

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2005

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا  
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.  
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Praise be to **اللَّهِ**.

We praise him and ask him for help and forgiveness. We ask him for protection from the evilness in ourselves and from our bad deeds. Whomever God guides to the truth no one will lead astray, and whomever He leads astray, no one will ever guide.

I testify that there is no God but **اللَّهِ** to whom there is no partner  
and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is his servant and messenger

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ، وَالتَّنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ،  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (الحشر ، 18)

*"O you who believe, fear Allah, and let every soul look to what (provision) it has sent forth for tomorrow. And fear Allah, for Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that you do" (S59, A18)*



Dear brothers and sisters, ASA.

Brothers and sisters, before we start the khutbah, it is very important for us as a Muslim community to stand fast together in this turbulent and testing period. Our faith is being tested. Our beliefs are being tested. Our understanding of Islam is being challenged. The tragedy is that all these tests and challenges are being imposed on us by other fellow Muslims. We, the Muslim community of Altrincham, condemn without any reservations or any shadow of doubt the indiscriminate murder of innocent civilians in the London bombings, carried out by fellow Muslims. These despicable acts can never be justified or condoned, for in doing so we acknowledge that we ourselves also lack the understanding of this beautiful religion. The religion of peace "Salaam", the religion of submission to the will of God, "Islam", and the religion that the rest of the world will be judged by, and not the reverse:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ  
الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

*"Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced, that you may bear witness over the nations, and the Messenger will bear witness on you" (S2, A143)*

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ  
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

*"You were the best of nations evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah" (S3, A110)*

When we read these two ayahs and contemplate their meanings, we have to ask ourselves, were does this atrocity fit in our religion. The clear answer is that it doesn't, it never did and it never will. It is our duty to understand Islam as Islam dictates. It is our duty to present Islam as it should. Our guilt in what has happened is that even ourselves, including myself are still far removed from the ideals of Islam. The ideals that have lifted the Ummah from the Jahilliah into the beacon of light that Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup> has blessed the world with. Until we condemn these acts of indiscriminate violence and acknowledge that the ends can never justify the means we will never elevate our spiritual status to justify our belonging to the Ummah described in these two ayahs.

ISA, as we continue with our understanding of Al-Fateha, it should become very clear to us that those who commit such indiscriminate acts of violence against innocent civilians haven't understood this beautiful surat. They have not understood the words:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah, Most Merciful in Essence,  
Most Merciful in Deeds*

May Allah forgive us and guide us to the truth, and give us the courage, patience and resolve to abide by the truth, Ameen.

Now for Al-Fateha:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*"Praise be to Allah, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds" (S1, A2)*

We are still at the beginning of the first surat in the Holy Quran. We are reminded that this surat has been described by The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> as "As-Salat", as we have heard:

لا صلاة لمن لم يقرأ بفاتحة الكتاب

*There is no prayer for he who does not recite the Fateha of the Book.*

Al-Fateha has also been described as "Surata-Al-Hamdi": **سورة الحمد**

Because it opens with: **الحمد لله رب العالمين**

It is also known as Al-Fateha, or the opening, as the Holy Quran opens with it. It is known as Ummul-Ketab, that is, the foundation of the book, as we read in the Holy Quran:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ  
وَأُخَرٌ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ

*"He it is Who has sent down to you the Book: in it are verses fundamental (clear in meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: and others not as discernible in meaning." (S3, A7)*

The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said that all of the Quran is encompassed within this surat. In another hadeeth, The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said that the Quran has been summed up in the Fateha, and the Fateha has been summed up in:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

جُمِعَ الْقُرْآنُ فِي الْفَاتِحَةِ ، وَجُمِعَتِ الْفَاتِحَةُ فِي ☆ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ☆

This sura also has a special standing because it opens with the ayah:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Before we start addressing this ayah, you may remember from the last two khutbahs that:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

And

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

are not just mere sentences to be simply remembered and uttered in a traditional manner, but they are wide reaching concepts that should encompass our lives in all that we feel, think and do.

