

SIFAH LECTURE SERIES

Light on the Tongue, Heavy on the Scale

A practical lecture — knowledge you can act on

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SIFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Light on the Tongue, Heavy on the Scale

The words that cost you nothing yet outweigh mountains on the Day your scale hangs in the balance.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A Test of Quality, Not Quantity

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me begin with a question that Allah Himself answered before you were ever born. Have you ever wondered why you were created? Not in a vague, philosophical way, but precisely, exactly, in the words of the One who made you? Allah did not leave that to guesswork. He opened an entire Surah of His Book by telling us, in a single breath, why He fashioned the two great events that frame every human life: our death and our living. And when you read His words carefully, they change the way you weigh your entire day.

ج
الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

*He who created death and life to test you as to **which of you is best in deed**. And He is the Almighty, the Most Forgiving.*

Surah Al-Mulk (67:2)

Notice the words with the care they deserve. Allah said *absanu* ‘*amalan*, which of you is **best** in deed. He did not say *aktharu* ‘*amalan*, which of you does the **most** deeds. Read that again slowly. It was never a contest of quantity. It was always, from the very first day, a question of quality. And this one distinction, if it truly lands in your heart, will lift an enormous burden off your shoulders. Because most of us walk through life quietly terrified that we are simply not doing enough. Not praying enough, not

fasting enough, not giving enough. But Allah did not build a scale that only rewards volume. He built a scale that reads sincerity.

And here is the mercy hidden inside that. On the Day when our deeds are finally weighed, it is not, in the end, the sheer bulk of our actions that saves us. It is the mercy of Allah, as He looks into the sincerity with which we acted and the acceptance we were begging Him to grant us. Yet one of the clearest ways a servant proves that his heart is sincere is precisely this: that he reaches out and seizes the simple gifts of worship Allah has scattered all along his path. The light words. The easy remembrances. The small acts that cost nothing and weigh everything.

So let me ask you honestly, my dear brother, my dear sister. Can a person really claim to be sincere in seeking Paradise if he will not even stretch out his hand for the *easiest* things his Lord has sent to raise him? Imagine the Day when every single soul is begging, pleading, straining for Paradise, and you discover that you left free treasure lying on the ground your whole life because you were too distracted to bend down and pick it up. That is what this lecture is about. It is about the words that are light on the tongue and heavy on the scale, and about why you and I have no excuse to leave them behind.

THE GREAT BALANCE

The Scale That Will Be Set Up

Before we hold these words in our hands, let us stand for a moment before the scale itself, because if you do not feel the weight of that Day, you will never feel the value of these words. Allah has told us, plainly and without ambiguity, that the balance will be set up, and that no soul, not one, will be wronged by even the tiniest measure.

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ
 شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا
 وَكَفَىٰ بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ

*And We place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. **And even if there be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth.** And sufficient are We as accountant.*

Surah Al-Anbiya (21:47)

A mustard seed. Think about how absurdly small that is. You could hold a hundred of them in the palm of your hand and barely feel their weight. And yet Allah swears that not one of them will be lost, not one will be overlooked, not one good word you ever whispered will slip through the cracks of that reckoning. This is a promise that should make the heart tremble twice: once in fear, that even the smallest sin is recorded, and once in hope, that even the smallest good is treasured.

Salman, may Allah be pleased with him, described this balance in a way that stretches the imagination. He said that if the heavens and the earth and everything between them were placed into just one of its two pans, they would fit, and it would still weigh with perfect precision. Picture that for a moment. The entire cosmos in one pan, and the scale still functions flawlessly, tipping to the exact fraction of a deed. And when the angels behold this awesome sight, they turn to their Lord and ask whom He will weigh upon it. He answers that He will weigh whomever He wills of His creation.

And here is the part that should humble every one of us. The angels, who have never once disobeyed a command, who have nothing whatsoever to fear from the reckoning, still lower themselves before that scale and say that they did not worship Allah as He truly deserves to be worshipped. Why? Because they know their Lord. They know Him in a way we barely glimpse, and that knowledge tells them He is owed far, far more than any worship a scale could ever hold. If the sinless angels feel their worship falls short, where does that leave you and me, who waste our hours and forget our Lord for entire days?

