

A Scholarly Research by Shaykh Albaani 'That Prayer Beads are a *Bida*'

Taken from

'Silsilah Ahadeeth ad-Daeefah'

1/83

A summary of the research

by the

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Shaykh al-Albaani said in 'Silsilah ad-Da'eefah':

83 – 'What a blessed reminder are prayer beads and indeed the best place to prostrate on is the earth and on that which the earth produces.'

***Mawdoo* (Fabricated)**

Narrated by ad-Daylamee in 'Musnad al-Firdaws' (4/98); he said that Abdoos bin Abdullaah informed us that Abu Abdullaah al-Hussain bin Funjoowayah a-Thaqafi informed us that 'Ali bin Muhammad bin Nassrooweeyah narrated to us that **Muhammad bin Haroon bin Isa bin Mansoor al-Hashami** narrated to us that Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Hamzah al-'Alawee narrated to me that Abdul Samad bin Musa narrated to me that Zainab bint Sulayman bin 'Ali narrated to me that Umm al-Hasan bint Jafar bin al-Hasan on the authority of her father on the authority of her grandfather on the authority of 'Ali *marfoo*' (ascribed to the Messenger of Allaah - *sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*).

[Research of the Isnad]¹

Suyooti mentioned it in his book 'al-Manha fee as-Subha' (2/141) and Shawkani conveyed it from him in 'Nail-Awtaar' (2/166-167) and they remained quiet about this narration!

I say (Albaani): This chain has darkness upon darkness; the majority of the narrators are *Majbool* (unknown) and some of them have been blamed:

I did not find anyone who wrote a biography for Umm al-Hasan bint Jafar bin al-Hasan.

Al-Khateeb wrote a biography for Zainab bint Sulayman bin 'Ali in his 'Tareekh' (14/334) and he said: 'She was of the best of women.'

Al-Khateeb wrote a biography for Abdul Samad bin Musa, he is al-Hashmi, (14/41) but he did not mention anything about him either praising or criticizing him. However, Dhahabi conveyed in 'al-Meezan' on the authority of al-Khateeb that he said regarding him: 'Indeed they regarded him as weak (*Da'eef*).'

Perhaps that was in some of al-Khateeb's other books, then I corrected that and said: Rather that is in another hadeeth which will be mentioned with no. 2898.

Then Dhahabi said: 'He narrates rejected narrations on the authority of his grandfather Muhammad bin Ibraheem al-Imaam'

I say (Albaani): Perhaps he is the point of objection in this hadeeth.

As for Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Hamza al-'Alawee then al-Khateeb also wrote a biography for him (3/63) and said: 'Ibn Abee Haatim said: I heard from him and he is *Sadooq* (truthful) who died in the year 286.'

Muhammad bin Haroon, he is Muhammad bin Haroon bin al-Abbas bin Abee Jafar al-Mansoor, and al-Khateeb also mentioned him (3/356) saying: 'He was from the people who had intelligence, had excellence and was a lecturer. He held the post of an Imaam of the masjid al-Madina in Baghdad for 50 years and he died in the year 308.'

¹ Headings were added for clarity (T.N.)

As for Abdullaah bin al-Hussain bin Funjoowayah at-Thaqafi then he is *Thiqaa*h (trustworthy), his biography is in ‘*Siyaar alaam an-Nubala*’ (17/383) and ‘*Shadhraat ad-Dhaab*’ (3/200).

Likewise with Abdoos bin Abdullaah, his biography is in ‘*Siyaar alaam an-Nubala*’ (19/98) and in ‘*Lisaan al-Meezan*’ (4/95).

[The Explanation]

From what has preceded it becomes clear to you that the *Isnaad* (chain) is *Da’eef* (weak), so it cannot be used as evidence.

Now, in my opinion, this hadeeth is *Baatil* (false) due to its meaning for the following reasons:

Firstly: that prayer beads are a *Bida*’ which were not present at the time of the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* and were innovated after the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-*², so how could it make sense that the Messenger *-alayhi asallam-* would encourage his Companions in a matter they did not know?!