They clearly define specific aspects of our relationship with Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup>. A relationship that we need to understand, develop and nurture. After all, Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup> has created us, created everything around us, guided us, will deliver us, will judge us and will reward and punish us accordingly. We cannot escape from developing a relationship with Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup>. So we need to know how to establish and maintain this special relationship. We had many examples of how unfortunately these two sentences have become a custom and a tradition far removed from their meanings and values. They no longer form part of our relationship with Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup>.

The same, brothers and sisters, can be said of:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

The concepts relating to "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi-Rabbi-Alalameen" are many, and ISA we will try to understand some of the concepts and values of this aya. Some of these concepts are easy to grasp, but others require thought and contemplation. It is very likely that we will not be able to cover all the concepts relating to "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi-Rabbi-Alalameen" in this khutbah, and ISA we can cover the rest in the following khutbah. A reminder again, that ISA, all the khutbahs are now on a website. If you want access to them please let me know. I have placed the website address on the leaflet at the entrance of the mosque along with the password.

The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said:

الْحَمْدُ عَلَى النِّعْمَةِ أَمَانٌ مِنْ زَوَالِهَا

"To give Allah praise for a blessing is an assurance against its loss"

This is the first concept. This hadeeth tells us that whatever blessing Allah has bestowed on any of us, by us praising Allah for that blessing, it is an insurance from Allah against its loss. When we buy a car, a house or anything valuable, one of the first things that we do is that we insure it at a premium. We also have to insure it year on year. We in fact insure many things. Our credit cards are insured, our health is insured and our income is insured. Why do we do that? The answer is simple, it is mainly for the *consequences* of loss or damage. The insurance *does not guard against loss*, but it simply softens the blow.

Well, here we have a very simple insurance policy given to us by Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup> which actually insures against loss. All we are asked to do is to praise Allah for that blessing. We do however need to be clear on what giving praise to Allah entails, and this will become clearer later on. For now, we need to remember that:

أَلْحَمْدُ عَلَى النِّعْمَةِ أَمْلَأُ مِنْ زَوَالِهَا

The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> also said: مَا مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ إِلَّا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْهَا

This is the second concept relating to "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi".

*No matter what blessing has been bestowed by Allah, "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is more valuable than the blessing itself.*

This is a very important statement. No matter what blessing has been bestowed on us by Allah, when we give praise, when we say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", this is regarded by Allah to be more valuable than the blessing itself.

What does it mean? The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> is telling us that whatever the blessing, when

the person says these two words **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**, they are worth more to Allah than the blessing that has been bestowed.

For example, if Allah has blessed you with a valuable house, by saying "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", these two words are worth more than this house. In fact if the person has been blessed with all that this world has to offer from wealth, health, and everything else, by saying "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", to Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup> this is worth more than all of that. This is an amazing concept and ISA we will find out later why this is the case. We will understand why "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is so valuable, and why we should never let it slip out of our hands. Imagine if someone comes to us with an insurance policy that guarantees the product itself forever, the policy itself has more value than the product, and the premium is two words: what will your response be? Do you go to another insurance provider? In fact can any other insurance provider beat this offer?

In the vast history of Muslim scholars we have many examples of applying the concepts of Islam properly. This story may highlight how some scholars understood the meaning of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi". Let us listen to this story about one such previous scholar. ISA we will find it an important lesson to all of us. This is the story of a judge named Shuraih, or Abu-Ummaya.

Al-Sha'abi met Shuraih the judge and asked him how is he at home?

كَيْفَ حَالُكَ فِي بَيْتِكَ؟

Shuraih replied for the past twenty years, I have not come across anything at home that has caused me any distress or unhappiness. How many of us can give the same answer? So he exclaimed, how come that is so?