The great scholars of the early generations tried to help us picture this *mizan*. Al-Hasan al-Basri, that giant of the heart, described it in words the believers have carried down the centuries.

He said the balance on the Day of Resurrection has a tongue and two pans, and it weighs the deeds of the servants with a justice that wrongs no one. And then he said something that should stop you in your tracks: on that Day, some people will come forward with their good and their evil in **exact** balance, perfectly even, and these are the ones Allah sets aside, waiting upon His mercy, because they needed *just one more good deed* to tip the scale toward Paradise.

Sit with that image, my dear brother, my dear sister. Just one more good deed. One more *subhanallah*. One more *alhamdulillah* whispered in a moment you would otherwise have wasted. So now I ask you: what are these weighty words, these simple deeds, that you and I can lay into that pan before it is too late? Let us begin, as the Prophet ﷺ began, with the remembrance of Allah.

WORDS THAT FILL THE SCALE

How Heavy the Tongue Can Be

The Prophet ﷺ once gathered a truth so vast into so few words that his Companions never forgot it. He began by telling us that purity is half of faith, and then, without pausing, he turned to the words of the tongue and showed us exactly how heavily they fall upon that balance.

الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ، وَسُبْحَانَ
اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُنِ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Purity is half of faith. Al-hamdu lillah fills the scale, and subhana-llahi wa-l-hamdu lillah fill what is between the heavens and the earth.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 223 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Read what the Prophet ﷺ is placing into your hands. Two phrases. *Tasbeeh*, which is to declare Allah free of every flaw and imperfection, and *tahmid*, which is to praise Him and thank Him. And look at how

perfectly matched they are to the very fears you will carry on that Day. The tasbih affirms Allah's perfection, and what could be more fitting to hold in your hands on a Day when you fear most of all your own imperfections and shortcomings?

And the tahmid praises Allah and thanks Him for blessings you know, deep down, you never thanked Him enough for. The sight in your eyes, the breath in your chest, the roof over your head, the child asleep in the next room. Every one of those blessings, if you praise Him for them, comes rushing to your aid on the Day you need aid most. And when you join the two together, tasbih and tahmid, you reach a phrase the Prophet ﷺ described as beloved to the Most Merciful, light on the tongue and heavy on the scale.

كَلِمَتَانِ خَفِيفَتَانِ عَلَى اللِّسَانِ، ثَقِيلَتَانِ فِي الْمِيزَانِ،
حَبِيبَتَانِ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
الْعَظِيمِ

*Two phrases are **light upon the tongue, heavy upon the scale**, and beloved to the Most Merciful: subhana-llahi wa bi-hamdih, subhana-llahi-l-'azim.*

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 6406 and Sahih Muslim: 2694 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Now let me tell you what a hundred of these words a day will do to the record of your sins, even if those sins had piled up as countless as the foam scattered across the surface of the sea. The Prophet ﷺ said it directly.

مَنْ قَالَ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ فِي يَوْمٍ مِائَةَ مَرَّةٍ، حُطَّتْ
خَطَايَاهُ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ مِثْلَ زَبَدِ الْبَحْرِ

Whoever says subhana-llahi wa bi-hamdih a hundred times in a day, his sins are wiped away even if they were like the foam of the sea.

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 6405 and Sahih Muslim: 2691 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

And it does not stop at the erasing of sins. The Prophet ﷺ told us that for every single utterance of *subhana-llahi wa bi-hamdih*, a tree is planted for the servant in Paradise. So let me ask you the question that should ache in your chest. How many trees in Paradise have you failed to plant? How many oceans of sin could you have washed clean, simply by moving your tongue while you were stuck in traffic, or waiting for the kettle, or walking from your car to your front door?

Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, would make tasbeih twelve thousand times every single day. Twelve thousand. Imagine how his scale must stand on that Day. And here is the wonder of it: those words did not cost him a single coin of his wealth, nor did they steal a single hour from his work. They filled the empty spaces of his life the way water fills a cup. That is the invitation being extended to you right now, in this very moment, before you turn the page.

