

# ZIKR

The Remembrance of Allah

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*The following article is an entry under "Zikr" from the "Dictionary of Islam" by T.P. Hughes. T.P. Hughes was an eminent Christian missionary in India in 1888 C.E. We have meddled very little with the original idiom in this essay so as to preserve its old-style ambience. However, the grammatical use of (sic) has been used where we obviously have disagreed with the author.- Editor*

**ZIKR** Lit. "Remembering." The religious ceremony, or act of devotion, which is practised by the various religious orders of Faqirs, or Dervishes. Almost every religious Muhammadan is a member of some order of Faqirs, and consequently the performance of *zikr* is very common in all Muhammadan countries; but it does not appear that any one method of performing the religious service of *zikr* is peculiar to any order.

#### **Zikr Jali (Zikr recited aloud)**

*Zikrs* are of two kinds: *zikr jali*, that which is recited aloud, and *zikr khafi*, that which is performed either with a low voice or mentally.

The **Naqshbandiyah** order of Faqirs usually perform the latter, whilst the **Chishtiyah** and **Qadiriyyah** orders celebrate the former. There are various ways of going through the exercise, but the main features of each are similar in character. The following is a *zikr jali*, as given in the book *Qaulu 'l-Jamil*, by Maulawi Shah Waliyu 'Ilah of Delhi: -

"The worshiper sits in the usual sitting posture and shouts the word 'Allah' (God), drawing his voice from his left side and then from his throat. Sitting as at prayers he repeats the word 'Allah' still louder than before, first from his right knee, and then from his left side.

Folding his legs under him, he repeats the word 'Allah' first from his right knee and then from his left side, still louder!

Still remaining in the same position, he shouts the word 'Allah', first from the left knee, then from the right knee, then from the left side, and lastly in front, still louder!

Sitting as at prayer, with his face towards Makkah, he closes his eyes and says "La" - drawing the sound as from his navel up to his left shoulder; then he says "ilaha" drawing out the sound as from his brain; and last "illa 'llahu," repeated from his left side with great energy.

Each of these stages is called *azarb*. They are, of course,

recited many hundreds of times over and the changes we have described account for the variations of sound and motion of the body described by Eastern travellers who have witnessed the performance of a *zikr*."

#### **Zikr Khafi (Zikr recited in a low voice or mentally)**

The following is a *zikr khafi*, or that which is performed in either a low voice or mentally. Closing his eyes and lips, he says, "with the tongue of the heart," *Allahu Sami'un*, "God the Hearer." *Allahu Basirun*, "God the Seer." *Allahu 'Alimun*, "God the Knower."

The first being drawn, as it were, from the navel to the brain; the second, from the breast to the brain; the third, from the brain up to the heavens; and then again repeated stage by stage backwards and forwards. He says in a low voice, "Allah," from the right knee, and then from the left side. With each exhalation of his breath, he says, "*la ilaha*," and with each inhalation, "*illa 'llahu*."

This third *zarb* is a most exhausting act of devotion, performed, as it is, hundreds or even thousands of times, and is therefore considered the most meritorious.

It is related that Maulawi Habibu 'llah, living in the village of Gabasanri, in the Gadun country, on the Peshawur frontier, became such an adept in the performance of this *zarb*, that he recited the first part of the *zikr 'la ilaha'* with the exhalation of his breath after the mid-day prayer; and the second part, '*illa 'llahu*,' with the inhalation of his breath before the next time of prayer, thus sustaining his breath for the period of about three hours!

#### **Muraqabah (meditation) as a form of Zikr**

Another act of devotion, which usually accompanies the *zikr*, is that of *Muraqabah*, or meditation. The worshiper first performs *zikr* of the following: - *Allahu haziri*, "God who is present with me." *Allahu naziri*, "God who sees me." *Allahu ma'i*, "God who is with me."

Having recited this *zikh*, either aloud or mentally, the worshiper proceeds to meditate upon some verse or verses of the Koran. Those recommended for the Qadiriya Faqirs by Maulavi Shah Waliyu 'llah are the following, which is considered most devotional and spiritual by Muslim mystics: -

1. Suratu 'l-Hadid (57:3)

"He (God) is first. He is last. The Manifest, and the Hidden, and who knoweth all things."

