

هَلْ عَقْدُ التَّسْبِيحِ بَعْدَ
الصَّلَاةِ يَكُونُ بِالْيَدِ الْيُمْنَى أَمْ بِكِلْتَا الْيَدَيْنِ؟

**IS COUNTING TASBEEH AFTER THE
PRAYER TO BE DONE WITH THE
RIGHT HAND OR BOTH?¹**

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Tasbeeh with the right hand is from the well-known cases of *ikhtilāf* (jurisprudential differences), especially amongst the contemporary scholars. We can narrow down the views to three:

1. That the Sunnah to make *tasbeeh* with the right hand only, and it is impermissible to do so with the left. This is the view of Shaykh al-Albāni (رحمه الله).
2. That the Sunnah is to make *tasbeeh* with both hands and not to restrict it to the right hand. This is the view of Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd² (رحمه الله).
3. That the preferred thing is to make *tasbeeh* with the right whilst it being permissible to do so with the left. This is the view of the scholars on *al-Lajma ad-Da'imah* (the Permanent Committee).³

The scholars of the Permanent Committee were asked,

¹ Translation: Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennet from the website *Islam Question and Answer*.

² The Shaykh has a chapter dedicated to this matter in his book *La Jadeeda fi Abkām as-Salāh* (p. 52) in which he discusses the matter in some detail.

³ The Standing Committee for Scholarly Research and Fatwa is an Islāmic organisation in Saudi Arabia established by the King that issues rulings in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and prepares research papers for the Council of Senior Scholars, which advises the King on religious matters.

Did the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) use to make *tasbeeh* of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, on his right hand only or with his left hand also? In one hadith, it states that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to make *tasbeeh* with both his hands, but, in another hadith, it states that he made it with his right hand only. Are these hadith authentic or not?

They answered,

Allah instructs in His Book *at-Tasbeeh* and the established Sunnah also encourages it. It also elucidates on its virtues and when or how it should be done. As for whether it should be done with the hands or the fingertips then Imam Ahmed has reported in his Musnad and Abu Dāwood in his Sunan on the authority of Yaseerah bint Yāsir (رضي الله عنها) – who was one of the Muslims who migrated to Medina – who said that Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to us,

يا نِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ عَلَيْكُنَّ بِالتَّسْبِيحِ وَالتَّهْلِيلِ وَالتَّقْدِيسِ وَاعْقِدْنَ بِالأَظْفَارِ فَإِنَّهُنَّ مَسْئُولَاتٌ
مُسْتَنْظَقَاتٌ وَلَا تَغْفُلْنَ فَتَنْسِينَ الرَّحْمَةَ

“Hold fast to *at-tasbeeh*, *at-tahleel*, and *at-taqdees*, and count them upon the fingertips. For surely they shall be questioned, and they will be made to speak. And do not become heedless, so that you forget about the Mercy [of Allah].”⁴

On the authority of Al-A’amash on the authority of `Atā ibn Al-Sa’ib from his father on the authority of `Abdullah Ibn `Amr (رضي الله عنهما) that he said,

رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَعْقِدُ التَّسْبِيحَ

“I saw the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) counting the glorification on his fingers.”

On the authority of `Ubaidullāh ibn `Umar ibn Maysarah and Muhammad ibn Qudāmah on the authority of others that they said, Ghannam told us on the authority of Al-A’amash on the authority of `Atā ibn Al-Sa’ib from his father on the

⁴ Abu Dāwood (1501), at-Tirmidhi (3583) and Ahmed (371/6).

authority of `Abdullah Ibn `Amr (may Allah be pleased with both of them) that he said

رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يَعْقِدُ التَّسْبِيحَ قَالَ ابْنُ قُدَامَةَ - بِيَمِينِهِ

I saw the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) counting the glorification of Allah on fingers. Ibn Qudāmah said (in his version): "With his right hands"

From the above, it becomes clear to the questioner that the terminology used in various reports of this hadith are not contradictory. On the contrary, some of them (reports) speak in general terms and others provide clarity and explain [the generality]. What also supports the choice of making *tasbeeh* with the right hand is the general text in the hadith of ‘Aa’isha (رضي الله عنها):

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - كَانَ يُعْجِبُهُ التَّيْمُنُ فِي تَنَعُّلِهِ، وَتَرْجُلِهِ، وَطُهُورِهِ، وَفِي شَأْنِهِ كُلِّهِ.