THE PROPHET'S GENEROSITY

The Gift of the Heaviest Words

Our Prophet ﷺ, who understood the true worth of these words better than any human being who has ever lived, was constantly, tenderly teaching his Companions to trade a little breath for a great weight on the scale. Let me tell you a story that captures his mercy perfectly.

One morning he left the house of his beloved wife Juwayriyah, may Allah be pleased with her, just after the dawn prayer. She was sitting in her place of worship, absorbed in the remembrance of Allah. He went out and attended to his affairs, and returned to her near midday. And there she was, still seated in the very same spot where he had left her, hours later, still making dhikr. He asked her gently whether she had

remained like this since he departed, and when she said yes, he did not scold her, but he gave her four short phrases and told her something breathtaking: that if these four phrases were weighed against the entire long morning of her remembrance, they would outweigh all of it.

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ عَدَدَ خَلْقِهِ، وَرِضَا نَفْسِهِ، وَزِنَةَ
عَرْشِهِ، وَمِدَادَ كَلِمَاتِهِ

How perfect is Allah and praised is He, by the number of His creation, by His own pleasure, by the weight of His Throne, and by the ink of His words.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 2726 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Reflect on the mercy folded into this moment. The Prophet ﷺ did not tell Juwayriyah that her long, devoted sitting was wasted. Not at all. But he lovingly showed her that the door of reward is far wider than she had imagined, that a few words spoken with a present, attentive heart can weigh against hours of repetition. This is the sheer generosity of our religion. Allah does not measure you only by the time you can spare, which for most of us is painfully little. He measures you by the quality and the love behind what you say, and that has no ceiling whatsoever.

So hear this, and let it settle the anxiety in your chest. You need never feel that your scale is beyond saving simply because you lack the hours in the day. The words are short. The reward is without limit. You have only to move your tongue. The busy mother with three children pulling at her, the exhausted worker on a double shift, the student drowning in deadlines, every single one of them has the time for *subhana-llahi wa bi-hamdih*, *‘adada khalqih*. It fits into a single breath, and yet it fills the space between the earth and the sky.

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

When the Poor Feared They Were Losing the Race

Let me tell you about a moment of raw human distress among the Companions, because I promise you have felt something like it yourself. The poor among the Muhajirun once came to the Prophet ﷺ, and

their hearts were heavy with a particular kind of grief. They said that the people of wealth had run off with all the highest ranks and the lasting bliss. And listen to their reasoning, because it is so honest it hurts: they said, we pray just as they pray, and we fast just as they fast. But then they free slaves, and we cannot. They give charity, and we have nothing to give. They spend from their riches, and we have no riches to spend. And so they felt, in their bones, that they had been left behind in the race toward Allah.

Have you never felt that? Have you never scrolled past someone building a masjid, funding an orphanage, giving in ways you simply cannot match, and felt that quiet ache that you are somehow falling behind in the eyes of your Lord? The Prophet ﷺ did not dismiss that feeling. But he did not send those poor Companions away empty-handed either. He handed them words that would let the empty-handed catch up with the wealthy, a remembrance to say after every single prayer.

تُسَبِّحُونَ وَتُحَمِّدُونَ وَتُكَبِّرُونَ خَلْفَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ ثَلَاثًا
وْثَلَاثِينَ

You glorify Allah, praise Him, and magnify Him after every prayer thirty-three times.

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 843 and Sahih Muslim: 595 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

Look at the kindness woven into this answer. No one in this world is too poor, too busy, or too burdened to compete for the very highest of ranks, because the currency of this particular race is not gold. It is the remembrance of the tongue, and that currency is handed freely to every one of us the moment we are born and stays with us until our final breath. The wealthy man may give a thousand in charity. But the man with an empty pocket can sit after his prayer and weigh down his scale with words that cost him not a single coin, and in the sight of Allah he may well outrun the giver.

So let no one ever say that his circumstances have shut him out of the reward. Let no one whisper to himself, when I have money, when I have time, when life calms down, *then* I will get serious about worship. The door the Prophet ﷺ threw open for the poor Companions that day is standing open for you right now, at the end of every prayer you pray. It costs you nothing but attention. Will you walk through it?