2. Suratu 'l-Hadid (57:4)

He (God) is with you wheresoever ye be."

3. Suratu Qaf (50: 16)

"We (God) are closer to him (man) than his jugular vein."

4. Suratu 'l-Baqarah (2:109)

Whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God."

5. Suatu 'n-Nisa (4:125)

"God encompasseth all things."

6. Suratu 'r-Rahman (55:26,27)

"All on earth shall pass away, but the face of thy God shall abide resplendent with majesty and glory."

### The Union of the Heart and Tongue

Some teachers tell their disciples that the heart has two doors, that which is fleshly, and that which is spiritual; and that the *zikh jali* has been established for the opening of the former, and *zikh khafi* for the latter, in order that they may both be enlightened.

To the uninitiated, such a ceremony appears but a meaningless rite, but to the Sufi, it is one calculated to convey great benefit to his inner man, as will appear from the following instructions which are given by a member of the Order respecting the *zikh*, which he says is a union of the heart and the tongue in calling upon God's name. "In the first place, the *Shaikh*, or teacher, must with his heart recite, 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah,' whilst the *Murid* [disciple] keeps his attention fixed by placing his heart opposite that of the *Shaikh*; he must close his eyes, keep his mouth firmly shut, and his tongue pressed against the roof of his mouth; his teeth tight against each other, and hold his breath; then, with great force, accompany the *Shaikh* in the *zikh*, which he must recite with his heart, and not with his tongue. He must retain his breath patiently, so that within one respiration, he shall say the *zikh* three times, and by this means, allow his heart to be impressed with the meditative *zikh*."

"The heart," the same writer continues, "in this manner is kept constantly occupied with the idea of the

Most High God: it will be filled with awe, love, and respect for Him; and, if the practiser arrives at the power of continuing to effect this when in the company of a crowd, the *zikh* is perfect. If he cannot do this, it is clear that he must continue his efforts. The heart is a subtle part of the human frame, and is apt to wander away after worldly concerns, so that the easier mode of arriving at the proceeding is to compress the breath, and keep the mouth firmly closed with the tongue forced against the lips. The heart is shaped like the cone of a fir-tree; your meditations should be forced upon it, whilst you mentally recite the *zikh*. Let the "La" be upward, the "ilaha" to the right, and the whole phrase "La ilaha illa 'llahu" (There is no God but Allah) be formed upon the fir-cone, and through it pass to all the members of the whole frame, and they feel its warmth. By this means, the world and all its attractions disappear from your vision, and you are enabled to behold the excellence of the Most High. Nothing must be allowed to distract your attention from the *zikh*, and ultimately, you retain by its medium, a proper conception of the *Tawhid*, or Unity of God.

"The cone-shaped heart rests in the left breast and contains the whole truth of man. Indeed, it signifies, the 'whole truth'; it comprises the whole of man's existence within itself and is a compendium of man; mankind, great and small, are but an extension of it, and it is to humanity what the seed is to the whole tree which it contains within itself: *in fine*, the essence of the whole of God's book and of all His secrets is the heart of man. Whoever finds a way to the heart, obtains his desire. To find a way to the heart is needed by a heartfelt service, and the heart accepts of the services of the heart. It is only through the fatigues of water and ashes that the *Murid* reaches the conversation of the heart and the soul; he will be then so drawn towards God, that afterwards without any difficulty, he may without trouble, in case of need, turn his face from all others towards the *Tark* (the abandonment of the world), the *Haqiqat* (the truth), the *Hurriyat* (the freedom), and the *Zikh* the recital of God's names and praises."

As a curious instance of the superstitious character (*sic*) of this devotional exercise, the Chishtiyah order believe that if a man sits cross-legged and seizes the vein called *kaimas*, which is under the leg, with his toes, that it will give peace to his heart, when accompanied by *zikh* of the "*nafi wa isbat*, which is a term used for the *Kalima*, namely:--*La 'ilaha illa 'llahu*, "There is no deity but God."

