



Prayer Beads:

muslim unity hanging by a thread

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THE ISSUE

Is using prayer, or *dbikr* beads (Ar. *subḥab*) allowed in Islam?

THE REPLY

The answer - which may come as a surprise (or even a shock) to some people - is a simple and straightforward "Yes!" Not only this, but it would seem that the position of classical jurists tends towards, if anything, actual unanimity in the matter.

In recent years, and in stark contrast to the juristic norm, a rather odd opinion has circulated among many of the *mutadayyin*, or 'practicing' Muslims, which asserts that the use of *dbikr* beads has no sanction at all in Islam and is, in fact, a *bid'ab*; a reprehensible innovation.¹ Armed with this anomalous conviction, it has incited an untold number of people to adopt a disdainful attitude towards those who use or allow the use of *dbikr* beads. In some cases it has bred feelings of self-righteousness, causing such people to harbour deep misgivings against a large part of the *ummah*, its scholars, and its history. In other cases it has driven some to take on more animated acts: confiscating *dbikr* beads from others, or removing them from mosques and *musallabs*, or breaking them whenever possible. In a few cases it has led to the refusal of returning *salams* to those holding *dbikr* beads, or to not shaking their hand! In all, the belief that *dbikr* beads are a *bid'ab* not only drives a wedge between Muslims and their unity, it also inverts the teaching of the religion on the actual issue.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate this exact point: that far from being a *bid'ab*, the use of prayer beads is

perfectly valid in Islam; having the support of the jurists along with their proof-texts. The paper will also discuss, albeit briefly, why the methodology which gives rise to such an anomalous view is itself an anomaly and highly questionable.

It has been my experience that most people who have learnt, or been taught, that *dbikr* beads are *bid'ab* tend to be very open and accepting of the counter argument and of the normative stance of past scholars when presented to them. It is only with a small clique of diehards who have chosen to be self-referential that any dogged determination to stick to one's guns is seriously found. Thus, it is in appealing to the open-minded seeker that this article is written.

SHAWKANI AS STARTERS

A good, yet concise presentation of the issue is given by the eighteenth century Yemeni polymath and *murajjib*, Imam al-Shawkānī, as per his commentary upon Majd b. Taymiyyah's *Muntaqā al-Akbbār*. His discussion commences with the following three hadiths:

1 - From Yusayrah, and she was of the Emigrants, who related: Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, said to us: "Take to saying *lā ilāha illa 'llāh, subḥāna 'llāh* and *subḥāna 'l-maliki 'l-quddūs*, and be not negligent and so be deprived of divine mercy. Count on your fingers, for they shall be questioned and be made to speak."²

2 - Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ relates that he, along with Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, visited a woman who had in front of her some datestones or pebbles on which she was counting the glorification of Allah. So he said

to her: "Shall I not inform you of something that would be easier or be better for you than this? Say: Glory be to Allah (*subḥāna'Llāb*) as many times as what He created in the heavens. Glory be to Allah as many times as what He has created on earth. Glory be to Allah as many times as what He created between them. Glory be to Allah as many times as what He is creating. Then Allah is greater (*Allābu akbar*) a like number of times; then Praise be to Allah (*alḥamduli'Llāb*) a similar number of times; then There is no deity worthy of worship save Allah (*lā ilāha illa'Llāb*) a like number of times; then There is no might nor power except Allah (*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illa bi'Llāb*) a like number of times."³

3 - Ṣafiyyah relates: Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, visited me whilst I had in front of me four thousand datestones upon which I was counting glorifications. He said: "Do you count glorifications on these? Shall I not teach you what surpasses this?" I replied: Teach me. He said: "Say, *subḥāna'Llāb 'adada kbalqibi* - Glory be to Allah as many times as what He has created."⁴

After stating that the above three hadiths are sound,⁵ al-Shawkānī goes on to comment:

"The first hadith proves it is prescribed to count *tasbīḥ*, or glorification, upon one's fingers. Abu Dāwūd and al-Nasā'ī record - as do al-Tirmidhī; who grades it *ḥasan*, and al-Ḥākim; who said it is *ṣaḥīḥ* - that Ibn 'Amr relates: "I saw Allah's Messenger, peace be upon him, counting *tasbīḥ* on his hand." Abu Dāwūd and others add: "with his right hand." The reason that the Prophet, peace be upon him, gave for this is in the hadith [at the beginning] of the chapter: i.e. the fingers will be questioned and be made to speak. In other words, they shall bear witness. So from this viewpoint counting *tasbīḥ* on one's fingers is preferable than doing so using *dbikr* beads (*subḥab*) or datestones.

