

Dhikr: Islamic Context and Mahdavi Practice

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DHIKR: CONCEPT, PRACTICE, and STATE

CONCEPT:

- MEANS “REMEMBRANCE”, “RECOLLECTION” BUT ALSO “MENTIONING”
- IN ISLAMIC THEOLOGY—Humans are by nature negligent and forgetful
- We have all recognized and acknowledged Allah
- We are reminded by the signs of Allah “ON THE HORIZONS AND IN OURSELVES”, the revealed books, the prophets

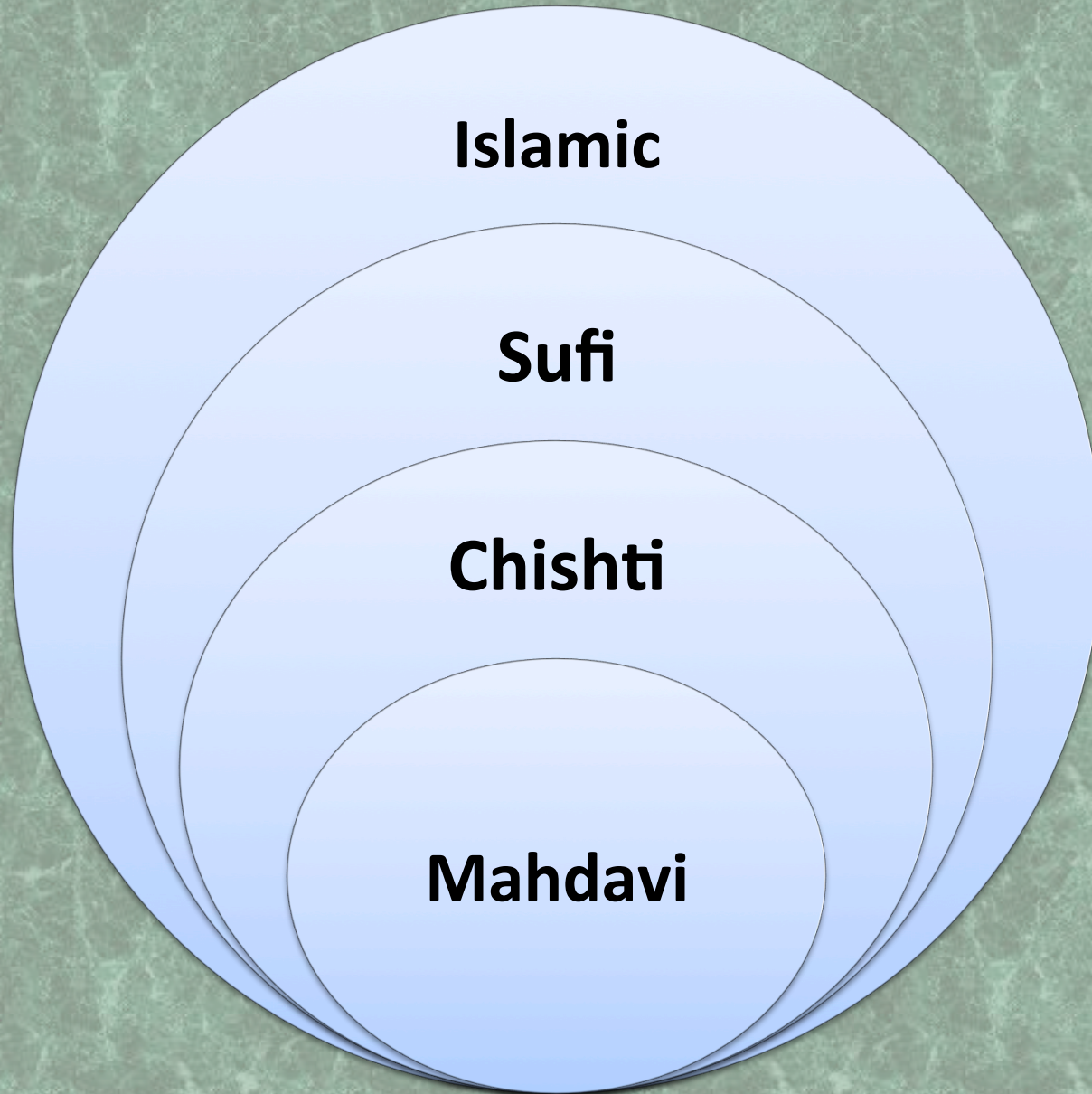
PRACTICE OF DHIKR

- Repetition of pious phrases
- May include bodily gestures, postures
- Distinctive forms and practices of dhikr
identify specific Sufi Orders