Shuraih replied, I married a good woman from a good family. **إِسْرَاءُ صَالِحَةٌ**

Shuraih continued, when we were alone, the first thing I did was to pray two raka'as to Allah in praise for the blessing of a good wife. He said, as soon as I finished my prayers, I found her behind me praying the same, and giving praise and thanks to Allah for the same blessing, the blessing of a good husband. As I came close to her, she said, I am still a stranger to you, I do not know what your likes and dislikes are. Tell me what you like so as I have it for you, and tell me what you dislike so as I avoid it. You have married from among your people a woman that is compatible to you and I have married a man that is compatible to me. However, I married you according to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. So fear Allah in your dealings with me, and abide by Allah's words:

فَامْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ

*"Keep together on equitable terms or separate with kindness" (S2, A229)*

The first lesson from this story is that when Shuraih got married, the first thing he did in response to this blessing is that he prayed to Allah in praise and thanking Allah for the blessings of a good woman. No sooner has he finished his prayers, and twenty years down the line, this blessing is still there. Shuraih and his wife understood clearly and fully the benefit of praising Allah for His blessings, and took on the proper insurance policy. They did not have marriage counsellors in those days. They did not live with each other for a few years to find out if they are compatible. They did not try each other out before settling. No, what they did was to acknowledge the blessings of Allah, they gave praise and thanks to Allah, and they lived according to the laws of Allah. If we truly praise and thank Allah for His blessings on us, it is an insurance against its loss, whatever this blessing may be.

The blessing of sight, the blessing of hearing, the blessing speech, the blessing of health, the blessing of the mind, and so on. Do we praise Allah to ensure these blessings. Do we praise Allah for these blessings and use them in seeking the pleasure of Allah, or do we ignore that, or worse still, do we use these blessings in disobeying Allah. Another hadeeth confirming this concept:

مَا أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى عَبْدٍ نِعْمَةً قَبْلَ الْحَمْدِ لِلَّهِ إِلَّا كَانَ الَّذِي أُعْطَاهُ أَفْضَلَ بِمَا أَخَذَ

*Whatever blessing Allah has bestowed on a servant, and that servant says "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lah", what this servant has given Allah in return, is regarded by Allah as better than the blessing bestowed.*

This is a very important concept to grasp brothers and sisters. We sometimes put a great deal of importance on our worldly possessions. A beautiful house, an expensive vehicle, a large family, a good job, a status in the community, good health and many other examples. These possessions and attributes are but blessings from Allah. When one looks carefully at the values of what we have, you will quickly realise that it is infinitesimally small to what the bounties of Allah are. Unfortunately, we tend to forget this. The reminder that "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is worth more reminds us of our

relationship with Allah, and of the fact that all that we have, if not linked to an appreciation of Allah then it is of no true value what-so-ever.

Allah reminds us that the true value in our possessions is in our appreciation of Allah. For example, let us say that someone has a mansion worth millions of pounds, and a salary that is equally obscene. For someone who does not believe in Allah, one may say that this is a very lucky and fortunate person. He is wealthy. But for us Muslims, for those of us who understand the vale of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", we know that if that person does not praise Allah for this blessing, the end result is very grave indeed. However, if that person does praise Allah, we all know that that praise is worth more than all his wealth.

The statement of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is in fact an acknowledgement of Allah. Just as with **أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ** and **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ** , both being an

acknowledgement of Allah, "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is an acknowledgement of Allah. Once you have accepted this acknowledgement, you have accepted Allah the Provider, Allah the Sustainer, Allah the All-knowing and so on. If you know this fact, that is all you need to know. But, if you are not aware of it, you are at a grave loss.

If you possess the whole world and you say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", it is worth more to Allah than all that possession. In fact, in view of the profound meaning of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", scholars have argued as to which is a more profound statement of acknowledgement of Allah.

**لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ أَمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**

In view of this special relationship with Allah, some scholars argue that "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is more profound.

Now for the third concept. This concept relates to the letters "Al-", in "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi". What do these two letters mean? In grammar, the "Al-" indicates the all encompassing. The Holy Quran did not state "Hamdan-Lil-lahi", but stated "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi". "Hamdan-Lil-lahi" would indicate only a portion of the praise is to Allah, or worst still, others can share in the praise. **NO!** The "Al-" in "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" indicates that it is **ALL** praise is to Allah, and all praise is to Allah **ONLY**. When we wish to give praise it is given to Allah, and we should not share anyone else in that praise.