The evidence for this is what Ibn Waddah al-Qurtubi mentioned in ‘*al-Bida*’ wal-Nahee anhaa’ (p.12) on the authority of Saltt bin Bahraam who said: ‘Ibn Mas’ood passed by a woman who had a *Tasbeeh* (prayer beads) and would count upon them, so he broke it and threw it away. Then he passed by a man who was counting upon pebbles, so he kicked him with his leg. Then he said: You have preceded the Prophet! You have carried out an oppressive *Bida*! You have preceded the Companions of Muhammad *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* in knowledge!’

The chain up to Saltt is Saheeh, he is *Thiqaa*h (trustworthy) from the *Atbaa*’ *at-Tabi’een* (followers of the successors of the Companions), so its chain is broken.

Then it was narrated on the authority of Abaan bin Abee ‘Ayaash who said: I asked al-Hasan about a *Nathaam* (a thread with pearls etc. arranged upon it) made from pearls and date stones etc, is *Tasbeeh* counted upon it?

So he said: None of the women of the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* or the female emigrants did this.

² What supports that is the statement of the scholars of language: ‘Indeed the words: ‘*as-Subha*’ (Prayer beads) is a newly created word, it was unknown to the Arabs.’

However, its chain is very weak.

Secondly: that prayer beads oppose the guidance of the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*: Abdullaah bin ‘Amr said: ‘I saw the Messenger of Allaah *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*- counting the *Tasbeeh* with his right hand.’

Narrated by Abu Dawood (1/235), Tirmidhi (4/255) who graded it hasan, Ibn Hibban (2334), Hakim (1/547), Bayhaqi (2/253) and its chain is *Saheeh* just as Dhahabi said. I researched it in ‘Saheeh Abu Dawood’ (1346).

[The Command of the Messenger]

Then prayer beads oppose the command of the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*-, when he said to some women:

‘You should make *Tasbeeh*³, *Tableet*⁴, *Taqdees*⁵ and do not be negligent and forget Tawheed (and in a narration: mercy), **and count them on your** fingertips since they will be questioned and will respond.’

This hadeeth is *Hasan*, narrated by Abu Dawood and other than him, Hakim and Dhahabi authenticated it and an-Nawawi and al-Asqalani graded it as *Hasan* as is mentioned in ‘Amali al-Adhkaar’ (1/84) and it has supporting evidence on the authority of ‘Aeysha which is *Mawqoof* (the Isnad only goes back to the Companion), see ‘Saheeh Abu Dawood’ (1345).

This is why a group of scholars have made the hadeeth ‘What a blessed reminder are prayer beads.....’ *Da’eef*; as is mentioned by Shaykh Muhammad Khaleel al-Qawoojee in ‘Shawaariq al-Anwaar al-Jaleela’ (1/113).

[Here the Shaykh mentions technical information related to the *Isnad* of the hadeeth]

[He continues:]

It may be said: Some of the Ahadeeth mention performing *Tasbeeh* with pebbles and the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*- approved of it, therefore there is no difference between this and *Tasbeeh* using prayer beads, as Shawkani said.

³ To say ‘SubhanAllaah’ (T.N.)

⁴ To say ‘La illaha ill Allaah’ (T.N.)

⁵ ‘To say ‘SubhanAllaah al-Malikul Quddoos; or Subooh Quddoos Rabb al-malaikatu war-Ruhu; and it is possible that Taqdees means to say Allaahu Akbar’. (Mishkat al-Masabih (2/9) –Checked by shaykh Albani) (T.N.)

I say (Albaani): Perhaps this would be acceptable if the Ahadeeth regarding this were authentic, however this is not the case. Most of what is narrated regarding this are two Ahadeeth which Suyooti brings in his booklet as we indicated, so it is necessary to mention them and explain their mistakes:

Firstly on the authority of Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas that he and the Messenger of Allaah -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*- entered upon a woman while she was counting *Tasbeeh* on date stones or pebbles in front of her and the Messenger -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*- said: 'Shall I inform you of that which is easier upon you than this or better?'

He said: '*SubhanAllaah* equivalent to the number of what Allaah created in the heavens....' the hadeeth.

