CHAPTER III
REMEMBERING THE LORD:
SUHRAWARDI PRACTICE OF ZIKR
Zikr as Mystical Exercise

One of the most evocative expressions of the Suhrawardi principle of adab lies in the pursuance of a vigorous regime of internal and external discipline, aimed towards spiritual perfection. The Suhrawadi emphasis on the maintenance of strict adab is crucial for a perfect sustenance of ones spiritual life. And the most important area of application of the principle of adab constituted the realm of mystical rituals, the primary among which, for the Suhrawardis was the ritual of remembrance (zikr).\(^1\) This was supposed to be the central spiritual practice of the Suhrawardi tasawwuf, whereby disciples gained the first hand experience of the spiritual tenets from their master. The practice of this ritual lay at the centre of the Suhrawardi path of initiation, so that all their shaykhs including the great Bahauddin Zakariyya was trained in the ritual of zikr at the Baghdad khanqah of his master Shyakh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi.\(^2\) While Shyakh Bahauddin Zakariyya established his own khanqah in Multan, amidst a varied socio-political structure and a richly diverse cultural milieu, taking his masters words beyond the realms of the Islamic Caliphate, he always emphasised on the proper adherence of the adab i-zikr.

Since we have dealt in quite some details with the principle of adab as it came to be represented and understood in the mystical lexicon and spiritual knowledge, at the same time it is important to spent few words on the proper understanding of the concept of adab i-zikr. What was it and How did it essentially operate, being the most natural queries. In the words of Zakariyya, obedience to adab i-zikr essentially signified obedience to God and the tenets of the shariah, which aids the Sufi seeker in every way, and in all his thoughts regarding God.\(^3\) But for such benefits to descend on the

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 102.

\(^3\) Ibid.
individual engaged in *zikr* it is incumbent that he adheres to certain norms of the discipline. Firstly, in the words of Zakariyya, the mystic must enter the space where *zikr* is to be done in the purest of mental and physical state. This essentially meant that the Sufis must have performed the regulatory ablutions (*wudu*) before taking his place in the assembly. Secondly, in his outer appearance and clothing he should imitate the *sunnah* of the Prophet, like in the wearing of clothes. Thirdly, in the assembly the Sufi should take his seat in his designated place for prayer. Fourthly, the most important condition in the ritual of *zikr* lay in the demonstration of proper *adab*. This meant that the mystic should place his hands on his lap, but most importantly, should empty his heart of all the material thoughts, that distract the heart and lead it to nothing but the pure essence of the Divine. Lastly, the mystic should close his eyes in devout contemplation, remembering nothing but God, and at the same time repeat the verse, which forms the very basis of Islamic belief, "There is no God but God."

Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya always believed that the external manifestation of *adab* was very important and should in a sense precede the internal practice of the norm. So that even before he trained his disciples to the internal dynamics of *adab*, he emphasised that during the practice of spiritual exercises one should ‘maintain a soft voice and try to keep it as soft as possible because in order to allow God to enter the heart it must be peaceful and extremely pious.' The above mentioned advice of Shaykh Zakariyya apart from being an instruction to his disciples envelops some important spiritual conditions that must be adhered to in the path towards the Creator. The focus of the above statement lies in the word – 'heart', which is signified as the ultimate repository of Divine beneficence. And the most crucial precondition for receiving the blessings of the Lord, lies in the

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5 Huda, *Spiritual Exercises*, p. 102.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
fact that the heart of the mystic should be peaceful – in the sense that it should be free from worldly chores, material tidings and lustful desires, so that serenity reigns in such a state. At the same time, the necessary conditions for inducing such a state of peace in the heart, is that the same should be immersed in the thought of God, pious to be precise. It is only when the heart is devoid from these immoral qualities mentioned above, that the essence of being pious can be realised in it. Thus ultimately the importance of adab as essential to the realisation of ones spiritual aims is well illustrated in the above saying of the Suhrawardi master, together with the fact that spiritual rituals must bind themselves to the twin intentions of achieving union with the Divine, through the observance of proper adab.

Shaykh Zakariyya goes on to elaborate that for every bit of purification that undergoes in the heart of the mystic, it simultaneously creates enough space for the love of God. And in a way it is the love of God that brings a person closer to his Creator thereby strengthening his heart to witness the Divine Truth. What therefore should be the proper way of remembering the Divine? On this Shyakh Zakariyya instructed his disciples to break the recitation of the liturgy into smaller verses or portions, with concentration on ilah- lab. This invocation in the opinion of Shaykh Zakariyya made the mystic realise the true Oneness of God, that there is no God but Allah, and that all the love and contemplation of the mystic should be directed towards that God.