This is another story narrated in our history that exemplifies this concept, and highlights to us how some early Muslims applied their understanding of these concepts. It is an elaborate story, but because the meaning is so well defined it is worthy of repeating. Al-Hajaaj ordered the execution of ten men. Some of you who are familiar with the history of the period of Al-Hajaaj, would be familiar with the manner in which he ruled in Iraq. He was very brutal and harsh, and executions were a common event. By Maghrib prayers, only one man was left, and he was destined to be executed the following morning. Al-Hajaaj ordered one of his Wazeers to keep him in custody overnight for his fate in the morning. On their way, the condemned man told the Wazeer that he was innocent of any wrong doing, and he begged the Wazeer

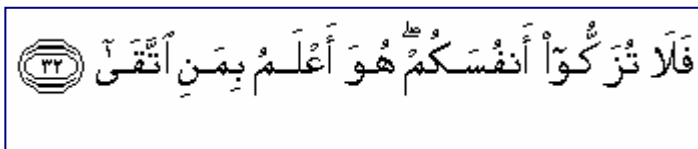
to allow him to go and have his peace with his family before his death. He pledged an oath by Allah to return by the dawn prayers. The Wazeer laughed and was having none of that. After incessant begging and promising to return, the Wazeer gave up and let him return to his family.

The Wazeer had a sleepless night for if this man does not return, it is his neck that is on the line. No sooner did the Fajr azan go, this man was knocking on the Wazeer's door. He came back to his death. In the morning, the Wazeer told the Hajaaj of the event. Al-Hajaaj told his Wazeer, if you want to keep this man as your slave, you can have him, and the man was pardoned. As the two left, the Wazeer said to the man, you are free to go. The Wazeer has saved this man's life from a sure death, and then followed his good deed by releasing him from slavery. What did this man do? What would you expect him to do? His response illustrates the meaning of Al- in "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi".

This man did not turn to the Wazeer in thanks and he did not speak to him. What he did was he turned to the heavens and said: "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lah", and he walked off. Understandably, the Wazeer was hurt by this man's response. Not even a word of thanks.

Three days later, the freed man came back to the Wazeer and thanked him abundantly for his good deeds and explained to him his actions on the day. He told him that on the day when he was pardoned and freed, he could not bear giving praise to anyone else but Allah. At that moment, this man felt unable to even share "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" with the man that saved his life twice. This man understood the meaning of Al-Hamdu. He understood that it means that ALL praise is to Allah and Allah alone. Whatever happened on the day, it happened by the will of Allah, and praise is to Allah and Allah alone. Yes, we do and we must acknowledge the work of others, (*He who has not thanked others has not thanked Allah*), and probably none of us will get to the state demonstrated by this man in the story. But we need to be careful and we need to understand that when we are praising and thanking others, we do not forget Allah.

In fact we need to be very careful when we praise people. Our praise is based on our superficial knowledge of people, which is not always complete. So even when there is room for praising people, we need to be very careful, and we need to remember this aya:.



*"Do not praise yourselves, for Allah knows best who it is that fears Allah" (S53, A32)*

For instance, if you are helped in a business deal, or you were given good advice, or had good medical treatment, the natural impulse is to thank people as if it was only their input that was all important. We, somehow, forget that it is Allah, Allah is the one that ordained everything. Allah ordains success and failure, Allah alone ordains sickness and health. Therefore, one of the main concepts of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is that it denotes all praise be to Allah, and Allah alone. For indeed, as Muslims, we are very much aware that no one but Allah is deserving of praise.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

In this context is the basic premise of the relationship of the Muslim with his Lord. If we understand this concept “All praise is to Allah and Allah alone”, we are a long way in understanding this relationship. If we understand that “All praise be to Allah and Allah alone”, we start to understand the power of Allah, the bounties of Allah, the blessings of Allah, the mercies of Allah and so on. All praise means All praise.