The most common form of *zikh* is a recital of the ninety-nine names of God, for Muhammad promised those of his followers who recited them, a sure entrance

to Paradise (*Mishkat*, book cxi); and to facilitate the recital of these names, the *zakhir* (or reciter) uses a *tasbih* (or rosary).

### Three other forms of zikr: *Tasbih*, *Tahmid* and *Takbir*

In addition to the forms of *zikr* already mentioned, there are three others, which are even of more common use, and are known as *Tasbih*, *Tahmid*, and *Takbir*. They are used as exclamations of joy and surprise, as well as for the devotional exercise of *zikr*.

*Tasbih* is the expression *Subhana-Allah!* "Holiness be to God!"

*Tahmid*, *Alhamdu li-Allah!* "Praise be to God!"

*Takbir*, *Allahu akbar!* "God is great!"

When the *Tasbih* and *Tahmid* are recited together, it is said thus, *Subhanna 'llahi bi-hamdi-hi*, i.e. "Holiness be to God with His praise." It is related in the Hadis that Muhammad said, "Whoever recites this sentence a hundred times, morning and evening, will have all his sins forgiven."

Muhammad said, "Repeat the *Tasbih* a hundred times, and a thousand virtues shall be recorded by God for you, ten virtuous deeds for each repetition."

In forming our estimation of Muhammad and Muhammadanism, we must take into consideration the important place the devotional exercise of *zikr* occupies in the system, not forgetting that it has had the authoritative sanction of the Prophet himself.

### A description of a zikr session

The following is a graphic description of one of these devotional performances by Dr. Eugene Schuyler, in his work on Turkistan:-

"At about ten o'clock one Thursday evening, in company with several friends, we went to the mosque and were at once admitted. Some thirty men, young and old, were on their knees in front of the *qiblah*, reciting prayers with loud cries and violent movements of the body, and around them was a circle, two or three deep, of men standing, who were going through the same motions. We took up a position in one corner and watched the proceedings. For the most part, the performers or worshipers had taken off their outside gowns and their turbans, for the night was warm and the exercise was violent. They were reciting the words 'My defence is in God! May Allah be magnified! My light, Muhammad - God bless him! There is no God but God!' These words were chanted to various semi-musical notes in a low

voice, and were accompanied by a violent movement of the head over the left shoulder towards the heart, then back, then to the right shoulder, and then down, as if directing all the movements towards the heart. These texts were repeated for hundreds and hundreds of times and this *zikr* usually lasted for an hour or two. At first the movements were slow, but continually increased in rapidity until the performers were unable to endure it any longer. If anyone failed in his duty, or was slower, or made less movement than was required, then persons who regulated the enthusiasm went up to him and struck him over the head, or pushed him back out of the circle and called another into it. Occasionally persons got so worn out with their cries, and so wet with perspiration that it became necessary for them to retire for a few minutes rest, and their places were immediately taken by others. When their voices became entirely hoarse with one cry, another was begun and finally the cry was struck up, 'He lives! He lives! God lives!' at first slowly, with an inclination of the body to the ground: then the rhythm grew faster and in cadence, the body became more vertical, until at last they all stood up: the measure still increased in rapidity, and, each one placing his hand on the shoulder of his neighbour, and then forming several concentric rings, they moved in a mass from side to side of the mosque, leaping about and always crying: 'He lives! God lives!' Hitherto, there had been something wild and unearthly in it, but now to persons of weak nerves, it became positively painful, and two of my friends were so much impressed as to be obliged to leave the mosque. Although I was sufficiently cold-blooded to see the ridiculous (*sic*), rather than horrible side of this, I could not help receiving an impression that the devotees were a pack of madmen, whose motions were utterly independent of any volition of their own. . . The intonations of the voice were very remarkable and were often accompanied by most singular gestures, the hands or a book being often held to the side of the mouth in order to throw the voice as far as possible. Often these recitations are merely collections of meaningless words (*sic*) which always seem to produce the same effect on the hearers, and are constantly interrupted by cries of *Hi*, *ho*, *och*, *ba*, *ba*, and groans and sobs, and the hearers weep, beat their breasts with their fists, or fall upon the round."