DHIKR as a STATE

- Beyond the practice itself, **dhikr** and the condition of being a “**dhakir**” can be interpreted in terms of a state of consciousness or spiritual experience
- Some of the distinctive elements of the Mahdavi dhikr are in this area

CONTEXTS OF DHIKR



ISLAMIC: QUR'AN AND HADITH

- THE TERM “DHIKR” APPEARS **75** TIMES IN THE QUR'AN (another **84** as verb) WHICH ITSELF IS CALLED A “DHIKR” (reminder)
- “O you who believe remember Allah with a great remembrance (dhikr^{an} kathir^{an}) and glorify him in the morning and evening” 33:41
- “Remember Allah deep in your soul (nafs) humbly and with fear (khawf) without loudness in words..” 7:205

ISLAMIC: QUR'AN AND HADITH

- “Remember Me and I will remember you”
– Q 2:152

• "فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ"

- “Remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down” Q 3:191 4:10

Hadith

- Dhikr is the polish for the Heart
- A breath without the remembrance of Allah is wasted

SUFI

COSMOLOGY-SUFIS SUCH A IBN 'ARABI, RUMI

- Understand dhikr within a context of awakening and spiritual development (suluk)
- Sufi cosmology is one of the emanation (fayz) or manifestation (tajalli) of Allah and the path of ascent or return of the seeker (murid)
- what is the purpose? –fana/baqa
- Important role of the **MURSHID** (spiritual guide)

Determination	Ibn Arabi ¹	Kashani	Ibrahim Hakki
Nondetermination (<i>La Taayyun</i>)	He-ness (<i>Hahut</i>)	UnmanifestAbsolute(<i>Ahadiyya</i>)	Unity (<i>Wahdah</i>)
	Divinity (<i>Lahut</i>)	Manifest Absolute (<i>Wahidiyya</i>)	Darkness (<i>Amā</i>) Divinity (<i>Lahut</i>)
First Determination (<i>Taayyun al-awwal</i>)	Power (<i>Jabarut</i>)	Power (<i>Jabarut</i>)	Power (<i>Jabarut</i>)
Second Determination (<i>Taayyun al-thani</i>)	Angelic World (<i>Malakut</i>), including Imaginal World (<i>Mithal</i>)	Angelic World (<i>Malakut</i>)	World of Spirits (<i>Anwah</i>)
			Isthmus (<i>Barzah</i>)
Third Determination (<i>Taayyun al-thalis</i>)	World of Humans (<i>Nasut</i>)	Kingdom, World of Dominion (<i>Mulk</i>)	World of Witnessing (<i>Shahadah</i>)

CHISHTI TARIQA (Sufi Order)