Alhamdulillah When It Is Hard to Say

Now I want us to slow down and sit with one phrase in particular, *alhamdulillah*, and with a specific version of it that is the most difficult, and therefore the most rewardable, to say. I am not talking about the alhamdulillah you utter when everything is going your way. I am talking about alhamdulillah when it hurts. Alhamdulillah not in the moment of triumph, but in the moment of trial.

There is the alhamdulillah you say when the obvious blessing has just arrived, when you are holding your newborn child for the very first time, tears in your eyes, overwhelmed with joy. That praise is easy, and it is beautiful, and Allah loves it. But there is another alhamdulillah, one that the tongue can barely form, one that has to climb over a mountain of grief before it escapes the lips. It is the alhamdulillah you say when Allah tests you, and you must bury the very child you once welcomed into the world with such joy. And it is for *that* praise, said at the moment of loss rather than the moment of gain, that the Prophet ﷺ told us Allah builds a house in Paradise.

إِذَا مَاتَ وَلَدُ الْعَبْدِ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِمَلَائِكَتِهِ: قَبِضْتُمْ وَلَدَ
عَبْدِي؟ فَيَقُولُونَ: نَعَمْ، فَيَقُولُ: مَاذَا قَالَ عَبْدِي؟
فَيَقُولُونَ: حَمْدُكَ وَاسْتَرْجَع، فَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ: ابْنُوا لِعَبْدِي
بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَاسْمُوهُ بَيْتَ الْحَمْدِ

*When the child of a servant dies, Allah says to His angels: have you taken the child of My servant? They say: yes. He says: what did My servant say? They say: he praised You and said innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn. So Allah says: **build for My servant a house in Paradise and name it the House of Praise.***

Source: Jami' at-Tirmidhi: 1021 · **Authenticity:** Hasan

There are two phrases of remembrance, my dear brother, my dear sister, that are among the most frequent on our tongues and yet, at certain moments of our lives, become the most difficult words in our entire vocabulary to force out. The Prophet ﷺ told us that the very best remembrance is *la ilaha illa-llah*, and the very best supplication is *alhamdulillah*.

أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَفْضَلُ الدُّعَاءِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

*The best remembrance is **la ilaha illa-llah**, and the best supplication is **alhamdulillah**.*

Source: Jami' at-Tirmidhi: 3383 · **Authenticity:** Hasan

And who ever embodied this praise more perfectly than our beloved Prophet ﷺ himself? When something pleased him, he would say: all praise is for Allah by whose grace good things are completed. And when something distressed him, when grief pressed down on his chest, he would say: all praise is for Allah in every state. Do you see it? His gratitude was never chained to his circumstances. It flowed in the good and it flowed in the bad.

In fact, the Companions said that if you had walked into the masjid and found the Prophet ﷺ in prostration, you would not have been able to tell whether something joyful or something painful had just struck him. Because both drove him to the exact same place: his noble face upon the ground, praising his Lord. Joy took him to sujud. Grief took him to sujud. That was the sanctuary his heart always ran to. And once, while he led the prayer, a man behind him, upon rising from the bowing, spoke words of plentiful and blessed praise, and the Prophet ﷺ later told him what he had witnessed in the unseen.

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ

*Our Lord, to You belongs all praise, praise abundant, pure, and blessed. The Prophet ﷺ said he saw **more than thirty angels racing one another** to be the first to record those words.*

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 799 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

So why is the praise offered in the moment of trial the most precious of all? Let me explain it simply. When Allah gives you an obvious blessing and you say alhamdulillah, you are thanking Him for something you can plainly see and hold. That is good. But when Allah tests you, and you *still* say alhamdulillah in every state, you are praising Him for an unseen blessing hidden behind the trial, a good you cannot yet perceive, from a place of pure trust in His wisdom rather than reliance on His visible generosity. The first kind of praise is training you for the second, exactly as saying la ilaha illa-llah in your days of health and ease is quietly preparing your tongue to say it at the single most consequential moment of your entire existence.

