Him while He is pleased with us, and to entering His Garden by our key of lā ilāha illa-llāh.

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

*I say this statement of mine, and I seek the forgiveness of Allah for myself and for you, so seek His forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.*

**Closing of the First Khutbah**

## The Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ.

*All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and all his Companions. O Allah, send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad as You sent blessings upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.*

### A Reminder Carried Home

Dear brothers and sisters, in the first khuṭbah we learned that lā ilāha illa-llāh is the key to Paradise, but that no key opens a door without its ridges. We walked through those ridges one by one: knowledge of what we deny and affirm, certainty without doubt, acceptance with no picking and choosing, submission of the limbs, sincerity for Allah alone, love above every other love, the rejection of all false objects of worship, and steadfastness upon all of it until death. The Prophet ﷺ said it is important that we fulfil and meet these requirements in our lives, and not merely enumerate and quote them. So let us turn to what this word means, what it weighs, and how it is meant to live in our days.

### The Meaning of the Word

In simple terms we say that lā ilāha illa-llāh means there is no god besides Allah. But its fuller meaning is that there is no deity worthy of worship and no one worthy of unconditional obedience except Allah. It is a statement of two parts, a negation and an affirmation. Think of Sūrah al-Kāfirūn as an elaboration of the negation, the clearing away of every false object of worship, and think of Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ, qul huwa-llāhu aḥad, as an elaboration of the affirmation, the establishing of Allah alone. So when you say it, you are first emptying the heart of every rival and then filling it with Allah. And it is, as the scholars noted, the statement of sincerity, kalimat al-ikhhlāṣ, so light that the tongue alone can form it without even parting the lips, which is why a believer can keep it running quietly through his heart while he walks, while he works, and while he sits among people who never notice.

### The Heaviest Word on the Scale

And though it is light to say, it is the heaviest thing a servant can lay upon his scale. The Prophet ﷺ described a man brought on the Day of Judgement with ninety-nine scrolls of sins, each scroll stretching as far as the eye could see, and then a single small card is brought out bearing the testimony of faith.

فَتُوضَعُ السِّجَلَاتُ فِي كِفَّةٍ وَالْبِطَاقَةُ فِي كِفَّةٍ، فَطَاشَتِ السِّجَلَاتُ وَثَقَلَتِ الْبِطَاقَةُ.

*The scrolls are placed in one pan and the small card in the other, and the scrolls fly up and the card weighs heavy, for nothing is heavier than the name of Allah.*

**Source:** Sunan at-Tirmidhī **Hadith No:** Tirmidhī 2639 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

This is the testimony said sincerely from a real heart, brothers and sisters, not a word merely moving on a tongue. And the Prophet ﷺ told us that Allah will bring out of the Fire a person who has in his heart even an atom's weight of faith, and the scholars say the foundation of that faith is lā ilāha illa-llāh. So even one whose deeds have fallen far short, if that word is still alive in his heart, is not beyond the reach of Allah's mercy. This must never make us comfortable with sin, but it should fill the most broken among us with hope. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, may Allah have mercy on him, summed up the worth of this word with a beautiful balance.

*Every blessing you are given, you pay for it by saying al-ḥamdu lillāh; but as for Paradise, you pay for it by saying lā ilāha illa-llāh. So lā ilāha illa-llāh is the price of entering the Garden, and al-ḥamdu lillāh is how you give thanks for the gifts along the way.*

**Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī**

## Living It in Real Time

So when we speak of lā ilāha illa-llāh, brothers and sisters, we are not speaking of a phrase said on autopilot. It is a statement meant to reshape an entire life. It decides who we listen to, who we obey, and what truly matters to us. Every time something competes for our loyalty, our ego, our money, our status, our desires, lā ilāha illa-llāh is the truth that puts it back in its place. And when this word truly settles into the heart, it changes how a person moves through the world. You are no longer shaken by what people say of you. Praise does not go to your head and criticism does not crush you, because you already know whom you are trying to please and whom you belong to. That clarity is exactly why the Companions were who they were, for lā ilāha illa-llāh was not only something they believed, it was something they lived.

But we have to be honest with ourselves. Saying it carries responsibility, and it forces uncomfortable questions. Who am I really obeying right now? What am I willing to compromise my dīn for? What exactly do I delay my prayer for? Every time we choose Allah over our desire and over the pressure around us, that is lā ilāha illa-llāh being renewed in real time, and every time we knowingly disobey

without caring, the statement grows weaker in the heart. Most of us imagine that faith only rises and falls through the great sins, but the truth is that most of the damage happens in the small things: the habits we will not take seriously, the excuses we keep making, the moments we know what is right and keep pushing it away. And because faith leaks and weakens when it is not fed, the Prophet ﷺ told us to renew it, and when he was asked how, he named this very word.

جَدِّدُوا إِيمَانَكُمْ. قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَكَيْفَ نُجَدِّدُ إِيمَانَنَا؟ قَالَ: أَكْثَرُوا مِنْ قَوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.