### The Whirling Dervishes Sama Ceremony as a form of Zikr

The dancing [whirling] and howling dervishes at Constantinople and Cairo have become public sights, and

are familiar to those Europeans who have visited those cities.

We are indebted to Mr. Brown's account of *The Dervishes* (Trubner and Co., Ludgate Hill) for the following graphic description of one of these public recitals of *zikh*.

The ceremony commences by the recital by the *Shaikh* of the seven first attributes of the Divinity, called by them the seven mysterious words. "He next chants various passages of the Koran, and at each pause, the Dervishes placed in a circle round the hall, respond in chorus by the word 'Allah!' (God) or 'Hoo!' (*Huwa* or *Hu*, He). In some of the societies, they sit on their heels, the elbows close to those of each other, and all making simultaneously light movements of the head and body. In others, the movement consists in balancing themselves slowly from the right to the left, and from the left to the right, or inclining the body methodically forwards and aft. There are other societies in which these motions commence seated, in measured cadences with a staid countenance, the eyes closed or fixed upon the ground, and are continued on foot." These singular exercises are consecrated under the name of *Murakebeh* (exaltation of the Divine glory) [*muraqabah*, 'meditation'], and also under that of the *Tevheed* (celebration of the Divine unity) [*Tawhid*], from which come the name *Tevheed khaneh* given to the whole of the halls devoted to these religious exercises.

In some of these institutions, such as the Kadirees [Qadiri's], the Rufa'ees [Rifai's], the Khalwettees, the Bairamees, the Gulshenees, and the 'Ushakees, the exercises are made each holding the other by the hand, putting forward always the right foot, and increasing at every step the strength of the movement of the body. This is called the *Devr* (*Daur*), which may be translated the 'dance or 'rotation.' The duration of these dances is arbitrary, - each one is free to leave when he pleases. Every one, however, makes it a point to remain as long as possible. The strongest and most robust of the number, and the most enthusiastic, strive to persevere longer than the others; they uncover their heads, take off their turbans, form a second circle within the other, entwine their arms within those of their brethren, lean their shoulders against each other, gradually raise the voice, and without ceasing, repeat "Ya Allah! (O God) or 'Ya Hu' (O He), increasing each time the movement of the body, and not stopping until their entire strength is exhausted.

### **The Rufa'ees [Rifai's]**

"Those of the order of the Rufa'ees excel in these

exercises. They are, moreover, the only ones who use fire in their devotions. Their practices embrace nearly all those of the other orders; they are ordinarily divided into five different scenes, which last more than three hours, and which are preceded, accompanied, and followed by certain ceremonies peculiar to this order. The first commences with praises which all the Dervishes offer to their *Shaikhs*, seated before the altar. Four of the more ancient come forward at first and approach their superior, embrace each other as if to give the kiss of peace, and next place themselves two to his right and two to his left. The remainder of the Dervishes in a body press forward in a procession, all having their arms crossed, and their heads inclined. Each one, at first, salutes by a profound bow the tablet on which the name of his founder is inscribed. Afterwards, putting his two hands over his face and his beard, he kneels before the *Shaikh*, kisses his hand respectfully, and then they all go on with a grave step to take their places on the sheep-skins, which are spread in a half-circle around the interior of the hall. As soon as a circle is formed, the Dervishes together chant the *Takbir* (the exclamation *Allahu akbar*, 'God is exalted' and the *Fatihah* (the first chapter of the Koran). Immediately afterwards, the *Shaikh* pronounces the words '*La ilaha ill' Allah*' (There is no deity but God), and repeats them incessantly; to which the Dervishes repeat 'Allah!' balancing themselves from side to side, and putting their hands over their faces, on their breasts, and their abdomen and on their knees.

"The second scene is opened by the Hamdee Mohammedee, a hymn in honour of the Prophet, chanted by one of the elders placed on the right of the *Shaikh*. During this chant, the Dervishes continue to repeat the word 'Allah!' moving their bodies forward and aft. A quarter of an hour later they all rise up, approach each other, and press their elbows against each other, balancing from right to left, and afterwards, in a reverse motion - the right foot always firm, and the left in a periodical movement, the reverse of that of the body, all observing great precision of measure and cadence. In the midst of this exercise, they cry out the words 'Ya Allah!' followed by that of 'Ya Hoo!' Some of the performers sigh, others sob, some shed tears, others perspire greatly and all have their eyes closed, their faces pale, and the eyes languishing.