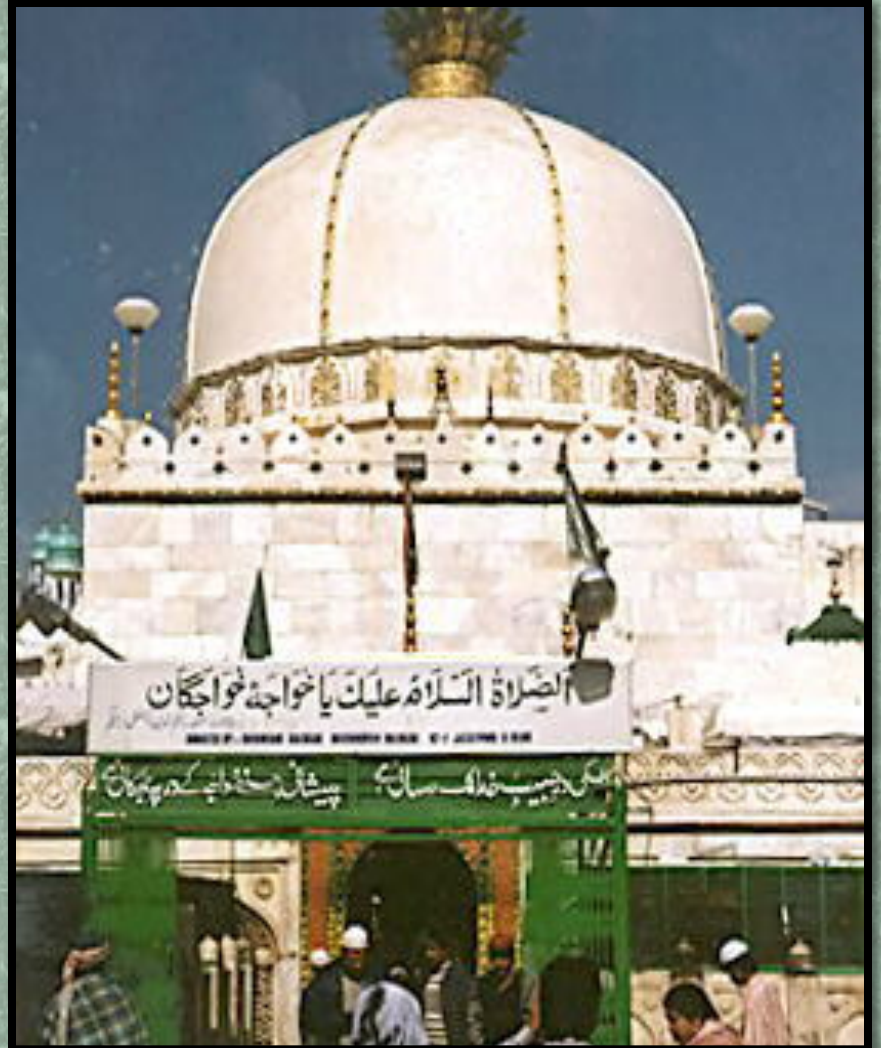
شجرہ شریف چشتیہ نظامیہ فخریہ مہارویہ

- ۱: سید الکونین رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم و کائنات حضرت محمد مصطفیٰ ﷺ
- ۲: مولانا کائنات مشکل کشا حضرت علی المرتضیٰ کرم اللہ وجہہ
- ۳: حضرت خواجہ حسن البصری رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۴: حضرت خواجہ عبدالواحد رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۵: حضرت خواجہ فضیل ابن عیاض رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۶: حضرت خواجہ ابراہیم آدم بلخی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۷: حضرت خواجہ سدید الدین ہمدانی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۸: حضرت خواجہ ابن الدین ہمدانی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۹: حضرت خواجہ محمد اعلیٰ بنوری رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۰: قطب سلسلہ چشتیہ، سر سلسلہ حضرت خواجہ ابوالفتح شامی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۱: حضرت خواجہ ابوالاحمد چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۲: حضرت خواجہ ناصر الدین محمد چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۳: حضرت خواجہ ابوالیوسف چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۴: حضرت خواجہ قطب الدین مودودی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۵: حضرت خواجہ حاجی شریف زعفرانی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۶: حضرت خواجہ عثمان ہرونی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۷: حضرت خواجہ معین الدین چشتی اجمیری رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۸: حضرت خواجہ قطب الدین بختیار کاکی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۱۹: حضرت بابا فرید الدین مسعود اودھنی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۰: حضرت خواجہ نظام الدین محبوب الہی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۱: حضرت خواجہ نصیر الدین چراغ دہلوی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۲: حضرت خواجہ کمال الدین چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۳: حضرت خواجہ سراج الدین چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۴: حضرت خواجہ علم الدین چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۵: حضرت خواجہ محمود راجن چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۶: حضرت خواجہ بہار الدین من چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۷: حضرت خواجہ حسن محمد چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۸: حضرت خواجہ محمد حسن چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۲۹: حضرت خواجہ عیسیٰ مدنی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
- ۳۰: حضرت خواجہ کلیم اللہ جہاں آبادی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

