

Hold Fast to the Awrad and Stave Off Distractions!

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This is a very important advice for the brothers with regards to the prescribed dhikr:

Of course, the special facet of the dhikr is the effect it has on the *nafs* of a person, so take care if one day the dhikr becomes heavy for you! Be careful because you will put yourself in a difficult maze! I recall seeing Sidna Shaykh Abd al-Ghani receive brothers from the *muridin* who came to talk to him about the adhkar, awrad or salawat, or perhaps a question about the specific *sibha* that the shaykh is using or about the specific number of tasbih, tahlil or takbirat they usually recite etc, there is a type of people who will exaggerate in these things from within themselves, without knowing the capacity and capability of his *nafs* and his spirit.

This is a very specific concept with regards to the awrad according to the pious predecessors: as much as the *himma* (spiritual aspiration) of the murid is, that is as much as the contradictions [in his mind] will increase, and as much as the shaytan (we seek refuge in Allah from him) will put pressure on the murid and the *dhakir* (one who remembers Allah). Not only in the dhikr (awrad) but in all worship.

It is important to understand that the shaytan will not allow you to perform the *Qiyam al-Layl* (night vigil) without making evil whisperings nor without making you feel that it is too heavy for you to complete! The *Nafs al-Ammara*¹ is very important to keep in mind. Our spiritual practices are a means of training our *nafs*. That is why our Master, the Prophet ﷺ advised *Tarweeh 'an in-Nafs* (comfort for the nafs) - this is very important.

Our Master, the Prophet ﷺ didn't need anything but he performed actions as a means of teaching us. The coolness of his eyes was in prayer and he used to say to Sayyidina Bilal, "Give us comfort, with the prayer at the time of prayer!".

As for us, our spirits in this age of worldly distractions, and the age of things that remove things that bring true happiness (instant gratification but not a lasting happiness) - our striving is all the more difficult and not easy.

Don't place on your *nafs* more than it can bear! Don't sit as a murid and start giving fatawa and adding things to the prescribed *adhkar*. From my point of view, the awrad of Shaykh Salih al-Ja'fari and Shaykh Abd al-Ghani, and the prayers that we have between our hands, are very reasonable [for daily recitation and not over-bearing] and more than sufficient.

Some principles to remember:

The first thing is that there is no need for extra *adhkar* when the murid has been prescribed the necessary *adhkar*, salawat and supplications already.

The second thing is that the murid must stick to his awrad. This was the constant advice of Shaykh Abd al-Ghani. The main *ilm* for every murid is the awrad. He shouldn't distract himself with anything else [such as other awrad and ahzab of other *turuq*]. Shaykh Abd al-Ghani

¹ Blameworthy self

permitted the students of knowledge to come to the Hadra just once a month, and he would say, “O my son, finish your exams first and then on the first day of your holidays you can come and sit in the masjid with us.” We ask Allah to keep away every evil distraction and make the *adhkar* easy on the people, until it becomes a normal and easy thing for them by the permission of Allah.

And don't ever show off with dhikr! A thousand people asked me why don't you carry a *sibha* with you and why don't you sit with it in Hadra? SubhanAllah! Do you want me to sit in the Hadra and start making tasbih?! When I saw Shaykh Salih and Shaykh Abd al-Ghani, I never saw them carry the *Sibha* with them in the Hadra! The Hadra is an hour or an hour and a half – during this time, people come to greet me with salam; so should I preside over the madih² and the gathering or take care of my *Sibha*? No! People will be driving and carrying a *Sibha* with them?! How can you focus [on the dhikr]? When you are at home you have ample time to focus on your tasbih (awrad and other such works) – so put your phone to the side and focus! Do not use your *Sibha* even at work³! It is disliked as you are paid for that time to work. Focus on your work. We ask Allah to give us and you tawfiq.

² The Shaykh is the guardian and caretaker of the madih and directs the maddahin in how to recite them correctly and explains the meanings within them.

³ Meaning: to ignore one's duties deliberately to sit and make tasbih.