



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

### Understanding “Allahu akbar”

#### INTRODUCTION

Everyone Muslim, whether they are practising or not, understands the meaning of “Allahu akbar”. It is a phrase that has been used daily by ALL MUSLIMS. The west and the western media on the other hand, has hijacked this phrase to implicate Muslims when a terrorist incident was about to happen, which they described as “islamic terrorism” or “islamist ideology”.

Islam means complete submission and you will also achieve peace. When you say “Assalamu’alaykum” you are actually using Allah’s Name of As Salam which means The One Who Grants peace and security to all of His Creations. Surely “Islamic terrorism” does not exist because Islam propagates only peace.

Allah Reminded us in the Qur’an surah 5 verse 32:

أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا  
النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

“...if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind...”

And in the first part of the Last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam: Our beloved Prophet said:

“...O People! just as you regard this month, this day ,this city as sacred ,so regard the life and property of every Muslim a sacred trust...”

Also, all of mankind, whether a Muslim or not, was created to get to know one another, NOT to kill one another:

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ وَأَنْتَى ذَكَرٍ مِنْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ إِنَّا النَّاسُ أَيُّهَا يَا  
لِتَعَارَفُوا وَقَبَائِلَ شُعُوبًا

“O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another...” 49: 13

*Allāhu Akbar* is one of the most magnificent phrases a human being can ever utter. *Allāhu Akbar* is a **declaration of Allah’s grandeur**, and an **affirmation of our submission** to His majesty. We remind ourselves through *Allāhu Akbar* that Allah is the greatest over everything: in His essence, in His power, in His honour, and in His majesty. Allah is the King of kings unto whom everything is subservient.

So it is ironical that while many Muslims declared “Allahu akbar” in their prayers,

1. They still worship the graves
2. They sell haram things like alcohol in restaurants for fear of lack of income
3. They still take up employment even though the employer does not allow them to pray during office hours
4. Support LGBT movements because fear repercussions from friends and supporters
5. Fear cultural backlash from relatives and started to compromise on their wedding ceremonies
6. Cheat and lie at work to get more money
7. Indulge in corruptions

**When do we say “Allahu akbar”?**

1. Beginning of prayers
2. Adhan and iqamah
3. Certain du’a for journey
4. Takbir al mutlak and takbir al muqayyad in the first 10 days of Dhulhijjah
5. During Eid – before the prayers to glorify Allah

**Internalising أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ**

On uttering the phrase *Allāhu Akbar*, we are saying that Allah is **greater than everything in our hearts**. It is not sufficient to simply say this phrase. We must also believe it. To be sincere in our utterance, we cannot give greater importance to something or someone other than Allah in our hearts. **He has to be the One.**

Each time we utter the phrase *Allāhu Akbar*, let us remind ourselves of the greatness of Allah and say: **Allah is Greater**... He is greater than us, greater than our desires, greater than our loved ones, greater than our hobbies, greater than the most powerful armies and empires, **greater than everything**. Each time we utter the phrase *Allāhu Akbar*, let us **renew our imān** in Him, and let us **strengthen our bond with Him**.

As our knowledge of *Allāhu Akbar* deepens, our **awe** and **fear** of Allah should increase. Subsequently, this should lead us to venerating Allah, loving Him, obeying Him, worshipping Him in the best manner, turning towards Him with full dedication and trusting in Him alone.

A firm belief in the greatness of Allah should lead us to constantly remember, thank and praise Him with our tongues. It should shake the body into humbling itself, feeling its own insignificance, and rushing to worship Him.

Saying *Allāhu Akbar* with conviction should make us **appreciate the greatness** of our Creator. When we remind ourselves of His greatness, our self-importance should disappear as we remember how weak and insignificant we are. Saying *Allāhu Akbar* should **safeguard us from pride** as we will no longer think of ourselves or what we possess as great.

### One of the Best Forms of Dhikr

*Allāhu Akbar* is one of the best forms of remembering our Creator. It is a great act of worship. One of the earliest commandments of Allah to His beloved ﷺ was: **وَرَبِّكَ**

**فَكَبِّرْ** Proclaim the greatness of your Lord! (74:3).

Elsewhere, Allah (‘azza wa jall) says, **بِرَّهِ تَكْبِيرًا** Proclaim His limitless greatness! (17:111).

‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (raḍiy Allāhu ‘anhu) said, **“The slave’s utterance of *Allāhu Akbar* is better than the world and all that it contains.”**

***Allāhu Akbar* is a phrase that has brought about wonders throughout the history of Islam.** *Allāhu Akbar* is the echo of the battlefield. By repeating it, the warriors in the path of Allah feel the honour, power and closeness of Allah to them. They derive from *Allāhu Akbar* strength, steadfastness and sincerity. *Allāhu Akbar* enables them to overcome their enemies, wipe out corruption, and bring arrogant tyrants to their knees.

*Allāhu Akbar* is a **tremendous phrase** and a **powerful source** of protection. When shayṭān hears it, he feels small and insignificant, and hastily retreats. *Allāhu Akbar* solves problems, removes stress and eases worries. *Allāhu Akbar* **cures** illnesses

and **calms** our fears. Whenever we feel overwhelmed or utterly lost and confused, *Allāhu Akbar* reminds us: there is someone far greater and more powerful than what we are experiencing. If we cling on to *Allāhu Akbar*, **Allah will never abandon us**.

### A Phrase Repeated

Uttered in the ears of the newborn, *Allāhu Akbar* are the first words we hear as we enter this world. Throughout our lives, we hear this phrase repeated. Two of the five pillars of our dīn **centre around this statement**: ṣalāh and ḥajj. We are summoned to the masjid through the adhān, which begins with *Allāhu Akbar*. The iqāmah begins with *Allāhu Akbar*. The ṣalāh is commenced with *Allāhu Akbar*. Throughout ṣalāh, we move from one pillar to the next by uttering *Allāhu Akbar*. There is no phrase we are obligated to utter more times in a day than *Allāhu Akbar*.

Al-‘Izz b. ‘Abd al-Salām (raḥimahullāh) explained that ṣalāh begins with the takbīr, indicating the **grandeur** of Allah, so that the slave knows who he is standing, sitting, bowing and prostrating in front of. It reminds him to **humble himself** to the greatness of Allah.

Once the slave becomes mindful of the grandeur of Allah, he will uphold the internal and external etiquettes of ṣalāh and purification, and he will become preoccupied with Allah alone. He will worship Allah ‘**as though he can see Him**’. He writes, “Whoever worships Allah in such a way has exited from the realms of the universe.” Subsequently, repeating *Allāhu Akbar* at each stage of ṣalāh helps us to **renew our awareness** of His greatness. It reminds us to **embody the humility** and lowliness that each posture requires.

Likewise, throughout the various rites of ḥajj and ‘umrah, *Allāhu Akbar* is constantly repeated. Similarly, we have been instructed to say *Allāhu Akbar* when the new moon is seen, as part of the takbīrāt of the two Eids, when starting a journey, when ascending (e.g. going up a hill, stairs, lifts), when slaughtering an animal, upon receiving good news, and even when seeing something burning.

It is also an established practice to say *Allāhu Akbar* in large gatherings, during battles, on military expeditions and upon achieving victory. This is to **instil a sense of greatness** of the action being undertaken and evoke feelings of power and strength in those situations.

About the takbīr, Ibn Ḥajar (raḥimahullāh) writes, “It is a form of remembrance which has been transmitted to us to say in every **difficult** and **happy situation**. It is said to thank Allah and disassociate oneself from all that His enemies attribute to Him.”

Ibn Taymiyyah (raḥimahullāh) explained, “Takbīr has been legislated to be uttered on **major occasions** – either due to the large crowds; or situations which consist of

actions that are great in and of themselves; or are situations that require strength etc. This is to highlight the fact that Allah is the Greatest. And no matter how big and grand these occasions may be, the **greatness of Allah overpowers the hearts** of the believers. The outcome of this is that the entire dīn is dedicated to Allah, and the slaves are constantly glorifying Allah.”

*The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “No one ever utters “Laa ilaaha illa Allah” nor “Allahu ‘akbar” except that he is given glad tidings.”*

*It was asked, “O Messenger of Allah, **glad tidings of Paradise?**” He ﷺ replied, “Yes” (Ṭabarānī).*