Only through the following of the proper adab i- zikr can the mystic experience that unlimited amount of love for God in his heart, which is the direct result of its purification through an invocation of the Lord. The effect of zikr on the individual becomes clearer when his heart is burned in the fire of love, for the true effect of zikr happens only when the heart of mystic is

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 103.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., p. 102.
completely consumed by the emotion of love.\textsuperscript{12} This emotion is the most crucial towards a mystic's advancement towards the realisation of union with God. When the essence of the mystic unites with the all encompassing entity of God, then nothing remains to distinguish between the lover and the Beloved. All is turned into one (ja'm).\textsuperscript{13} It is the beneficence of God, which is stated in one of the more popular Hadith, which says 'those who seek me (God) I return favours to him.'\textsuperscript{14} The significance of zikr continues to incur immense benefit for the mystic since God says 'those servants who remember me, I will keep them close to me and protect them.'\textsuperscript{15}

The moment of union of the mystic with his Lord is marked by certain characteristics whereby the body, heart, mind and soul of the mystic is in complete union with that of the Divine and the mystic retains no separate entity or existence of his own, but is rather completely consumed in the fire of 'total love' for his Beloved. When God accepts His lover, as Shaykh Zakariyya would say, it can be equated to the experience of entering paradise (Jannat).\textsuperscript{16} Shaykh Zakariyya elaborates the invocations that the mystic is supposed to utter in the process of union. Firstly, he should recite, 'Oh Lord, protect me with your shelter.' Secondly, he should recite, 'Oh Lord you are the poles of all the worlds.' Thirdly, he should recite, 'Please bless me with your kindness.' Fourthly, the mystic should recite, 'You are the Lord of all Friends of God.' And lastly, the mystic should say, 'Please bless me with your kindness.'\textsuperscript{17}

If studied carefully the invocations above follow a distinct pattern of seeking the guidance and benefaction from the Lord. Firstly, since God is the Creator and the Protector of all beings in this world, it is essential for Sufis to beg His protective hand on the worshipper so that he may be free

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
from the vicissitudes of the world. The second invocation once again
describes one of the most important attributes of the Almighty, that of
being the pole (qutub) of all the worlds, and thus the controller and decider
of all that happens in His creation. In the Holy Quran where one of the
most oft used attributes of God is that he the Most Merciful (Rahim), for He
blesses His loved ones through his kindness (rahmat). Therefore the kind
benefaction of God is imperative of one is to successfully tread the path of
the Divine. The Quran also repeatedly harps on the relation of God, to the
mystics as within the parameters of ‘friendship.’ Thus on almost all
occasions the mystics are also commonly known as the Friends of God (wali
Allah). It is crucial for the mystics to recognise the lordship of their Creator,
and also the fact that He is the Lord of all Creations, also that of the
mystics, more popularly the Friends of God. However the repetition of the
third invocation as the last quite conclusively illustrates that the blessings of
the Almighty is of central importance for any individual to gain the
knowledge of tasawwuf. The blessing of kindness is ample proof of the
purity of the heart which then becomes the repository of the Lord. Lastly,
Shaykh Zakariyya states that all such qūkr exercises must never be conducted
without the proper sense of humbleness that originates directly from the
quality of adab.\footnote{Ibid.} Without adab it is impossible to realise the Truth of
spirituality, while that the same time without the knowledge of such Truth it
is impossible for the mystics to benefit from such qūkr rituals, which
determines the way for the lover to burn himself in the fire of union for the
love of his Beloved.

\textbf{Remembering Rasul i- Allah: Zikr i- Muhammadi}

Being a strict follower of the Prophetic tradition it was natural for
Suhrawardi masters to invoke that tradition in their regular spiritual
exercises – zikr being no exception. The master saint of Ucch, Shyakh Makhdum Jahaniyan, is said to have remarked that the ninety nine names of Prophet Muhammad carry immense blessing and powers of God, for the benefit of the mystic.\textsuperscript{19} Hence the ‘recitation of these names after the dawn prayer will cause all sins, great and small, open and secret, to be forgiven.’\textsuperscript{20} However the spiritual value of the ninety nine names of Muhammad is also recognised by mystics beyond the Suhrawardi \textit{tariqa}. One little known mystic is to have remarked that an eleven fold recitation of these names after evening prayer is greatly beneficial for the mystic towards enhancing his spiritual knowledge, mildness of the heart and the maturity of \textit{tasawwuf}.\textsuperscript{21}