A HIDDEN UNITY

Every Word of Surrender Is a Word of Praise

Now here is a truth so beautiful it ties our whole faith into a single thread, and once you see it, you cannot unsee it. When you look closely at the great phrases a believer reaches for in his darkest and brightest moments, you discover that they are all, at their very root, words of praise.

When you say *hasbuna-llahu wa ni'ma-l-wakil*, Allah is sufficient for us and He is the best of guardians, you are praising His care and His protection. When you say *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn* at the moment of loss, when everything in you wants to break, you are admitting that you belong to Him and you return to Him, and buried inside that admission is a quiet, profound act of praise. Each of these phrases is a confession of your own smallness before Him.

Every one of them is an acknowledgement that you cannot fully understand His plan, cannot fully thank Him for His gifts, cannot fully act as His favours deserve. Allah knows and you do not, and to say so is to praise His knowledge. Allah controls and you do not, and to say so is to praise His power. So every honest word of surrender you ever speak is, beneath the surface, a word of *hamd*. This means that praise is not one small corner of your worship. Praise is the atmosphere your whole faith breathes in.

And the very best alhamdulillah of all is the one offered with a smile upon the face and a heart that beats steadily with gratitude, because our Prophet ﷺ never once sat in self-pity. When we read his blessed life and pass through his seasons of grief, the loss of his children one after another, the crushing rejection at Ta'if when he was stoned and bloodied, the long years of hardship and boycott and hunger, we feel a deep sorrow on his behalf. And yet he himself did not feel sorry for himself. He met every single season with praise. Let that be your share of his way, my dear brother, my dear sister. Not to drown in pity over

what you have lost, but to lift the tongue with alhamdulillah for all that Allah has poured into your life, which is far, far more than you could ever count.

THE FINAL WORD

La ilaha illa-llah at the Last Breath

There is a moment coming for every one of us, my dear brother, my dear sister, when the most frequent word on a believer's tongue suddenly becomes the single hardest word in his entire vocabulary to utter. And that is the moment of leaving this world. The moment the soul is drawn up through the chest, when the eyes begin to close and the tongue grows heavy and unresponsive. Allah has promised that He gives firmness to the believers with a firm word, both in this life and in the next.

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ

*Allah keeps firm those who believe, **with the firm word**, in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah leaves the wrongdoers to stray, and Allah does what He wills.*

Surah Ibrahim (14:27)

That firm word is *la ilaha illa-llah*. And the Prophet ﷺ taught us to gently prompt our dying loved ones with it, to place it on their lips as their soul prepares to depart.

لَقِّنُوا مَوْتَاكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Prompt your dying ones to say la ilaha illa-llah.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 916 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

But here is the sobering reality. How often does the tongue simply refuse? How often are the eyes already closing, the breath already shortening, before a person can bring out that word? I want you to understand something crucial: the one who will say *la ilaha illa-llah* with ease at the end is the one whose entire heart was built upon it across a whole lifetime. You do not stumble into it in your final hour. You are carried into it by the momentum of thousands of days.

And remember, the very first question in the grave will be: who is your Lord? No number of mourners weeping over your grave will answer that question for you. Your wealth will not answer it. Your reputation will not answer it. Only a deep, unshakeable foundation of *la ilaha illa-llah*, laid down brick by brick through years of quiet remembrance, will let the heart hold firm when the angel comes and asks. So keep your tongue moist with it, my dear brother, my dear sister. Do not let a single day pass without *la ilaha illa-llah*, and beg Allah, beg Him sincerely, that it be the very last of your words in this world.

LIVING IT TODAY

These Light Words in a Heavy Age

Now let me bring all of this crashing down into the life you will return to the moment you finish reading. Because it is one thing to be moved, and quite another to be changed. We live, you and I, in an age that has declared war on the empty second. Have you noticed? The instant a queue forms at the checkout, the instant the lift doors slide shut, the instant you finally sit down to rest your bones, what happens? The hand reaches for the phone. Automatically. Without a single conscious thought.