"The last two hadiths both indicate the permissibility of counting *tasbīḥ* on datestones or pebbles, and likewise with *dbikr* beads - since there is nothing to distinguish between them. This is because the Prophet, upon whom be peace, tacitly approved what the women were doing and did not censure them. Also, being directed to what is preferable does not negate permissibility (*wa'l-irṣād ilā mā huwa aḥḍal lā yunāfi al-jawāz*)."⁶

PRACTICE OF SOME PREDECESSORS

Al-Shawkānī continues his discussion by citing a number of reports about the Predecessors (*atbār al-salafīyyab*), demonstrating their use of pebbles or beads in making *dbikr*. He writes:

"In Hilāl al-Ḥaffār's monograph; by way of Mu'tamar b. Sulaymān; about Abu Safiyyah - the freedman (*mawla*) of the Prophet, peace be upon him - that a mat would be spread for him and then a palm-leaved basket would be brought, filled with pebbles, upon which he would count *tasbīḥ* till noon. It would then be taken away and be brought back to him after he had prayed. He would then resume counting *tasbīḥ* until evening. Imām Aḥmad recorded it in *al-Zubd* ...

"Ibn Sa'd records; from Ḥakīm b. al-Daylamī, that Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ would count *tasbīḥ* on pebbles.

"Ibn Sa'd further records in his *Tabaqāt* ... that Fāṭimah, daughter of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, used to count *tasbīḥ* on a thread strung with knots.

"In *Zawā'id al-Zubd*, 'Abd Allah, son of Imam Aḥmad, records that Abu Hurayrah had a string with a thousand knots in it; and that he would not go to sleep until he had counted *tasbīḥ* on them.

"Aḥmad records in *al-Zubd*; by way of al-Qasim b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān; that Abu al-Dardā' used to have a bag filled with datestones and that whenever he finished the noon prayer he would bring them out, one by one, and count *tasbīḥ* on them until they were finished ...

"Al-Suyūṭī cites all these reports in a monograph called, *al-Minḥab fi'l-Subḥab* - which forms part of his collection of Legal Verdicts (*fatāwā*). Towards the end of it, he states: "It is not related from any of the Predecessors or Later-Comers that they forbade the allowance of *dbikr* beads. Rather, many of them used to count on it and did not view it as being disliked (*makrūb*)."⁷ ..."⁸

OBJECTIONS NOTED

Ibn Abī Shaybah, in his monumental treasury of hadiths and *salaf* reports, *al-Muṣannaf*, has this chapter: "Those who disliked counting on prayer beads."⁹ Here he cites a number of reports from some of the Companions and

Successors of whom it is related that they disapproved of *dbikr* beads. These include the objections of ‘Umar, ‘Ā’ishah, and perhaps the most well-known, Ibn Mas‘ūd, may Allah be pleased with them all.¹⁰ With this being the case, jurists have not understood from such reports, even if authentic, that using *dbikr* beads is a *bid‘ab* - as the chapter heading itself suggests.

IBN TAYMIYYAH ON PRAYER BEADS

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah states: “Counting *tasbīḥ* on one’s fingers is a *Sunnab*. The Prophet, upon whom be peace, said to the women: “Count on your fingers, for they will be questioned and be made to speak.” As for counting on datestones, pebbles and the like, then this too is good. Some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, used to do this. The Prophet, upon whom be peace, once saw the Mother of the Believers [Safīyah] counting *tasbīḥ* on pebbles, and he approved it tacitly. It is related of Abu Hurayrah that he too would count *tasbīḥ* on its like.

“As for counting on a string of beads, or something similar to it, there were some who held it was disliked, and others who held that it was not disliked. If the intention in doing so is sound, then it is something good and not disliked (*fa huwa ḥasan ḡbayr makrūb*). To use them without a need, though, or doing so only to show-off to others - like hanging it around one’s neck or wearing it on one’s wrist - then this is either ostentation (*riyā’ li’l-nās*), or it is resembling those who habitually show-off. The first case is forbidden; the second, lesser in sin and revolves around being detested.”¹¹

Elsewhere, while discussing the issue of turning things into religious symbols to show-off with, Ibn Taymiyyah had this to say:

“Sometimes one of them may show-off by putting their prayer mat over their shoulder or dangling *dbikr* beads from their hand, making them symbols (*shī‘ār*) of faith and prayer. But it is known from definitely-transmitted (*mutawātir*) reports that neither the Prophet, peace be upon him, nor his Companions, ever made such things into symbols. Instead they would count *tasbīḥ* on their fingers, as per the hadith: “Count on your fingers, for they will be questioned and be made to speak.” Some of them did, though, count on pebbles and datestones.