Narrated by Abu Dawood (1/235), Tirmidhi (4/277-278), Ibn Hibban 92330 – in his book 'Zawaid', Doorqi in 'Musnad Sa'ad' (130/1), Mukhalas in 'al-Fawaid' (9/17/2), and Hakim (1/547-548)⁶ by way of 'Amroo bin al-Harith that Sa'eed bin Abi Halaal narrated to him on the authority of Khuzaimah on the authority of 'Aeysha bint Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas on the authority of her father.

Tirmidhi said: 'Hadeeth *Hasan*.'

Hakim said: '*Saheeb al-Isnad*.'

Dhahabi agreed with him, however he was mistaken because this Khuzaimah is *Majhool* (unknown) even Dhahabi himself said in 'al-Meezan': 'Khuzaimah is unknown and so is Sa'eed bin Abi Halaal.'

Hafidh said likewise in 'Taqreeb': 'Indeed he is unknown.'

Even with Sa'eed bin Abi Halaal being *Thiqaaah*, as-Saajee mentioned on the authority of Ahmad that he became confused and Yahya also described him as confused as in 'al-Fasal' by Ibn Hazm (2/95). Perhaps what supports this argument is his narrating this hadeeth, because some of the trustworthy narrators who narrated from Sa'eed do not mention Khuzaimah in their chain, so the chain becomes broken. This is why Hafidh al-Mizee did not mention 'Aeysha bint Sa'ad amongst the *shuyookh* (those

⁶ Suyooti attributed it in 'al-Manha' to Nisa'ee and Ibn Majah and Shawkani followed him in that, however there is some speculation about this due to two points:

- a- That Ibn Majah did not relate this narration at all.
- b- That Nisa'ee narrated it in 'al-Yawm wa Layla' as is mentioned in 'at-Thufah' (3/325), so it was necessary to qualify it and I did not see this in the printed version.

who were narrated from) of Ibn Abi Halaal, so this *Isnad* is not without the defects of *Jabaala* (a narrator being unknown) or *Inqitaa'* (a break in the chain), so how can this hadeeth be Saheeh or Hasan?!

Some of those who authored works claiming Prayer Beads are from the Sunnah were ignorant of this information or they pretended to be ignorant of it such as those of the present day who follow their desires and blindly follow their Shaykh Abdullaah al-Ghamaari who likewise pretended to be ignorant of this truth. He mentioned this hadeeth in his 'Kanz' (103) so that he could make the Prayer Beads permissible for his *Mureeds* (loyal followers) consequently making it permissible for them to wear them around their necks just as some of the *Mushayikh* (shaykhs) of the Soofi orders wear them.

See the refutation against him in the introduction to volume three of this 'Silsilah' (p.37) and you will see the strangest of the strange.

The second hadeeth is on the authority of Safeeyah who said:

'The Messenger of Allaah -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*- entered upon me while I had 4,000 date stones in front of me and I would count *Tasbeeh* upon them.

He said: 'O daughter of Huyaiya what is this?!'

She answered: 'I am counting *Tasbeeh* upon them.'

He said: 'I have said more *Tasbeeh* than this while I have been standing here near you.'

She requested: 'Teach me O Messenger of Allaah!'

He said: 'Say *SubhanAllaah* equivalent to the number of what Allaah created of things....'

Narrated by Tirmidhi (4/274), Abu Bakr ash-Shafi'ee in 'al-Fawaaid' (73/255/1), Haakim (1/547) by way of Hashim bin Sa'eed on the authority of Kanana Maula (the freed slave of) Safeeyah, from her.

Tirmidhi regarded it as weak by saying: 'This hadeeth is *Ghareeb* (strange), we do not know it except from this route of the hadeeth of Hashim bin Sa'eed al-Koofee and his *Isnaad* is not well-known. Also, there is a hadeeth on this issue on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas.'

As for Hakim then he said: ‘*Sabeeh al-Isnaad*’ and Dhahabi⁷ agreed with him and this is strange coming from him, since he mentioned this Hashim bin Sa’eed in ‘al-Meezan’ and said: ‘Ibn Ma’een said: He is nothing. Ibn ‘Adee said: Whatever he narrated cannot have supporting narrations.’

This is why Hafidh said in ‘Taqreeb’: ‘He is weak’.