أقول قولي هذا وأستغفرُ الله لي ولكم

2<sup>nd</sup> Khutbah:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ثُمَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ . الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شَرِّهِ  
أَنْفُسِنَا وَسَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا . أَمَا بَعْدُ :

Now for the next concept. The Prophet<sup>(SAAWS)</sup> said:

الْحَمْدُ رَأْسُ الشُّكْرِ

Al-Hamdu (that is giving praise), is the basis of giving thanks.

What does this mean?

When we say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", or all praise be to Allah, we have not done any physical thing. We have taken no action. All we did is that we simply uttered the words. It is what we believe these words mean and the manner in which we act accordingly that makes "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" very important in our lives.

Again, this is similar to what we said about "A'ouzo-bil-lahi" and "Biss-mil-lahi". It is not just the words, but the manner in which we understand and apply these words that is important. To give an example, how many of us when asked how are you, or how do you feel, or how are things getting on, would say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi". Probably everyone. It is very customary to say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi". The crunch is, do we really mean it. Do we really mean "All praise be to Allah", or are these just meaningless words. Are we saying "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" because we truly believe it, because if we do, we should act accordingly.

When you say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" about your job, do you then look around you and say, I know so and so who earns more than I do for the same work. Do you say I am fed up with what I have and why does not Allah grant me something better. Do you say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" about your house, your car, your bank account, your children, your wife, your family, your friends, your neighbours and then moan about it. If that is the case, then "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" that you have just said is truly meaningless.

The very important concept here is that when you say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" you mean it. That is, you accept what you have and you accept it as a blessing from Allah, and

you wilfully praise Allah for what you have. By this wilful acceptance, "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" becomes a state of mind, and not just a few mere words. Until you achieve this state of mind, you can never thank Allah in real terms. Your behaviour will never change. You will always feel you are lacking. You will not be able to fulfil your relationship with Allah until you submit to this concept. If you do not submit to this concept, your conduct will be lacking. If you do not submit to this concept, your conduct will never change, and it will never truly reflect what you say. There will always be an element of hypocrisy in what you claim to say and what you truly believe. The common expression is that "you say it, but you don't mean it".

Brothers and sisters, the concept of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" is a state of mind. It is a belief. It is a submission to the will of Allah.

Imagine if you are able to say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" what ever befalls you, good or bad. How strong will your character be? How steady will you be when the daily bashing of good news and bad news hit you? When you are able to say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" come what may, it is a testimony that you have truly understood your relationship with Allah. You praise Allah for everything.

We started the first khutbah with "**A'ouzo-bil-lahi**", Allah the protector, then we had "**Biss-mil-lahi**", Allah the Creator, the Provider, the Merciful, and now we have "**Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi**", which is your total submission to the will of Allah by giving Him All praise come what may.

If you know and live "A'ouzo-bil-lahi", you will never fear anything or anyone but Allah. If you know and live "Biss-mil-lahi", you will always act as Allah has guided you, and if you know and live "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", you will always accept your predicament. Just imagine that person, that Muslim. A Muslim who fears no one but Allah, acts as Allah has guided and is accepting of all that Allah has blessed him with. Why can't we be such a Muslim? Three sentences that if we truly believe in and act upon, our lives will be immensely bettered, both in this life and in the hereafter.

Brothers and sisters, we recite the verse **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ** about 40 times a day. Ask yourself, are you up to this verse. Are you in the right state of mind? Do you really believe and act according to these words.

We have yet to cover other important concepts of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi", and ISA we will do that in next Khutbah. These are the amazingly beautiful first verses of the Holy Quran. We need to grasp their meanings and we need to apply them in our everyday lives. This is how we as Muslims, can enrich our lives and the lives of those around us, and not extinguish it in an act of senseless violence.

