

The Secret in the Prescribed Adhkar of the Shaykh

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There is certainly a secret in the special dhikr or adhkar given by the Mashayekh to the murids. These secrets are known by the Shaykh and this is transmitted in relation to the quantity [of repetitions of the adhkar]; for example, why do we say *Ya Lateef* 129 times? Perhaps the reciter does not know why, but certainly our Shaykh [Salih al-Ja'fari] knows why this particular number has a secret - because the secret is between the Shaykh and his Shaykh or indeed Sayyidina Rasulillah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam), who gave him the quantity and the methodology of the dhikr (how to make this dhikr and details regarding the timing of day or night for making this dhikr). In some cases, there are some special adhkar that are said specifically after Fajr prayer and others after Maghreb prayer, and some adhkar that are specifically said at the time of Qiyam al-Layl, or after Isha prayer or before Fajr prayer.

There was a Shaykh who worked in the Ministry of Endowments in Egypt (Awqaf), and held the very responsible role of chief assistant to the Minister (of Endowments). His name was Shaykh Ahmad Abd al-Wahid and was very close to our Mashayekh, may Allah have mercy on his soul. Shaykh Ahmad related a story of his time as a student in al-Azhar, he said, "One day I was holding my sibha and was repeating: 'Allah, Allah, Allah, Allah, Allah...' and at that moment, Shaykh Salih (who was his Shaykh) passed by him and said 'Ahmad, what is it you are saying?' He replied, 'O our master, Shaykh! I am saying: Allah, Allah, Allah...', to which Shaykh Salih said, 'No, your pronunciation is wrong', and then Shaykh Salih taught him how to pronounce the Supreme Name (al-Lafdh al-Jalala) - how to form each of the letters, their points of articulation (makhaarij) and the characteristics used to differentiate between letters (sifaat).

Shaykh Ahmad Abd al-Wahid spoke for 15 minutes about how Shaykh Salih taught him how to pronounce *Allah* (Glorified and Exalted is He) correctly. This is a special kind of lesson and indeed a type of dhikr, and in it is a secret! This is a secret given by Shaykh Salih for that person (Shaykh Ahmad Abd al-Wahid) at that time, and every Shaykh has a secret within his adhkar.

As much as a person makes dhikr, then that is as much as they will find shaytan attacking them and wanting them to stop this dhikr. So there will be some kind of struggle! Your nafs prevents you from making dhikr and shaytan tries to stop you from making dhikr! This is indeed a struggle against oneself in overcoming the nafs. And this is hard for people to bear.

The danger comes from false Mashayekh (those people pretending to be an authorised Shaykh) when they transmit adhkar from their own minds and imaginations, or perhaps they heard of these adhkar and then give them to others without permission, and we know in tasawwuf that permission is a foundation stone of this science, upon which we depend. The permission from the authorised Shaykh is important because otherwise a person will not take any blessing or benefit in what they are reciting, except in those things of which are written: 'I do give ijaza in such-and-such to *all people*', and Shaykh Salih used to embody this practice. I asked Shaykh Abd al-Ghani once, "Why did Shaykh Salih always give a general permission for all people to read his works, such as the Friday Lessons and the full works (for which he especially travelled to collect for the ummah) that he edited of Sidi Ahmad b. Idris, and to recite his poetry from his voluminous Diwan?" Shaykh Abd al-Ghani replied, "Sayyidina Rasulillah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) ordered Mawlana Shaykh Salih to do this (give a general permission to all people), and that this *ilm* was given to Mawlana Shaykh Salih from Sayyidina Rasulillah (salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) and from the Ahl al-Bayt, especially Sayyidina Imam Ali (may Allah ennoble his countenance) and Sayyidina al-Imam al-Hussayn (may Allah be pleased with them and please them)".

So this type of ilm is for everyone and the benefit of this ilm is for everyone. An example can be found in *al-Aqmar al-Nuraniyya* (a summarised Prophetic biography). Shaykh Salih gave permission to all people to read it in totality, on Sundays and Thursdays, and their virtues and benefits are bounteous!



What is important is that people concentrate on the direct permission from the living Shaykh for blessings, because this is our tradition and can even be said that it is a rule and etiquette within tasawwuf.

And success is with Allah, Sublime and Majestic is He, alone.