This Kanana’s condition is unknown; no-one other than Ibn Hibban regarded him as trustworthy.

Then I amended this and said: However a group of narrators have narrated from Kanana and from them were Zuhayr and Hudayj, the two sons of Muwayyeeyah, Mohammad bin Talha bin Musrif and Sa’adaan bin Basheer al-Juhani; all these four are trustworthy and also included along with them is Yazeed bin Mughliss al-Bahilly, whom a group regarded as trustworthy while others regarded him as weak. So the one from whom the likes of these narrate is included in the group of those who are regarded as ‘*Sadooq*’; just as I recently researched in a uniquely detailed piece of study ‘Tamaam al-Mina’ (p.204-206), so do not be deceived by some of the ignorant ones, like Saqqaf and other than him; therefore the defect in this hadeeth is only Hishaam.

What indicates that these two hadeeth are weak is that this story is mentioned on the authority of Ibn Abbas without mentioning pebbles and its wording is as follows:

Ibn Abbas said: On the authority of Juwayreeyah that the Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* left her early when he went to pray the morning prayer, while she was in her place of prayer, then he returned after he had prayed *Duha* prayer and she was still sitting.

So he said to her: Are you still in the same state that I left you in?

She answered: Yes.

The Prophet *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* said:

‘I have already said four statements after you, three times, and if they were weighed against what you have said today then they would outweigh what you have said. They are: SubhanAllaahi wa bihamdihee, ‘adad Khalqihi, wa ridha nafsihi, wazeenat ‘arshihee, wa Midaad kalimaatihi.

⁷ Suyooti followed him in this in ‘al-Manha’ & Shawkani was deceived by it.

(Allaah is free from imperfection and praise is for him; to the amount of his creation, the pleasure of His own Self, the beautification of His *'Arsh* and the extent of His words.)

Narrated by Muslim (8/83-84) and Tirmidhi (4/274) and he authenticated it. Also narrated by Nisa'ee in 'Amal al-Yawm wa Layla' (161-165), Ibn Majah (91/23), Ahmad (6/325 & 429-430).

So this authentic hadeeth indicates two matters:

The first is that the person in the story is Juwayreeyah and not Safeeyah as was mentioned previously in the second hadeeth!

The second matter is that the mention of pebbles in the story is rejected. What supports this is that Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood *-RadhiAllaahu anhu-* rebuked those whom he saw counting *Tasbeeh* upon pebbles.

This has been mentioned on the authority of Ibn Mas'ood via many chains, one of which has already preceded. If the use of pebbles for counting *Tasbeeh* was that which the Messenger *-sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam-* had relayed then it would not have been hidden from Ibn Mas'ood, inshAllaah.

Indeed this rebuke was adopted by some of those who graduated from the school of Ibn Mas'ood, including none other than Ibraheem bin Yazeed Nakhai, the scholar from Koofa, who used to prohibit his daughter from helping women braid thread together for prayer beads which they would use for *Tasbeeh*⁸!

Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah in 'al-MusannaF' (2/89/2) with a good chain.

[The Amount of *Dhikr*]

If the *Dhikr* were a lot, a person might perhaps say: It is not possible to enumerate exactly the amount counted upon fingers as is the way mentioned in the Sunnah.

The reply is: indeed this matter of contempt came from another *Bida'*, which is the act of performing the *Dhikr* (remembrance) of Allaah much more than the limited amount - which Allaah the Most-Wise did not legislate. So this *Bida'* necessitated another *Bida'* which is the prayer beads since, as far as I know, the most that has been

⁸ In this and what has preceded is a clear refutation of Shaykh al-Habashee in his claim that no-one has preceded me in rejecting prayer beads.

mentioned in the authentic Sunnah is indeed one hundred and it is possible for the one used to doing so to count this easily on one's fingers.

As for the hadeeth:

'Whoever says one hundred times a day: 'Laa ilaaha illAllaah wahdahu la shareeka lahu.....' the hadeeth.

So the intent is: one hundred in the morning and one hundred in the evening; as is clearly mentioned in some of the authentic narrations and they have been explained in 'Saheehah' (2762).