As for *tasbīḥ* on beads, some disliked it whereas others allowed it. But no one ever said that *tasbīḥ* using *dbikr* beads is preferable to using one’s fingers.”¹²

FURTHER TESTIMONIES

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, the distinguished hadith master and Shāfi‘ī jurist, gave the following *responsum* when asked about the legality of using *dbikr* beads made of silk thread and also from thick thread: “It is not forbidden to use *dbikr* beads made of such threads, though it would be better if some other thread were used instead.”¹³

In *al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib*, Ibn al-Qayyim has a section that states: “Concerning Counting on One’s Fingers and that it is Preferable to Using *Dbikr* Beads.”¹⁴ The hadith of Yusayrah is then cited to substantiate this.

Another of Islam’s great hadith masters, *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajr al-‘Asqalānī - whose commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* ranks second to none, and who was the premiere hadith master of his age - had the following stance in respect to *dbikr* beads. His illustrious student, al-Sakhāwī, relates of him that, “Whenever he, may Allah have mercy upon him, would sit with a group after the ‘Ishā prayer, or at any other time to teach, he would carry a *subḥab* up his sleeve so that none could see it, and he would continuously count *tasbīḥ* or *dbikr* on it ...”¹⁵

On a similar note, al-Dhahabī cites the practice of Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān who, like Ibn Ḥajr above, was leader of the believers in hadith (*amīr al-mu‘minīn fi’l-ḥadīth*) of his age. He records that Ibn Ma‘īn said: “Yaḥyā used to carry *dbikr* beads with him, and would put his hand in his tunic to count *tasbīḥ* [on it].”¹⁶ Interestingly, al-Dhahabī makes no pronouncement against the practice, as is his wont whenever he deems any saying or action objectionable in his hagiographical treasure-trove.

Al-Munāwī provides the following gloss to the hadith of Yusayrah: “This is the basis for the recommendation of the well-known *subḥab*, which was familiar even in the age of the Companions. ‘Abd Allah b. Aḥmad recorded; that Abu Hurayrah had a thread with a thousand knots on it, and that he would not sleep until he had counted *tasbīḥ* on them. Then there is the hadith recorded by al-Daylamī: “What a wonderful reminder the *dbikr* beads are.”¹⁷ The author [i.e. al-Suyūṭī], however, related from

one of his contemporaries, Jalāl al-Bulqīnī; who relates from some others; that counting *tasbīḥ* on one's fingers is preferable due to the explicit meaning of the hadith. But this applies only if there is safety from error; otherwise using *dbikr* beads is preferable."¹⁸

Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī said in his commentary to the *Mishkāt*, while discussing the above same hadith: "It contains an allowance for counting *dbikr* on the venerable *subḥab*. Abu Hurayrah used to have a thread with many knots in it, upon which he would count *tasbīḥ*. As for the claim that it is a *bid'ab*, this is unsound; for it has a basis in the Sunnah ... Counting on one's fingers, though, is proven to be preferable ..."¹⁹

Shaykh 'Uthaymīn was asked about the legality of using *dbikr* beads. He replied by stating: "Using the *subḥab* is allowed, though it is preferable to count *tasbīḥ* on one's fingers."²⁰

SUBHAH, SUHBAH AND SAINTS

Al-Suyūṭī records a *musalsal* report;²¹ by way of Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim al-Sufi who relates; I heard Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Mālikī whom I saw with a *subḥab* in his hand. So I said: "O my teacher, do you, even now, use a *subḥab*?" He replied: "Similarly, I saw a *subḥab* in the hand of my teacher, Junayd. So I said to him: O my teacher, do you, even now ..." The chain continues in the exact same manner through Junayd; from Sarī al-Saqāṭī; from Ma'rūf al-Karkhī; from Bishr al-Ḥāfi; from 'Umar al-Makkī; who saw al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with a *subḥab* in his hand. So he said to him: "O my teacher, with your rank and excellence in devotional acts, and yet do you, even now, use a *subḥab*?" He said to me: "This is something we used at the outset [of the path] and which we are not about to forsake at its end. I love to remember Allah with my heart, tongue and hand."²² *Subḥāna 'Llāb!*

After narrating it, al-Suyūṭī remarked: "And how could it be otherwise, when prayer beads remind one of Allah; Exalted is He. And rarely will a person see prayer beads except that he remembers Allah: and this is among the greatest of its benefits."²³

THE QUESTION OF "WHY?"