*Renew your faith. It was said: O Messenger of Allah, how do we renew our faith? He said: say lā ilāha illa-llāh in abundance.*

**Source:** Musnad Aḥmad **Hadith No:** Aḥmad 8695 **Authenticity:** Ḥasan

And all of this returns, in the end, to intention.

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى.

*Actions are but by intentions, and every person shall have only what he intended.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Bukhārī 1, Muslim 1907 **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun ‘Alayh

When lā ilāha illa-llāh is sincere, it sets the intention straight. You pray because Allah deserves worship. You stay from sin because Allah is watching. You do good even when no one sees because Allah knows. Tawḥīd is not only the rejection of idols of stone; it is the rejection of showing off, of people-pleasing, and of acting for any reason other than Allah. When intentions drift, our deeds lose their weight, but when intentions are aligned with Tawḥīd, even a small and quiet deed grows heavy on the scale, and a hidden act done sincerely can outweigh a public one done for attention.

## A Practical Plan to Keep the Key

So how do we keep this key bright and its ridges sharp through the week ahead? Keep your tongue moist with lā ilāha illa-llāh, brothers and sisters, and do not let your idle moments pass in heedlessness when this word is free upon the tongue. Build upon it the remembrances the Prophet ﷺ taught us, for he said that whoever performs his wudū well and then bears witness to it has every gate of Paradise opened before him.

مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَيَسْبِغُ الْوُضُوءَ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، إِلَّا فُتِحَتْ لَهُ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ الثَّمَانِيَةِ يَدْخُلُ مِنْ أَيِّهَا شَاءَ.

*There is none of you who performs the ablution well and then says: I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger, except that the eight gates of Paradise are opened for him to enter by whichever he wishes.*

**Source:** Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim **Hadith No:** Muslim 234 **Authenticity:** Ṣaḥīḥ

And make it the word of your hardest hours as well as your easy ones. When distress closes in upon you, turn to the supplication of Yūnus, the testimony that lifted him from the belly of the whale, for the Prophet ﷺ told us that no one in difficulty calls upon Allah with it except that Allah answers him.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ \*

*There is no deity except You; glory be to You. Indeed, I have been among the wrongdoers.*

**Sūrah al-Anbiyā' (21:87)**

Anything that reminds you of Allah, say lā ilāha illa-llāh. When you see the vastness of His power beside the smallness of your own, say it. When He fulfils a promise to you, say it. And above all, live so that you may die upon it, for the Prophet ﷺ stood at the deathbed of his own beloved uncle Abū Tālib, pleading with him to say lā ilāha illa-llāh so that he might testify for him before Allah, and his uncle refused and died upon the religion of his forefathers. Nearness of blood does not open the door, brothers and sisters; only the key with its ridges does. And on another day a Companion, Usāmah ibn Zayd, may Allah be pleased with him, struck down a man in battle after the man had said lā ilāha illa-llāh, thinking he said it only to escape the sword, and the Prophet ﷺ rebuked him gravely, asking whether he had split open the man's heart to know what was inside it. So we honour this word upon the tongue of every person, and we labour to make it true in our own hearts, that it may be the last of our words in this world. For whoever's last words are lā ilāha illa-llāh will enter Paradise.

## Closing Du‘ā

Dear brothers and sisters, let us raise our hands to the One in whose hand are all the hearts. O Allah, make lā ilāha illa-llāh firm in our hearts, truthful on our tongues, and visible in our deeds, and let it be what carries us through hardship, what brings us back when we slip, and what we say at the very last moment of our lives.

O Allah, O Turner of the hearts, keep our hearts firm upon Your religion, and make us steadfast at the time of death upon lā ilāha illa-llāh. O Allah, forgive the believing men and the believing women, the living among them and those who have passed. O Allah, set right the affairs of this Ummah, unite the

hearts of the Muslims upon truth, protect our families and our children, and keep our young ones firm upon faith in an age of trial. O Allah, relieve the distressed, heal the sick, settle the debts of the indebted, and grant safety and provision to our brothers and sisters who are oppressed and afraid in every land, for You are the All Powerful and they have none besides You.

O Allah, forgive us and our parents, and have mercy upon them as they raised us when we were small. O Allah, accept from us our prayers, our fasting, and our standing before You, and overlook our shortcomings and our sins. O Allah, make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts and the light of our chests, grant us beneficial knowledge and hearts that truly fear You, and let our deeds be sincere for Your Face alone. O Allah, admit us into the highest gardens of Firdaws without reckoning and without punishment. Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

### The Final Reminder

Remember the command of your Lord, with which Allah closes the affair, the command of justice and excellence.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ  
يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ \*

*Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives, and He forbids immorality, wrongdoing, and oppression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.*

**Sūrah an-Nahl (16:90)**

So remember Allah, the Most Great, and He will remember you. Thank Him for His favours and He will increase you. And establish the prayer.

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