In the spiritual realm of the mystic the significance of dreams cannot be over emphasised. So that there are instances of mystics being initiated in their dreams by their masters who are long deceased.\textsuperscript{22} Suhrawardi sources too emphasise on the importance of dreams as a crucial medium for spiritual communication. It is said that when Shaykh Makhdum Jahaniyan Jahangasht, during his visit to Medina, met the Prophet of Islam in his dreams the Prophet remarked that a mystic receives the greatest reward ‘when the ninety nine names are recited twelve times after the night prayer.’\textsuperscript{23} It is also said that Muhammad stressed on the significance of these ninety nine names by promising that ‘he would definitely bring that person to Paradise, and would never enter without him.’\textsuperscript{24} Thus Suhrawardi shaykhs while realising the importance of these names in the mystical regime of their order, took much care to incorporate the image of Paradise, perhaps as an ideal state of existence when the mystic physically leaves the world and ascends towards the next.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 104.
\textsuperscript{22} Annemarie Schimmel, \textit{Mystical Dimensions of Islam}, p. 109
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Spiritual Exercises of the Suhrawardi Sufis}, pp. 104.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Jawahir al-Awbya}, p. 223, in \textit{Spiritual Exercises of the Suhrawardi Sufis}, p. 104.
The ninety nine names of Muhammad which are said to carry great spiritual benefits for the mystic, is basically culled from the Holy Quran, which attach multiple attributes to his personality including nadhir (warner), basher (glad tidings) among many. Thus these names are in a sense reflective of the numerous qualities of the Prophet which individuals recollect when they remember the Prophet in their prayers (salaat) and remembrance (zikr). An analysis of those names is necessary if we are to comprehend completely the significance they have in the spiritual realm of the mystic.

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<td>Most Commendable, Praiseworthy</td>
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<td>Praising, Praisers</td>
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<td>Praised</td>
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<td>Distributor</td>
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<td>Following, The Last</td>
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<td>Conqueror, Opener</td>
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<td>Khatim</td>
<td>The Last</td>
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<td>Who Guards/ Assembles People</td>
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<td>He Who Wipes Out (Infidelity)</td>
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<td>Bashir</td>
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<td>Just</td>
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<td>Itabhi</td>
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Muzakkar Preacher
Wa’a'z Deliverer of Good Advice
Amin Trustworthy
Madani He Who Resides in Madina
Arabi He Who Resides in Arabia
Mudri From the Tribe Mudar
Ami’i Unlettered
Aziz Dear, Noble
Haris Concerned, Guard, Protector
Rauf Mild
Rahim Merciful
Yatim Orphan
Ghani Rich, Prosperous
Zwad Generous
Alim Scholar
Tayib Good
Tabir Clean
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**Forbidden, Immune**

**Commander**

**Sincere, Truthful**

**Who Declares For True**

**Rational**

**Companion**

**Resident of Mecca**

**Praise of Muhammad**

**Most Grateful**

**Near**

**One Who Returns to Original**

**One Who Preaches**

**Worthier, Most Worthy**

**Well Being**

**He Created him**

**Siyyedina Muhammad wa ala ala wa ashabo ajmayin**

Oh Lord! Bless upon Muhammad who is our leader and on his descendents and on his companions.
The theorisation of the concept of Prophetic *zikr* as through the repetition of the ninety nine names of Allah, was first idealised by a seventeenth century Suhrawardi shaykh from Ucch, Shaykh Sayyid Baqir ibn Sayyid Uthman Bukhari, who in his treatise *Jawahir al-Awliya* (Jewels of the Friends of God) while enumerating the above mentioned names of Prophet Muhammad also elaborated on the proper *adab* of conducting the *zikr* so that the mystic does not lose on the experience of *shahadat*.26

He goes on to say that after the mystic has repeated the prescribed *zikr* formulas together with the proper benedictions on the Prophet, the moment of present and watching (*ha^ir o na^tr*) is reached.27 At this moment one needs to offer his salutation (*salaam*) to the Prophet, which is done by bowing ones head together with reciting *Ya Rasul Allah* (Oh Messenger of God) and *Ya Habib Allah* (Oh Beloved of God).28 These are considered to be the most common methods of salutations. Together with the above invocations it is also essential to read the formula of *Khatim un-Nabwawa* (Seal of the Prophets) which then ensures extra blessings of the Prophet Muhammad on the individual who adhere to this formula.29 This too then becomes an integral part of the entire spiritual exercise of *ha^ir o na^tr*.