"A pause of some minutes is followed by a third scene. It is performed in the middle of an *Ilahee*, chanted by the two elders on the right of the *Shaikh*. The *Ilahees* are spiritual *cantiques*, composed almost exclusively in Persian by *Shaikhs* deceased in the odour of sanctity. The Dervishes then hasten their movements, and, to

prevent any realization, one of the first among them puts himself in their centre, and excites them by his example. If in the assembly there be any strange Dervishes, which often happens, they give them through politeness this place of honour; and all fill it successively, the one after the other, shaking themselves as aforesaid. The only exception made is in favour of the Mevlees; these never perform any other dance than that peculiar to their own order, which consist in turning round on each heel in succession.

"After a new pause commences the fourth scene. Now all the Dervishes take off their turbans, form a circle, bear their arms and shoulders against each other, and thus make the circuit of the hall at a measured pace, striking their feet at intervals against the floor, and all springing up at once. This dance continues during the *Ilahees*, chanted alternately by the two elders to the left of the *Shaikh*. In the midst of this chant, the cries of 'Ya Allah!' are increased doubly, as also those of 'Ya Hoo!' with frightful howling, shrieked by the Dervishes together in the dance. At the moment that they would seem to stop from sheer exhaustion, the *Shaikh* makes a point of exerting them to new efforts by walking through their midst, making also himself most violent movements. He is next replaced by the two elders, who double the quickness of the step and the agitation of the body; they even straighten themselves up from time to time, and excite the envy or emulation of the others in their astonishing efforts to continue the dance, until their strength is entirely exhausted.

"The fourth scene leads to the last, which is the most frightful of all, the wholly prostrated condition of the actors becoming converted into a species of ecstasy which they call *Halah*. It is in the midst of this abandonment of self, or rather of religious delirium that they make use of red hot irons. Several cutlasses and other instruments of sharp-pointed iron are suspended in the niches of the hall, and upon a part of the wall to the right of the *Shaikh*. Near the close of the fourth scene, two Dervishes take down eight or nine of these instruments, heat them red-hot, and present them to the *Shaikh*. He, after reciting some prayers over them and invoking the founder of the Order, Ahmed er Rufa'ee, breathes over them, and raising them slightly to the mouth, gives them to the Dervishes, who ask for them with the greatest eagerness. Then it is that these fanatics, (*sic*) transported by frenzy, seize upon these irons, gloat upon them tenderly, lick them, bite them, hold them between their teeth, and end by cooling them in their mouths! Those who are unable to procure any, seize upon the cutlasses hanging on the wall with fury, and

stick them into their sides, arms, and legs.

"Thanks to the fury of their frenzy, and to the amazing boldness which they deem a merit in the eyes of the Divinity, all stoically bear up against the pain which they experience with apparent gaiety. If, however, some of them fall under their sufferings, they throw themselves into the arms of their confreres, but without a complaint or the least sign of pain. Some minutes after this, the *Shaikh* walks round the hall, visits each one of the performers in turn, breathes upon their wounds, rubs them with saliva, recites prayers over them, and promises them speedy cures. It is said that twenty-four hours afterwards, nothing is to be seen of their wounds.

"It is the common opinion among the Rufa'ees that the origin of these bloody practices can be traced back to the founder of the Order. They pretend (*sic*) that one day, during the transport of his frenzy, Ahmed Rufa'ee put his legs in a burning basin of coals, and was immediately cured by the breath of saliva and the prayers of 'Abdul Kadir Gilani; they believe that their founder received this same prerogative from heaven, and that at his death, he transmitted it to all the *Shaikhs* his successors. It is for this reason that they give to these sharp instruments and to these red-hot irons, and other objects employed by them in their mysterious frenzy, the name of *Gul*, which signifies 'rose', wishing to indicate thereby that the use made of them is as agreeable to the soul of the elect Dervishes as the odour of this flower may be to the voluptuary.