Continuation of preparation (not included in the khutbah):

يا رَبُّ هَلْ أَنْتَ رَاضٍ عَنِّي ، قَالَ يَا عَبْدَ هَلْ أَنْتَ رَاضٍ عَنِّي حَتَّى أَرْضَ عَنْكَ

الحمدُ لله في السراء والضراء ، في الغنى والفقر ، في القوة والضعف ،  
في إقبال الدنيا وإدبارها ، في العز والنذل ، الحمد لله على كل حال

الحمد لله الذي لا يُحمد على مكروهٍ سواه

Scholars explained that there are four aspects to the praise of Allah. First is the praise to the essence of Allah. Second is praise to a blessing that Allah has already given. Third is praise for a blessing that you ask of Allah. Fourth is praise in fear of Allah. These four aspects of praise cover everything. Whenever we praise Allah, it is for one or more of these four reasons. Now listen to the verses and the manner in which they have been set:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

This is praise to the essence of Allah

رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

This is praise to all of Allah's the blessings in this world

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

This is praise to what we ask of Allah's mercies

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

This is praise in fear of Allah, Master of the day of judgement

Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup> start the Holy Quran with. **الحمد لله رب العالمين** We  
also know that the last words the believers utter as they enter paradise are:

الحمد لله رب العالمين

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
 يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِآيَاتِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي  
 جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٩﴾ دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ  
 فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَعَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

*"Those who believe, and work righteousness, their Lord will guide them by their faith, beneath them will flow rivers in gardens of bliss. Their prayer therein: "Glory to You, O Allah, and "Peace" will be their greeting, and their last prayer will be: "All praise be to Allah, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds" (S10, A9-10)*

### الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Allah has ordained that we establish our praise to Allah at the beginning, and this praise is fulfilled at the end. What an amazing concept. We first start with "all praise be to Allah" with the hope in Allah's mercy, and we end with "all praise be to Allah" having been granted this mercy.

Another concept of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" that we fail to grasp is that we tend to say it only when we perceive that something good has happened to us, and we fail to say it when something bad happens. For instance, we have no hesitation in saying "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" when we hit a good business deal, when we get on the housing ladder, when we achieve success in education, when we have a healthy family and children, and so on and so forth. We do however fail to invoke the same words and feelings of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" when something bad takes place. This is again a very important concept in understanding our relationship with Allah.

We all praise Allah for the creation of the heavens and this world. We praise Allah for our own creation and for everything created around us for our benefit. We also praise Allah for giving us the mercy of Islam and for guiding us onto the straight path.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

*"All praise be to Allah Who created the heavens and the earth" (S6, A1)*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا

*"All praise be to Allah Who guided us" (S7, A43)*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيَّ عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ عِوَجًا ۗ

***"All praise be to Allah Who has sent to His servant the Book, and has allowed therein no crookedness" (S18, A1)***

In these three ayahs, the praise given to Allah for giving us the mercy of His guidance and the mercy of this Holy Book is equivalent to the praise for the creation of the whole universe and all the heavens. When we praise Allah for guiding us, we need to remember the value of this blessing, the blessing of guidance. Allah reminds us that it is equivalent to the creation of the heavens and earth. Brothers and sisters, the blessing of guidance is enormous.

Now for another cruncher. When you want to thank someone for something, what do you do? How do you go about thanking someone who helped you out in a difficult situation, or a person who stood by you, and so on. It can be difficult. You like to match your thanks to the deed given. If that is the case, how do we thank Allah for all that Allah has blessed us with? If we were to try and find out how to thank Allah, we would have extreme difficulty. In those nations who do not know Allah, we hear of all sorts of offerings in thanks. In the past some nations gave offerings to the gods by killing a human being. We hear of all sorts of weird and wonderful things. Yet, in Islam, even this difficult task, the task of thanking the Creator, the Cherisher and the Sustainer, has been made simple for us. We say "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi".

Allah<sup>(SWT)</sup> tells us that by us knowing Allah and by us acknowledging Allah, we give praise to Allah. Allah knows that we will never be able to know how to thank and praise Him, and He helped us with this task. He helped us with "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi". This is the complex and amazing concept of "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi". We utter it hundreds of times and we do not stop and ponder as to its meanings. When we understand what "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi" stands for, our love for Allah grows immensely. Our comfort in Islam grows immensely. One can only conclude with "Al-Hamdu-Lil-lahi".

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