“Allah’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to love to begin with the right while putting on his shoes, combing his hair, in his purification and in all his affairs”.⁵

There is a lot of room for flexibility in this issue, and there is no harm in using the fingers on both hands, as is apparent from the previous mentioned hadith of Yaseerah. However, using the fingers on the right hand is the preferable thing to do based on what was previously stated.⁶

Perhaps the justified view amongst all of these views is to adopt the middle ground. It is said that the default position is that *tasbeeh* is to be done with the right hand. Taking into consideration that there is some debate surrounding the authenticity of the report that states “with the right hand” and that the reliable report states “with his hand” then there is nothing stated that he used both hands. If that were the case, he would have said “with both hands”. This suggests that the intended meaning was to use just one of the two hands, but it does not state just the left hand. Thus, the most likely meaning of “hand” here is the right hand, based on the well-known legal principle that teaches to give priority

⁵ Reported by Bukhāri and Muslim.

⁶ *Fatāwā al-Lajna ad-Dā'imah* (7/105-107).

to the right hand.

Imam an-Nawawi (رحمه الله) said,

Our companions and others from the scholars said that the recommended practice is to give preference to the right when doing anything honourable, such as ablution, ghusl, dressing, putting shoes and socks, trousers, entering the masjid, using the *miswak*, putting on *kohl*, trimming the nails, trimming the moustache, plucking the armpit hair, shaving the head, *salāms* in the prayer, exiting from the toilet, eating and drinking, shaking hands, touching the Black Stone, taking and giving things. Conversely, it is recommended to give preference to the left when, such as blowing the nose, cleaning oneself after the toilet, entering the toilet, leaving the masjid; removing socks, clothes and shoes.

The evidence for this principle comes from many hadith. The hadith of ‘Aa’isha (رضي الله عنها):

إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - كَانَ يُعْجِبُهُ التَّيْمُنُ فِي تَنْعُلِهِ، وَتَرْجُلِهِ، وَطُهُورِهِ، وَفِي شَأْنِهِ كُلِّهِ.

“The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to love to begin with the right while putting on his shoes, combing his hair, in his purification and in all his affairs”.⁷

And also from ‘Aa’isha (رضي الله عنها) that she said,

كَانَتْ يَدُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْيُمْنَى لِطُهُورِهِ وَطَعَامِهِ وَكَانَتْ يَدُهُ الْيُسْرَى لِخَلَائِهِ وَمَا كَانَ مِنْ أَدَى.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used his right hand for getting water for ablution and taking food, and his left hand when going to the toilet and for anything else unpleasant.⁸

And yet, for all that, this practice amounts to something recommended and preferable (as Imam an-Nawawi reported this principle from the scholars) and it is not a matter that results in hardship

⁷ Reported by Bukhāri and Muslim.

⁸ Abu Dāwood (33).

and sinfulness. Shaykh Uthaymeen was asked the following question: “Is counting *tasbeeh* to be done with the right hand only?” he replied,

The Sunnah is to glorify Allah with the right hand because this is what Abu Dāwood reported from the Prophet that he used to count *tasbeeh* with the right hand. However, one does not need to go to extremes in this matter by renouncing anyone who does *tasbeeh* on both hands. We say here that the Sunnah is to restrict it to the right because this is what has been reported from the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and because this is the best thing, given that the right is prioritised in all praiseworthy affairs and the left in all other matters.⁹

⁹ *Majmoo' al-Fatāwā ash-Shaykh al-Uthaymeen* (13/243).