Thus the invocation of the *zikr* of the Prophet of Islam, as a core to the larger practice of *ha^ir o na^tr*, is basically an attempt to transfer the mystic to a completely different plane of spiritual realisation.30 Here the essence or the *Nur i- Muhammadi* can be achieved, and more importantly experienced, by the mystic through the blessings that descend upon him. Therefore these additional supplications that are practiced by the Sufi over and above his regular prayer rituals are essential if the mystic is to gain

26 Huda, *Spiritual Exercises*, p. 105.
27 Ibid.
29 Huda, *Spiritual Exercises*, p. 106.
30 Ibid.
closeness to the being of Muhammad and derive benefits from the realm of the Unseen, and are thus advocated severely by Suhrawardi mystics.

Thus *zikr* as a spiritual exercise can be argued to combine the dual aspects of thought and action of the mystic. It is the heart of the mystic that contemplates the Divine and His messenger through the practice of multiple and varied layers of invocations, which then is transferred to the realm of action when the Sufi actually goes through the exercise and at the end benefits from the experience of witnessing. It was basically through the practice of *zikr* rituals that the Suhrawardi Sufis attempted to achieve closeness to the Divine, after losing their selves in its remembrance.31 In this sense *zikr* therefore runs as a parallel exercise of spiritual progress to the Chishtia *sama*, which too being a ritual conducted through an assembly precisely share similar aims of connecting the mystic to the greater spiritual force of the Lord. The poetic verse and mystical couplets in an exercise of *sama* precisely carry out the same function as all the *tasliyat* formulas, ninety nine names of the Prophet and the formula of the Seal of Prophethood intend to carry out in an assembly of *zikr*. Quite like the verses in an assembly of *sama*, these *zikr* formulas too reflect a precise image of combining the thought and actions of the mystic, so that what results is the spiritual transformation of the mystic from the realm of the created to that of the Creator.

These *zikr* rituals in a sense portray deep rooted spiritual beliefs which seldom find a logical justification among the legists and theorists, who are as indignant of the *zikr* ritual as they are of the practice of *sama*.32 But all said and done one cannot possibly ignore the attempt of this practice towards creating a sacred space that facilitates the exercise of spiritual communication. The ritual then serves only as a context and medium rather than the experience and aim. For mystics, irrespective of orders, *zikr* rituals

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
are a mode of communicating with the Divine, and achieving union with them. However it is the variety of expression — of both the thoughts and actions that sets it dynamicity together with a unique identity, requiring some further exploration.\textsuperscript{33}

The spiritual regime of the Suhrawardi Sufis required them to follow an elaborate set of \textit{zikr} formulas in addition to the regular exercises of prayer (\textit{salaat}) and recitation of the Quran (\textit{tilawat}). For any individual on the path of God, the five daily prayers are mandatory and cannot be compromised upon under any circumstances. However for the mystic on the path of spiritual benefaction, it is required that he should go further than the norm of five daily prayers and seek for more ways than one to surrender himself in the feet of his Creator. It is precisely towards such an aim that Suhrawardi manuals implemented the exercise of \textit{zikr} as essential supplication for the mystic in his spiritual enlightenment.\textsuperscript{34}

Suhrawardi manuals provide a detailed account of how such additional supplications should function within the broader spiritual exercises of the mystics of their order. Central to such an exercise of \textit{zikr} lay the ritual of \textit{zikr al-Quran}, or precisely the remembrance of the Quran, which can be simplified as invocations related to specific verses of the Quran, in addition to the regular regime of prayers.\textsuperscript{35}

Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya repeatedly emphasised that patience and love in the heart is essential to the realisation of all ritual exercises more particularly \textit{zikr}.\textsuperscript{36} Remembering Allah (\textit{zikr Allah}) should be made a regular practice in order for the blessing of the Divine to descend upon a pure heart. Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya was candid enough to admit that mystics across time and place have accorded a variety of definition to the practice of

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 107.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 155.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 157.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 155.
But that does not necessarily take away the essence of the discipline, since when the Sufi engages himself in contemplation and remembrance of the Divine then all roads and definitions lead to the same eternal Truth. Zakariyya states that *zikr* essentially signifies a coming together of the heart and the mind, of thought and action, which then leads to the remembrance of Allah (*zikr Allah*), the stirring of the soul through the blessings of the Divine.38