"After the Rufa'ees, the Sa'dees have also the reputation of performing miracles, pretty much of the same sort as the preceding. One reads in the institute of this Order that Sa'd ed Deen Jebawee, its found, when cutting wood in the vicinity of Damascus, found three snakes of an enormous length, and that, after having recited some prayers and blown upon them, he caught them alive, and used them as a rope with which to bind his fagot. To this occurrence they ascribe the pretended virtue of the *Shaikhs* and the Dervishes of this society, to find out snakes, to handle them, to bite them, and even to eat them without any harm to themselves. Their exercises consist like those of the Rufa'ees and other Orders, at first in seating themselves, and afterwards in rising upright; but in often changing the attitude, and in redoubling their agitation even until they become overcome with fatigue, when they fall upon the floor motionless and without knowledge. Then the *Shaikh*, aided by his vicars, employs no other means to draw them out of this state of unconsciousness than to rub their arms and legs, and to breathe into their ears the words '*La ilaha ill' Allah.*'

### The Mevleves [Mevlevi's]

"The Mevleves are distinguished by the singularity of their dance, which has nothing in common with that of the other societies. They call it Sema (*Sama*) in place of Devr (*Daur*) and the halls consecrated to it are called Sema khanehs. Their construction also different. The apartment represents a kind of pavilion, sufficiently light and sustained by eight columns of wood. These Dervishes also have prayers and practices peculiar to themselves. Among them the public exercises are not ordinarily made by more than nine, eleven, or thirteen individuals. They commence by forming a circle, seated on sheep-skin spread upon the floor at equal distances from each other; they remain nearly a half-hour in this position, the arms are folded, the eyes closed, the head inclined, and absorbed in profound meditation.

"The *Shaikh*, placed on the edge of his seat on a small carpet, breaks silence by a hymn in honour of the Divinity; afterwards he invites the assembly to chant with him the first chapter of the Koran. 'Let us chant the *Fatiha*,' he says, in 'glorifying the holy name of God, in honour of the blessed religion of the prophets, but above all, of Muhammad Mustapha, the greatest, the most august, the most magnificent of all the celestial envoys, and in memory of the first four Caliphs, of the sainted Fatima, of the chaste Khadeeja of the Imams Hasan and Husain of all the martyrs of the memorable day, of the ten evangelical disciples, the virtuous sponsors of our sainted Prophet, of all his zealous and faithful disciples, of all the Imams, *Mujtahids* (sacred interpreters), of all the doctors, of all the holy men and women of Mussulmanism [the Muslim faith]. Let us chant also in honour of Hazreti Mevlana, the founder of our Order, of Hazreti Sultan ul 'Ulema (his father), of Sayid Burban ed Deen (his teacher), of *Shaikh* Shems ed Din (his consecrator), of Valideh Sultan (his mother), of Mohammed 'Alay ed Deen Efendi (his son and vicar), of all the *Chelebees* (his successors), of all the *Shaikhs*, of all the Dervishes, and all the protectors of our Order, to whom the Supreme Being deigns to give peace and mercy. Let us pray for the constant prosperity of our holy society, for the preservation of the very learned and venerable Chelebee Efendi (the General of the Order), our master and lord, or the preservation of the reigning Sultan, the very majestic and clement Emperor of the Mussulman [Muslim] faith, for the prosperity of the Grand Vizier, and of the *Shaikh ul Islam*, and that of all the Mohammedan militia, or all the pilgrims of the holy city of Mekkeh. Let us pray for the repose of the souls of all the institutors of all the

*Shaikhs*, and of all the Dervishes of all other Orders; for all good people, for all those who have been distinguished by their good works, their foundations, and their acts of beneficence. Let us pray also for all the Mussulmans of one and the other sex of the east and the west, for the maintenance of all prosperity, for preventing all adversity, for the accomplishment of all salutary vows, and for the success of all praiseworthy enterprises; finally, let us ask God to deign to preserve in us the gift of His grace, and the fire of holy love.'