As for what Ibn Abi Shaybah (2/391) narrated on the authority of Weeqa on the authority of Sa'eed bin Jubayr who said: Umar bin al-Khattab saw a man counting *Tasbeeh* with prayer beads he had, Umar said: What would be better than this would be for him to say: 'SubhanAllaah

This is rejected due to the following reasons: the disconnection between him and Sa'eed as well as Weeqa being weak and he is Ibn Eyaas who is *layin* in hadeeth (he is not discarded, he is upright in himself but his hadeeth are not precise).

If there was only one resultant evil from the prayer beads which is that they have, or have nearly, annihilated the Sunnah of counting on fingers - which they agree is better - then this would have been sufficient evil since it is indeed rare that I see an old person count the *Tasbeeh* on his fingertips!

Indeed the people have also diversified innovating with this *Bida'*, so you see some of those who ascribe themselves to one of the Soofi orders wearing prayer beads around their necks!⁹

Some of the people use prayer beads while they are talking to you or while they are listening to you talk! The last thing my eyes fell upon a few days ago was a man going along some streets, busy with people, on an ordinary bicycle and in one of his hands were prayer beads!!

⁹ Shaykh Abdullaah al-Ghamari, the shaykh of the Darqaweeyah order and other orders, encourage them saying: 'There is nothing wrong with wearing prayer beads around the neck as it is the same as a writer placing his pen on his ear!' How amazing it is when a *Faqih* makes a good analogy because this is the most baseless analogy on the face of this earth as it is built upon fabricated ahadeeth.

They make a pretence to the people of not neglecting the remembrance of Allaah, even for the blink of an eye! Many of these *Bida'* become the cause of the loss of an obligation. It has happened to me – and to others – many a time that I have given my Salaams to one of them and they have replied with just a signal, without saying as-Salaam! The evils of these *Bida'* are innumerable. How excellent was the saying of the poet:

Every good is in the following of the Salaf * and every evil is in the innovations of the Khalaf¹⁰

A Summary of what the Shaykh mentioned:

- A- that prayer beads are a *Bida'* which were not present at the time of the Prophet -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*- and were innovated after the Messenger -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*-¹¹, so how could it make sense that the Messenger -*alayhi asallam*- would encourage his Companions in a matter they did not know?!
- B- That prayer beads oppose the guidance of the Messenger -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*: Abdullaah bin 'Amr said: 'I saw the Messenger of Allaah -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*- counting the *Tasbeeh* with his right hand.'
- C- Then prayer beads oppose the command of the Messenger -*sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam*-, when he said to some women: 'You should make *Tasbeeh*, *Tahleel*, *Taqdees* and do not be negligent and forget Tawheed (and in a narration: mercy), **and count them on your fingertips** since they will be questioned and will respond.'
- D- Ibraheem bin Yazeed Nakhai, the scholar from Koofa, used to prohibit his daughter from helping women braid thread together for prayer beads which they would use for *Tasbeeh*!
- E- As far as I know, the most that has been mentioned in the authentic Sunnah is indeed one hundred and it is possible for the one used to doing so to count this easily on one's fingers.
- F- If there was only one resultant evil from the prayer beads which is that they have, or have nearly, annihilated the Sunnah of counting on fingers - which they agree is better - then

¹⁰ The transliteration of which is: 'Kullu khairin fee ittiba' man Salaf * wa Kullu Sharrin fee Ibtida' man KhallaF' (T.N.)

¹¹ What supports that is the statement of the scholars of language: 'Indeed the words: '*as-Subha'* (Prayer beads) is a newly created word, it was unknown to the Arabs.'

this would have been sufficient evil since it is indeed rare that I see an old person count the *Tasbeeh* on his fingertips!

G- How excellent was the saying of the poet: Every good is in the following of the Salaf * and every evil is in the innovations of the Khalaf¹²

All Praise belongs to Allaah, may His peace

and blessings be upon our final

Prophet Muhammad, his

family, his companions

and all those who

follow his

guidance.

¹² The transliteration of which is: ‘Kullu khairin fee ittiba’ man Salaf * wa Kullu Sharrin fee Ibtida’ man KhallaF’ (T.N.)