And those idle minutes, the very minutes our righteous forefathers filled with the remembrance of Allah, we now pour into endless scrolling. Into the noise and chatter of strangers we will never meet. Into news designed to agitate the heart and comparisons designed to wound it. So let me ask you a question, and please be honest with yourself, because no one else is listening. What fills your idle moments? When you are simply waiting, what runs across your tongue? What is the default setting of your heart?

Understand this principle, because it governs everything. Whoever trains himself to complain and to curse through the small frustrations of his day, the slow driver, the cold coffee, the delayed train, should not be the least bit surprised when, under the great crushing pressures of life, his tongue knows no other language. You reap the harvest of the seeds you scatter in the small moments. But whoever fills those same idle gaps with *subhanallah* and *alhamdulillah* is quietly, invisibly stacking his scale, breath by breath, while he waits for a bus, or stirs a pot, or walks from his desk to his car. Nobody sees it. But Allah sees all of it.

And these words are a mercy in your hardships above everything else. When the test finally comes, and it will come, when the diagnosis arrives, when the money is lost, when the marriage strains under a weight you did not expect, when the child simply will not be guided no matter how you try, the believer has somewhere for his heart to run that is neither bitterness nor despair. He says *alhamdulillah* in every state, and *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiʿūn*, and in doing so he is praising Allah for a wisdom he cannot yet see. Do not wait for the trial to learn this language. Please, do not wait. Build it now, in your ease, in your comfort, so that when the strike finally lands, your heart already knows the way home.

So make me one small promise. Replace one single habit this week. Let the first reach of your hand in an idle moment be a word of remembrance before it is ever a screen. Just try it for a month, and watch, honestly watch, what it does to the state of your heart.

THE MEANING OF PRAISE

What You Are Really Saying

Let us take a moment to truly understand what leaves our lips when we say *alhamdulillah*, because the word *hamd* is itself one of the mercies of Allah, a comprehensive word that carries more than a translation can hold. The scholars explained that *hamd* gathers together both praise and gratitude at the same time, so that in a single word you are simultaneously praising Allah for who He is and thanking Him for what He gives. It is two acts of worship folded into three syllables.

And understand this: Allah, because He is who He is, does not need your praise in order to be praiseworthy. He is mighty whether or not you acknowledge His might. He is praised in the highest heavens whether or not your tongue ever moves. We even see this reality in His own Book, for do you know who was the first to praise Allah in the Qur'an? Allah Himself. His speech opens with His own praise in Surah al-Fatihah: *alhamdu lillahi rabbi-l-'alamin*. He praised Himself first, teaching us how, and inviting us in. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir drew these two great remembrances together for us beautifully.

He explained that *tasbih* is to declare Allah free of every flaw and deficiency, while *tahmid* is to praise Him for His perfection and His grace. And together, he said, these are the two remembrances that fill the scale on the Day of Resurrection and fill what lies between the heavens and the earth. And then he pointed to how Allah Himself joined them together in His Book.

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ
الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ

So glorify Allah when you reach the evening and when you reach the morning. And to Him belongs all praise throughout the heavens and the earth, and at night and when you are at noon.

Surah Ar-Rum (30:17-18)

Do you see how Allah wraps your entire day in remembrance? Evening, morning, night, and noon. There is no hour of your life He has left uncovered, no gap He has not offered to fill with His glorification and His praise. The invitation is total. All that remains is for you to accept it.

PRAISE AS PRAYER

Hamd, the Most Open Supplication

And here is a beauty in alhamdulillah that should completely reshape the way you make du'a. The Prophet ﷺ called alhamdulillah the very best supplication, even though, when you say it, you are not asking Allah for anything at all. Stop and marvel at that. The best du'a is the one where you request nothing. You are simply praising Him, and the praise itself becomes the du'a, ascending on your behalf.

A man once told the Prophet ﷺ that he did not know all the eloquent supplications, so he would simply praise his Lord and then let his supplication go wherever it went, trusting Allah to handle the rest. And the Prophet ﷺ, rather than correcting him, told him that his Lord loves praise. So take this into your prayer tonight. When you raise your hands, open with alhamdulillah. Then mention His beautiful names. Then recount His favours upon you, one by one. And only then ask Him for whatever you need. You genuinely cannot go wrong when you begin with His praise. And it is the very nature of Allah's excellence that the more you thank Him for what you already have, the more He gives you, again and again, without limit and without end. Gratitude is not the response to blessing; it is the doorway to more of it.