Even after reading the aforementioned testimonies from our classical juristic heritage, some may still be left

with the nagging question of why use *dbikr* beads in the first place, if counting on the fingers is better? The standard reply has it that, 'using one's fingers to count *tasbīḥ* or *dbikr*, if it is less than a hundred repetitions, is fairly straightforward for most people. But counting in excess of one hundred becomes harder to keep track of; hence the *subḥab*.'

The standard 'rebuttal' to the above would be to say that although there is a general encouragement to engage in plentiful *dbikr*, as per Allah's words: *O you who believe! Remember Allah abundantly*,²⁴ yet the Sacred Law of Islam has not prescribed any specific *dbikr* with more than one hundred repetitions.

Be that as it may, there are, nonetheless, hadiths which encourage or open the way for the repetition of certain *dbikrs* more than a hundred times. Take, for instance, the following hadith: "Whoever says a hundred times in the morning and the evening: 'Glory be to Allah and all praise be to Him (*subḥāna 'Llābi wa bi ḥamdihī*)'; none will come with anything better than him on the Day of Resurrection, except someone who said the same as it or more than it."²⁵

Also: "Whoever says one hundred times in a day: 'None deserves to be worshiped except Allah; alone, without any partner, to Him belongs the dominion and all praise, and He is omnipotent over all things (*lā ilāha ila 'Llābu waḥdabu lā sbarīka labu labu 'l-mulk wa labu 'l-ḥamd wa huwa 'alā kulli shay'in qadīr*)', will have the reward of emancipating ten slaves; a hundred good deeds will be written for him; a hundred bad deeds will be erased from him; he will be protected against the Devil all that day until the evening; and none shall come with anything better than this, save for a person who does more than it."²⁶

Moreover, prolific repetition of various *dbikr* formulae has been the habit of many scholars (*'ulemā*) and saints (*awliyā*) of this nation from as far back as the days of the early predecessors - some of whose practices have been cited above. Many of them have taken to employing the *subḥab* as a means to keep count of their glorifications, and thus help them to focus on actually being present in their remembrance of Allah: *So for this, let those who will compete*.²⁷

A STATEMENT ON DOCTRINE

Imam al-Taḥāwī's famous creedal statement contains the following paragraph: "We adhere to the Sunnah and the [vast] majority [of scholars], and we avoid isolated opinions, discord and sectarianism."²⁸

Isolated opinions (*sbudbūdb*) refer to those stances that are anomalous, odd, or even eccentric; those opinions which the vast majority of scholars have critically examined and have - for one valid reason or another - chosen to ignore it due to its aberrant character. This is not to suggest that the majority is always right and the minority wrong; but in questions wherein the overwhelming majority of scholars throughout the ages have adopted one particular view, it is inconceivable that such a huge number of jurists and verifying scholars would all have failed to discern the truth on that given point, only for it to be discovered centuries later by an individual or two whose scholarship, precision and piety is hardly likely to compare to the lofty heights of Islam's past masters. Rather, such dissenting views should be treated as being anomalies and must not be given any more consideration than that. "In doing so," wrote Shaykh Muhammad b. Mānī, "lies safety for a person's religion. It is essential, therefore, that in matters of disputation one holds to the view of the overwhelming majority of scholars (*jumbūr al-'ulemā*), since whatever opposes the overwhelming majority is anomalous (*sbādbdb*)."²⁹

In a sense, jurists have likened this doctrinal position of the overwhelming majority to that of consensus; *ijmā'*, and so have placed it under the same Quranic stricture: *Whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has been conveyed to him, and follows other than the believers' path, We shall give him over to what he has chosen, and expose him to Hell - what an evil destination.*³⁰ Here, "other than the believers' path" is whatever contravenes the *ijmā'* and the *jumbūr*.

Aside from the problems at the knowledge-based level, at the practical level, holding to anomalies and isolated views has bitter fruits too. This may be gleaned from al-Taḥāwī's words: "... we avoid isolated opinions, discord and sectarianism." For how often do such views create a pathology in the minds of those it takes hold of: a story that is, by now, tragically familiar. Fostering irreverence towards the bulk of past scholarship; disdain for much

of the *ummab* and its alleged deviations; and a flawed conviction in their correctness built on little more than a spider's web, these "vanguards of authenticity" - which many truly believe they are - feel compelled to lay siege to normative Islamic scholarship with their divine mandate to command good and forbid evil. Thus begins the dialectic of discord. Seeing their 'opponents' confident in their views and content with traditional paradigms of knowledge tends to reinforce their belief in the *jumbūr*'s fallibility. The truth must now be salvaged; all must be re-evaluated through the vanguards' lens; and the pure must now be separated from the putrefied: it is here that such isolated opinions are turned into benchmarks with which to 'test' who is guided aright and who steeped in *bid'ab*.³¹ Thus begins the plunge into sectarianism. All this may sound haunting, yet it is happening.