۳۱: حضرت خواجہ نظام الدین اورنگ آبادی چشتی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

۳۲: حضرت مولانا محمد فرید الدین فرجی اورنگ آبادی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

۳۳: حضرت مولانا محمد فرید الدین فرجی اورنگ آبادی رحمۃ اللہ علیہ



CHISHTIyya AND MAHDAVIyya

- Indian context and regional contacts
—U.P. Gujarat, Hyderabad
- Link through Shaykh Danyal Chishti
- Philosophy of wahdat al-wujud (unity of existence)
- Emphasis on love (‘ishq)

Chishti Dhikr

- Can be group or individual
- Can be silent or performed aloud
- Focuses on the shahada and nafi/ithbat
- Dhikr of 1200 (bara soo)
- Uses head movements (strikes/ “zarb”)
- Has various techniques “pas-e anfas”
- and shughl/ashghal “concentrations” “didar-e ilahi”

“Levels” Lata’if Spiritual Centers

SHĀH WALĪ ALLĀH’S THEORY OF THE SUBTLE SPIRITUAL CENTERS

THE SUBTLE SPIRITUAL CENTERS (LAṬĀʾIF) SHĀH WALĪ ALLĀH’S MODEL

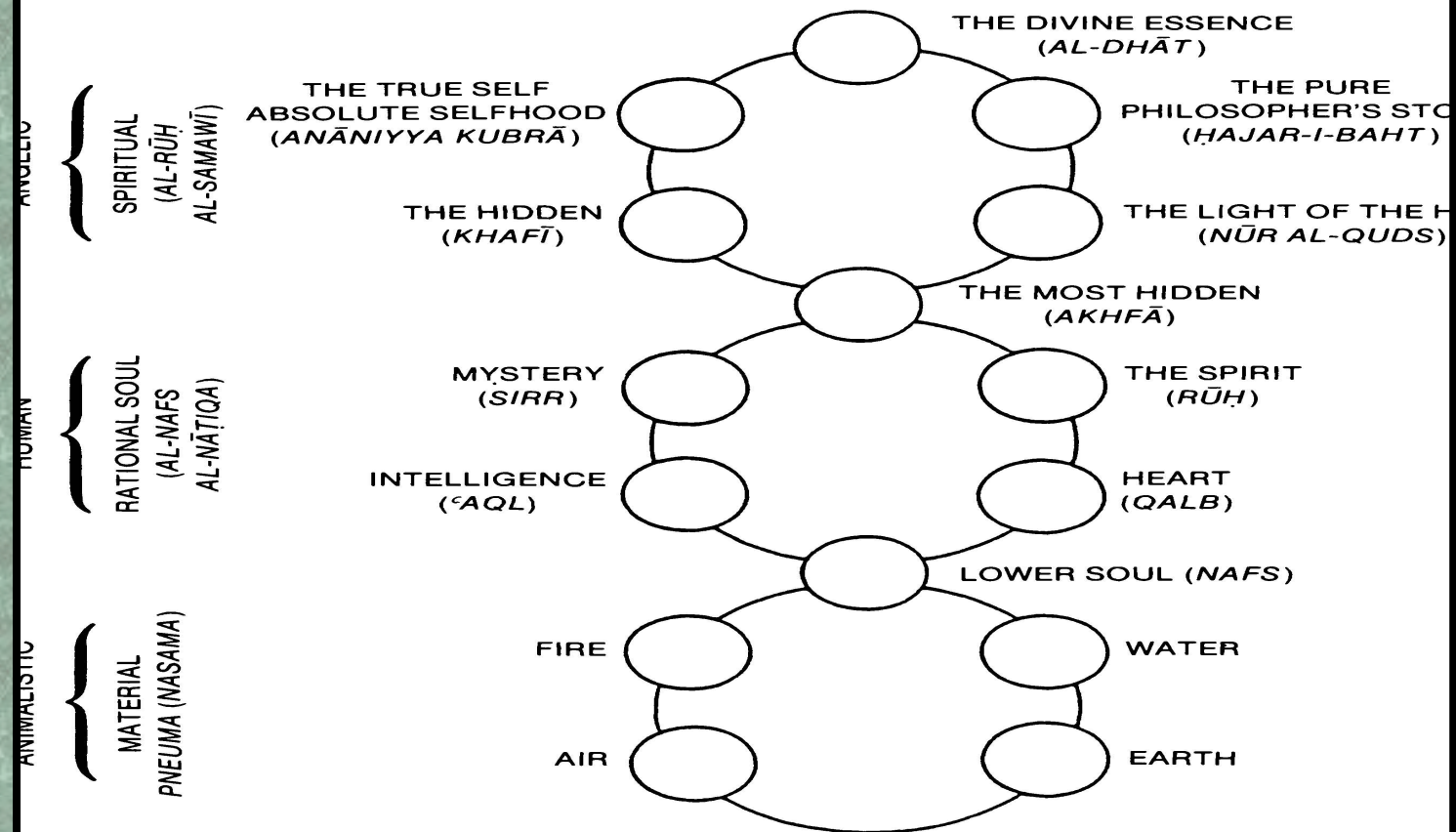


FIG. 3.—Based on diagram in Shāh Walī Allāh, *al-Taḥfīmāt al-Ilāhiyya*, vol. 1, p. 244

MAHDAVI DHIKR

MAHDAVI DHIKR 1

- **Special features**

- Performed silently (khafi) without any special movements “dhikr-e khafi iman ast”
- Importance of the breath (“a breath without remembrance is wasted”/the spirit (ruh) permeates the entire body)
- Ideal is perpetual dhikr-- “dhikr dawwam, da’imi” (Har ja ke bashid ba yad e khuda bashid)

MAHDAVI DHIKR 2

- **Special features**
 - Goal is vision of the divine-- “didar-e ilahi”
 - Dhikr is an obligatory practice (farz)
 - Dhikr timings “emperor of the day [*Sultan-an-Nahar*] and Emperor of the Night [*Sultan-al-Lail*]”

Based, on Qur'an, Hadith, Sufi Sayings (aqwal), and Reports from the Mahdi Maw'ud (naqliyat)