Between Hope and Fear

Before you close this and return to your life, let me leave two truths in your hands, one in each palm, so that you carry them home in balance. Let no one walk away thinking that a busy tongue alone is enough without a striving, sincere heart. And equally, let no one walk away thinking his sins are simply too many, too heavy, too ancient, for these light words to ever lift. Both of those are traps of the shaytan, and both will paralyse you.

The believer walks toward his Lord upon two wings. There is the wing of fear, which keeps him from heedlessness and laziness, and there is the wing of hope, which keeps him from despair and giving up. A bird cannot fly on one wing alone. So if your record of sins troubles you and keeps you up at night, then remember the hundred words that wipe away sins like the foam of the sea, and reach for them tonight, this very night. And if your worship pleases you and you feel yourself growing, then guard it fiercely: keep it sincere, keep it hidden from the eyes of people, and let the angels race one another to record a praise you offered for the Face of Allah alone.

Before you leave, ask yourself a few honest questions, and do not rush past them. When did your tongue last move with subhanallah outside of a prayer? How many of your idle hours yesterday were given to remembrance, and how many were surrendered to distraction and noise? And this one above all: if your soul were taken from you tonight, what would be the last word it had grown used to saying? These questions are not meant to crush you. They are meant to wake you. Because the one who weighs himself honestly in this life will find his weighing in the next made light and easy. So do not pass over the answers in a hurry. Carry one of them home. And let it change a single habit, starting today.

☰ Your Action Plan: Light Words, Heavy Scale

Don't just read — choose what you will act on this week. These words cost you nothing and weigh everything.

1 Attach dhikr to your prayers

After every fard prayer, before you stand up and reach for your phone, say subhanallah, alhamdulillah, and Allahu akbar thirty-three times each. This is the very race the Prophet ﷺ opened for the poor Companions, and it is open for you at the end of every salah.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

2 Set a hundred-word portion

Commit to saying subhana-llahi wa bi-hamdih one hundred times each day. This alone wipes sins like the foam of the sea and plants a tree in Paradise for each utterance. Break it into batches during your commute, your walk, or your chores.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

3 Redeem the idle moment

The next time you reach for your phone in a queue, a lift, or a spare minute, let your tongue move first with a word of remembrance before your hand ever touches the screen. Retrain the default setting of your heart.

TODAY

Make it last: once you begin today, keep it every day after — until it becomes a permanent habit for life.

4 Practise praise in trial

The next time something small goes wrong today, the traffic, the spill, the delay, catch yourself and say alhamdulillah 'ala kulli hal, all praise to Allah in every state. Train the tongue now, in ease, so it holds firm when the real test lands.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

🚩 The 7-Day Heavy Scale Challenge

For the next seven days, wage a quiet war on the empty second. Every idle moment that used to belong to your screen now belongs to your Lord: subhanallah while you wait, alhamdulillah while you walk, la ilaha illa-llah before you sleep. Say subhana-llahi wa bi-hamdih one hundred times each day and complete the tasbih after every prayer. On the seventh day, notice how much lighter your heart feels and how naturally the words now rise to your tongue. Then do not stop, because these seven days are not the goal. They are the foundation of a lifetime of a moist and remembering tongue, so that when your final breath comes, la ilaha illa-llah is already waiting there, ready and familiar, to be the last word you ever speak. And once these days are done, don't let it stop — let it become a lasting habit of the heart, carried for the rest of your life.

✍️ Make it stick — and make it last

- ✓ **Write it down.** Put your chosen action on a sticky note on your mirror, desk, or fridge — somewhere you cannot miss it.
- ✓ **Print this plan** and tick each action off as you do it.
- ✓ **Set a daily reminder** on your phone or calendar so it never slips your mind.
- ✓ **Keep a one-line journal** each night — did I do it today? how did it go? — and watch your streak grow.

Don't aim for one good day or week — aim to keep it for life. A habit only counts once it outlives the challenge.