CONCLUSION

The preceding pages have hopefully demonstrated that using *dbikr* beads can in no way be deemed a *bid'ab* in the religion. "The *bid'ab*," wrote al-Luknawī, "for which the ruling is one of misguidance (*ḍalālah*) - i.e. what the Sacred Law declares to be *bid'ab* - is that which was not found in the first three generations, or for which there is no proof in the four sources ... Taking recourse to prayer beads and counting *dbikr* on it is not like that."³² How can it be otherwise when the elite of this *ummab*, those from whom fatwas and rulings emanate and the religion preserved, have not declared it to be so, but have instead reiterated its legality. With this being said, all of us must engage in *dbikr* in a way that is best conducive to bring about presence of heart: with or without the use of the *subḥab*; or prayer beads.

Truth be told, the point was not really about the *subḥab*, as it was the psychology behind its non-acceptance. If a person believes that a scholar or two in our current time has discovered a truth unbeknown to, or hitherto veiled from, the juristic community for the last thousand years or so, then this is a travesty of nothing less than seismic proportions.

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END NOTES

1. Cf. al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'ifab wa'l-Mawḍū'ab*

(Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif, 1992), 1:184-93; no.83, analyzing the hadith: "What a wonderful reminder the *dbikr* beads are." In the course of his analysis he says that "*dbikr* beads are a *bid'ab*," and that "If there were only one evil *dbikr* beads have, it would suffice - which is that they replace the *Sunnab* of counting with one's fingers ..."

In the third volume of this *Silsilat*, or series (3:48; no.1002), Shaykh al-Albānī wrote - after citing the authentic hadiths about counting on one's fingers: "This is the *Sunnab* in counting the prescribed forms of *dbikr*: counting on the hand - and the right hand at that. Counting on the left hand, or with both hands, or with pebbles, all of this contravenes the *Sunnab*. There is nothing authentically reported at all about [counting on] pebbles, let alone on *dbikr* beads ..." This, of course, does not mean that the Shaykh was oblivious of the proofs marshalled in support of the *subḥab*; but that he considered all such proofs to be weak and unsound.

2. Abu Dāwūd, *Sunan*, no.1501; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, no.3817. In some books the name of Yusayrah is given as Busayrah.

3. Abu Dāwūd, no.1500; al-Tirmidhī, no.3803, who said it is *ḥasan gharib*. Al-Ḥākim deemed it *ṣaḥīḥ* in *al-Mustadrak*, 1:547, and al-Dhahabī concurred.

4. Al-Tirmidhī, no.3789, who declared it *gharib*. Al-Ḥākim, 1:548, graded it as *ṣaḥīḥ*, and al-Dhahabī was of the same view. Ibn Ḥajr al-'Asqalānī, though, graded the hadith *ḥasan* in *Natā'ij al-Aḥkār*, 1:79.

5. He said: "As for the first hadith, it was also recorded by al-Ḥākim. Al-Tirmidhī said: "It is *gharib*; we do not know it except from the hadith of Hānī b. 'Uthmān. Al-Suyūṭī declared the chain of this hadith to be *ṣaḥīḥ*. The second hadith was also recorded by al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim who deemed it *ṣaḥīḥ*. Al-Tirmidhī declared it to be *ḥasan*. The third hadith is also recorded by al-Ḥākim and graded *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Suyūṭī." *Nayl al-Awtār* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2000), 2:672.

As for a thorough analysis of their chains and authenticities (and of the *salaf*-reports which follow), cf. al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'īfah*, 1:184-93, where he grades all such reports weak; and Mamdūh's rebuttal of this claim, *Wuṣūl al-Tabānī fī Iḥbāt Sunniyyat al-Subḥab wa'l-Radd 'ala'l-Albānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Imām al-Tirmidhī, 1995).