At the same time Zakariyya also states that while remembering the Lord represents the highest form of *zikr*, it does not necessarily signify the only form of *zikr*.39 Rather if an individual undertakes the exercises of daily prayers, together with recitation of the Quranic *suras* and the ninety-nine names of Allah he is as much following the logic of *zikr* as is done by a mystic.40 The basic concept of this ritual lies in the fact that, like the Chishtia ritual of *sama*, it is also primarily intended towards a vigorous cleansing of the heart of its impurities, through an intense focus on the attributes of Allah and the supreme qualities of his last messenger – Prophet Muhammad.41 Thus once the heart is successfully purified of its grime, what shines forth brightly is nothing else but the essence of the Quran and the blessings of the Almighty.

Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya would argue that any form of remembrance (*zikr*) takes the heart of the mystic away from the impurities of the self and cleanses the heart of the lustful desires of the world, thereby making it perfect for the experience of the Divine.42 Such is the importance of this ritual among the mystics of the Suhrawardi order, that masters like Zakariyya have taken the onus of categorising the ritual pertaining to various ranks of *tasawwuf*, so that the mystic has a clear notion of which type of *zikr*

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 156.
41 Ibid.
to follow under a particular spiritual category.\textsuperscript{43} For each Islamic calendar month, Zakariyya organised specific recitations and invocations for the mystic for his spiritual enhancement. So that in the new moon the mystic will follow the \textit{zikr ma dedan}. Similarly corresponding to each month there are \textit{zikr} formulas in the sense of \textit{zikr ma Muharram}, \textit{zikr ma Rabiul Awwal}, \textit{zikr ma Rabiul Thani}, \textit{zikr ma Safar}, \textit{zikr ma Ramad{a}n} among others.\textsuperscript{44}

While these \textit{zikr} formulas are related to every month of the Islamic calendar there are also specific invocations that were to be read in addition to the daily religious prayers. Among these the ones important include \textit{zikr nama\textsuperscript{x}} (recitation for additional prayer), \textit{zikr nama\textsuperscript{y} roshni} (recitations for illuminating prayers), \textit{zikr nama\textsuperscript{z} janaza} (recitations for funeral prayers) and \textit{zikr nama\textsuperscript{a} tabajjud} (recitations for pre dawn prayers).\textsuperscript{45} Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya also enumerated certain \textit{zikr} exercises which existed independently of any religious practice like prayers.\textsuperscript{46} These formulas were to be recited at different times of the day, during or before specific tasks. Of these the leading ones include \textit{zikr nama\textsuperscript{b} khojan} (recitations before sleeping), \textit{zikr ziyarat kardan} (recitations for the visitation rituals), and \textit{zikr shab i- minaj} (recitations on the evening of the Prophet's heavenly ascension).\textsuperscript{47} Thus these elaborate types of \textit{zikr} rituals are intended at supplicating prayers or as additional invocations to the recitation of the Quran, but most importantly as Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya would say they are instructions to the Sufis of the Suhrawardi order in their attempt at purifying their inner self and achieving the ultimate union with the Lord.\textsuperscript{48}

\textit{Zikr} as a spiritual exercise therefore remains the most cardinal ritual of the Suhrawardi Sufis in learning to focus themselves on the inner spirituality of their selves, thereby elevating towards the Divine. Such a ritual

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid
of constant repetition and remembrance should not be mistaken as a thoughtless process devoid of any sense of rationality, but rather as a structured and regulated process of cleansing the heart of the mystic. Thereby a Sufi learns to concentrate on his inner and outer dynamics of spirituality, through a simultaneous understanding of the inner meanings of the words of God (hatin al-Qur'an). The practice of zikr thus situates itself as the ultimate point of convergence of the qualities of language, sound and spirit, leading the mystic towards the experience of the transcendent.