"After the *Fatiha*, which the assembly chant in a body, the *Shaikh* recites the *Fatihah* and the *Salawat*, to which the dance of the Dervishes succeeds. Leaving their places all at once, they stand in a file to the left of the superior, and, approaching near him with slow steps, the arms folded, and the head bent to the floor, the first of the Dervishes, arrived nearly opposite the *Shaikh*, salutes, with a profound inclination, the tablet which is on his seat, on which is the name of Hazreti Mevlana, the founder of the Order. Advancing next by two springs forward, to the right side of the superior, he turns toward him, salutes him with reverence, and commences the dance, which consists in turning on the left heel, in advancing slowly, and almost insensibly making the turn of the hall, the eyes closed, and the arms open. He is followed by the second Dervish, he by the third, and so on with all the others, who end by filling up the whole of the hall, each repeating the same exercises separately, and at a certain distance from each other.

"This dance lasts sometimes for a couple of hours and it is only interrupted by two short pauses, during which the *Shaikh* recites different prayers. Towards the close of the exercise, he takes a part in them himself, by placing himself in the midst of the Dervishes; then returning to his seat, he recites some Persian verses expressive of good wishes for the prosperity of the religion, and the state. The General of the Order is again named, also the reigning Sultan, in the following terms: 'The Emperor of the Mussalmans, and the most august of monarchs of the house of Othman, Sultan, son of a sultan, grandson of a sultan, Sultan -, son of Sultan -, Khan,' etc.

"Here the poem mentions all the princes of blood, the Grand Vizier, the Muftee, all the Pashas of the empire, the 'Ulemas, all the *Shaikhs*, benefactors of the Order, and of all the Mussulman peers, invoking the benediction of heaven on the success of their armies against the enemies of the empire. 'Finally, let us pray for all the Dervishes present and absent, for all the friends of our holy society, and generally for all the faithful, dead and living, in the east and in the west.

"The ceremony terminates by chanting the Fatihah, or first chapter of the Koran." (by John P. Brown, *The Dervishes, or Oriental Spiritualism*, pg. 218 seqq.)

### Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) about Zikr

These ceremonies of *zikr* would at first sight appear to have little in common with original Muhammadanism, but there appears to be little doubt that the practice of reciting the word *Allah* and other similar expressions, commenced in the days of Muhammad himself, and this even the Wahhabis admit, who at the same time condemn the extravagances of the Howling and Dancing Dervishes of Turkestan, Turkey, and Egypt.

A chapter is devoted to the Prophet's injunctions on the subject in all large books of traditions, called *Babu 'z-Zikr*, from which the following sayings of Muhammad have been selected:

- Whenever people sit and remember God, they are surrounded by angels which cover them with God's favour, and peace descends upon them, and God remembers them in that assembly which is near him.
- Verily there are angels who move to and fro on the road and seek for the rememberers of God, and when they find an assembly remembering God, they say to one another, "Come ye to that which ye were seeking." Then the angels cover them with their wings as far as the lowest heaven, called the region of the world. The Prophet said: - When the angels go to the court of God, God asks them, while knowing better than they, "What do My servants say and do?" Then the angels say, "They are reciting the Tasbih, the Takbir, the Tahmid, and the Tamjid for Thee." And God says, "Have they seen Me?" The angels say, "No, by God, they have not seen Thee." Then God says, "What would their condition be if they had seen Me?" The angels say, "If they had seen Thee, they would be more energetic in worshiping Thee and in reciting the Tamjid, and they would be more excessive in repeating the Tasbih." God says, "Then what do they want?" The angels say, "Paradise." Then God says, "Have they seen Paradise?" The angels say, "We swear by God they have not." Then God says, "What would their state have been had they seen Paradise?" The angels say, "If they had seen Paradise, they would be very ambitious for it, and would be excessive wishers of it, and very great desirers of it." God says, "What thing is it they seek protection from?" The angels say, "from Hellfire." God says, "Have they seen the

fire?" The angels say, "No, by God, if they had seen the fire. -- " God says, "How would they have been had they seen the fire?" The angels say, "If they had seen the fire, they would be great runners from it, and would be great bearers of it." Then God says, "I take ye as witnesses that verily I have pardoned them." One of the angels said, "There is a person amongst them who is not a rememberer of Thee, and is only come on account of his own needs."