Two more monographs on the subject are also worth mentioning. The first is by Bakr Abu Zayd, *Al-Subḥab: Tārīkhūbā wa Ḥukmūbā* (Riyadh: Dār al-Āṣimāh, 1998), and runs in a similar vein to that of al-Albānī's. The other, al-Luknawī, *Nuzbat al-Fikr fī Subḥati'l-Dbikr* (Amman: Dār al-Fatḥ, 2000), which adopts the classical stance in the issue.

6. *Nayl al-Awtār*, 2:672. Al-Mubārakpūrī, in his magisterial *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwādib bi Sharḥ Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1990), 9:322, endorses the exact same words of al-Shawkānī.

7. Al-Suyūṭī, 'Al-Minḥah fi'l-Subḥab', in *al-Ḥāwī li'l-Fatāwī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1988), 1:1-5.

8. *Nayl al-Awtār*, 2:672-3.

9. *Al-Muṣannaf* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd, 1998), 2:391.

10. *ibid.*, no.7669, 7657, 7667 respectively.

11. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā* (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1991), 22:506.

12. *ibid.*, 22:187. A similar, though more scathing critique of the exhibitionism that some intend in using *dbikr* beads is given in Ibn al-Ḥāj, *al-Madkbal*, 3:214-5 - as cited in Bakr Abu Zayd, *al-Subḥab*, 105-8.

13. *Fatāwā wa Masā'il Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1986), 1:400.

14. *Al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib min al-Kalimi'l-Tayyib* (Cairo: Dār al-Rayyān, 1987), 222.

15. *Al-Jawābir wa'l-Durar fī Tarjumab Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajr* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1999), 1:171.

16. Cited in Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Ṣiyar A'lām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1998), 9:180.

17. Al-Daylamī, *Musnad al-Firdaws*, no.7029. Al-Qārī says, *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ Sharḥ al-Misbkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* (Buluchistan: Maktabah al-Rushdiyyah, n.d.), 3:42-3, that it was narrated with a weak chain (*bi sanadīn ḍa'īf*). In contrast, al-Albānī graded it *mawḍū'*; fabricated, in *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa'īfah*, no.83. Al-Suyūṭī and al-Shawkānī seem not to have passed any judgement on its authenticity.

18. *Fayḍ al-Qadīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣagbīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, n.d.), 4:355.

19. *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, 5:227.

20. Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Fatāwā Arkān al-Islām* (Riyadh: Dār al-Thurayyah, 2003), 336; no.260. A similar verdict is given in Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, *Mulakkbakḥaṣ al-Fiqhī* (Jeddah: Dār Ibn al-Jawziyyah, 1999), 1:112.

21. *Musalsal*: "continuous". Ibn Ḥajr al-'Asqalānī defines this type of report, saying: "If the narrators concur in their modes of expression, or in some other manner, it is *musalsal*." *Nukbbat al-Fikr* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Ādāb, 2001), 31. So if each narrator, for example, transmits the hadith by using the phrase: "So and so related to me while he was holding his beard ...", or: "I swear by Allah that so and so related to me ...," this recurring in each level of the chain, then it is *musalsal*.

22. *Al-Minḥab fi'l-Subḥab*, 1:4-5; *Nuzbat al-Fikr*, 40-2, where al-Luknawī makes the following remark: "Al-Sakhāwī points to most of its routes of transmission, saying: 'The narration revolves around Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Sufī, and he has been accused of forgery. Also, the narrations of 'Umar al-Makkī from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī are problematic (*mu'ḍab*).' This *musalsal* report was also related via another route about which he made no comment."

23. *ibid.*, 1:5.

24. Qur'an 33:41. Also cf. 33:35; 3:41; 8:45.

25. Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, no.2692.

26. Al-Bukhārī, no. 6403; Muslim, no.2691.

27. Qur'an 83:26.

28. *The Creed of Imam al-Taḥāwī* (USA: Zaytuna Institute, 2007), 70; pt.92. The Arabic states: "*wa nattabi'u'l-sunnab wa'l-jamā'ab wa najtanibu'l-sbudhūd wa'l-kbilāf wa'l-furqa.*"

29. *Al-'Aqīdab al-Taḥāwīyyab bi Ḥāshiyab Mubammad b. Mānī'* (Riyadh: Aḍwā' al-Salaf, 1999), 69.

30. Qur'an 4:115.

31. Another isolated view used in such a manner is the claim that twenty *rak'ats* of *tarāwīḥ* prayer is a *bid'ab*.

32. *Nuzbat al-Fikr*, 55. As for the four sources (*al-adillab al-arba'ab*), they are: the Qur'an, the Sunnah, scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*) and analogy (*qiyās*).