- There are multiple reports from the Mahdi maw'ud concerning dhikr which are used to explain these features
- “Only due to dhikr can you achieve the vision of God, Whatever I say—do exactly that”
- Perform the dhikr of Allah may He be exalted, so that you can achieve the vision of Allah”

Mahdavi Dhikr

- The earlier Sufi tariqas begin with loud “dhikr lisani” and move toward khafi and akhfa (silent).
- “Mahdavi dhikr begins with dhikr khafi and ends with the divine vision (experience of God)”
 - “He came on the path of seeking and was brought to the path for reaching the higher abode” (naqliyat Mahdi Maw’ud)
- Mahdavi pas-anfas-”keeping track of the breath”
 - With every inhale “Illa-Allah” and with every exhale “La ilaha”

SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Stages and states—some examples of Mahdavi discussions of dhikr “levels”

Insaf Nama

- 15 hours a day (5 pahar) is ‘abundant’ (kathir) remembrance
 - Dhikr-e qalil (munafiq) 9 hours or less
 - Dhikr-e mushrik 12 hours (1/2 a day)
 - Dhikr-e mu’min—24 hours--perpetual
- How much dhikr is to be done (perpetual dhikr is more about dhikr as a state)

Levels of Dhikr/Kalima (Insaf Nama)

- **TASDIQ-affirmation**
- **TA'ZIM-glorification**
- **HALAWAT-sweetness**
- **HURMAT-reverence**

KALIMA:

- 1. SPOKEN-goftani
- 2. KNOWN-danistani
 - Ayn al-yaqin
- 3. TASTED-didani
 - Ilm al-yaqin
- 4. OCCURRED-shudni
 - haqq al-yaqin

ESSENCE, KASHF

MAHDAVI DHIKR IN A MODERN CONTEXT

- the idea of personal/individual development “spiritual transformation”
- Relationship of murshid and murid--individual counseling and guidance
- Emphasis on state/condition--- “love, God-consciousness” rather than on externals
- Need to appreciate this transmission against the “scripturalist puritanism” of some contemporary Muslim movements