- There is a polish for everything that takes rust, and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of God, and there is no act that redeems from God's punishments so much as the remembrance of Him. The Companions said, "Is not fighting with the infidels also like this? He said, "No, although he fights until his sword be broken."
- Shall I not inform you of an action which is better for you than fighting with infidels and cutting off their heads, and their cutting off yours?" The Companions said, "Yes, inform us." The Prophet said, "These actions are remembering God."
- 'Abdullah ibn Aus said: - An 'Arabi came to the Prophet and asked, "Which is the best of men?" the Prophet said, "Blessed is the person whose life is long and whose actions are good." The 'Arabi said, "O Prophet! Which is the best of actions, and the most rewarded?" He said, "The best of actions is this, that you separate from the world, and die whilst your tongue is moist in repeating the name of God."
- A man said, "O Prophet of God, really the rules of Islam are many, tell me a thing by which I may lay hold of rewards." The Prophet said, "Let your tongue be always moist in the remembrance of God."
- "Verily there are ninety-nine names of God; whosoever counts them up shall enter into Paradise."
- When Zu 'n-Nun (Jonah) the prophet prayed to his Lord when he was in the fish's belly, he said, "There is no Deity but Thee. I extol Thy holiness. Verily I am of the unjust ones." And a Mussulman who supplicates God with this petition will have his prayer granted.
- The best expressions are these four: *Subhana Allahi, al-Hamdu Lillahi, La ilaha illa Allah*, and *Allahu akbar*; and it does not matter with which of them you begin.
- Verily I like repeating these four expressions: O Holy God! Praise be to God! There is no deity but God! And God is Great! better than anything upon which the sun shines.
- No one can bring a better deed on the Day of

Resurrection (unless he shall have said the like or added to it) than he who has recited, "O Holy God! Praise by to Thee!" one hundred times every morning and evening.

- There are two expressions light upon the tongue and heavy in the scale of good works, and they are, "O holy God! Praise be to Thee!" and "O Holy God! The Mighty One!"
- That person who shall say, "There is no deity but God, who has no partner, to whom is dominion and praise and power," one hundred times, shall receive rewards equal to the emancipating of ten slaves; and one hundred good actions shall be written for him, and one hundred of his sins shall be blotted out; and those words shall be a protection to him from the devil and his wickedness, in that day in which he shall have repeated them, until the night. Nor can anyone perform a better deed for the Day of Resurrection than this, unless he has done even more.
- Moses said, "O my Lord, teach me how I am to call upon Thee." And God said, "O Moses, recite, 'There is no deity but God!'" Then Moses said, "O my Lord every one of thy people say this." And God said, "O Moses, if the seven heavens and their inhabitants and the seven earths were put into one scale, and this expression, 'There is no deity but God,' into another, these words would exceed in weight."
- Reciting "O Holy God" is half the scale of good works, and reciting "God be praised" fills the scale. The recital of "There is no deity but one," removes the curtain between the worshiper and his God.
- He who recites with an unsullied heart, "There is no deity but God," shall have the doors of heaven open for him until he reaches the throne of God, as long as he abstains from great sins.
- The ejaculation, "There is no power and strength but in God," is medicine for ninety-nine pains, the least of which is melancholy.
- There are two qualities which, being practiced by anyone, shall cause him to enter Paradise; they are small and easy, and it is easy for anyone to practise them. One of them is saying 'God is holy' ten times after every prayer, 'Praised be God' ten times, and 'God is great' ten times. And verily I saw the Prophet counting these words on his hand, and he would say, "then these words are one hundred and fifty with the tongue in the day and night, but they are one thousand and five hundred in the scale of actions, reckoning ten for one. And the second is this: when he goes to his bedchamber, let him say,

'God is holy' and 'God be praised,' and 'God is great,' then that is one hundred on the tongue and a thousand in the scales. Then which of you is it that commits two thousand five hundred vices in the day night, so that these words may cover them?" The Companions said, "If when we repeat these words we have so many rewards, why should we not say them?" The Prophet said, "The Devil comes to one of you when at prayers and says to him, 'Remember so-and-so,' till you have finished your prayers; and the Devil comes to you in your bed-chamber, and is always making you sleep."