The application of specific zikr techniques like those of controlled breathing, recitation of particular Quranic words, strengthening of the heart, repeating the names of God with respect to their particular attributes and finally a passionate cultivation of the heart – are fundamental for the Sufi towards a proper self examination and contemplation of the Divine, through a simultaneous removal of the veil that separated the Sufi from his Lord, thereby obstructing the penetration of Divine light into the heart.49 Thus a successful perusal of the zikr al-Quran, or recitation of the Quranic verses not only benefits the spiritual state of the mystic through the divinity of God’s words but at the same time creates opportunity for the essence of God to reside in the heart. Similarly with the invocation of the zikr nama%, which is at times equated to the call for prayer (adhan), the heart of the mystic experiences the benefits of real knowledge (matla al-Qur'an), descending from the Unseen.50

With such regular supplications the heart is protected from the ill effects of the impurities that reside in it, thereby turning it into a fortress of purity and sanctity, where the Quranic verses and the traditions of the Prophet reign supreme. Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya firmly believed that for experiencing the true taste of spirituality it is indispensable that the heart be cleaned from outer impurities and steered away from worldly pleasure.

50 Bahauddin Zakariyya, Al-Awrad, p. 82, in Huda, Spiritual Exercises, p. 157.
(hawa) that only malign the purity of the heart.\textsuperscript{51} When the mystic sets on the path of gaining Divine love and beneficence it is to be remembered that those can be achieved only through a regulated and structured regime of spiritual exercises, at the centre of which lies the words of God or the rizk\textit{ al-Quran}.\textsuperscript{52}

Suhrawardi saints considered the ritual of constant passionate remembrance as the primary means of achieving closeness to the Almighty. In their eyes the best Sufi is he who constantly engages himself in the practice of rizk with little or no sleep. But for the novice in the ranks of spirituality the ritual of rizk forms the connection between the worldly soul and the Divine essence. A continuous and regular pursuance of the ritual steers the mystic away from the binds of the material world, while elevating him to the realm of Divine presence (hazarat-al-haqq).\textsuperscript{53} On reaching such a stage the heart is cleansed from the impurities of the flesh and carnal self, and is set on the path towards an encounter (hulul) with the Divine Almighty, who nourishes the heart of the mystic with eternal beneficence. It is a great fallacy, as Suhrawardis would opine, to consider the ritual of rizk as nothing more than remembrance through lip service; since if the heart is not completely immersed in the remembrance of the Lord, then there is little chance of surrendering to the complete will of Allah, and if the effort is half-hearted from the side of the mystic, then his journey of tasawwuf remains incomplete, and so is the moment of Divine union. Therefore it is essential to lose ones 'self' completely in the remembrance of Allah so that he can surrender to the Divine will, and in turn increase his chances of annihilation (fana) and reunion.

Keeping this in mind, we now continue our discussion into a more detailed analysis of the variety of rizk rituals as enumerated above,

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
considered as essential for gaining mystical knowledge (ilm) and as a result achieving proximity with the oneness of Allah.

**Remembrance of Prayer: Zikr i- Namaz and Zikr al- Quran**

In his revealed book, God says that he created the universe so that he may be worshipped.\(^{54}\) Thus among all the revealed religions of the world there exists a pattern of expressing one's belief in one's creator, which we normally recall as prayers. In the Islamic religious structure an enormous degree of importance has been attached to the regime of prayers (salat) which needs to be performed by the believer five times a day. The masters of the Suhrawardi tariqa considered the regular obeisance of prayers to be the most crucial spiritual exercise in the life of a mystic.\(^{55}\) Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya stressed on this principle when arguing that ritualistic prayers are the primary means of worshipping the Divine and towards understanding the connection between the outer world and the inner spiritual realm of the mystic.\(^{56}\) The actions that dominate the ritual of prayer – starting from the ablutions (wudu) to the prostrations to placing the forehead firmly on the ground allows a simultaneous bending of the heart towards the Divine that releases it of the impurities beset in the heart, thereby allowing it a clean and purified presence in the existence of the Lord.\(^{57}\)

In order to steady the heart and make it strong enough to present itself in the path of spirituality (tasawwuf), Shaykh Zakariyya advised his disciples to perform the zikr of Sura Baqara, which is commonly referred to as the *Ayat ul- Kursi*\(^{58}\), or the "Throne Verse."\(^{59}\) Zakariyya would not argue

\(^{54}\) Al Quran 51:56. Creation is not an idle sport. God has a serious purpose behind creation for He is the source of all power and goodness. The progress of human beings depends on serving thy Lord in accord with His will. This is the worth of real service.

\(^{55}\) Huda, *Spiritual Exercises*, p. 147.

\(^{56}\) Ibid.


\(^{58}\) Considered to be the most excellent of all the verses in the Holy Quran, the *Ayat ul- Kursi* or the Throne Verse constitutes verse number 255 of the second chapter (Sura) of the Holy Quran, named al- Baqara (The Chapter of the Cow). On the authority of Abu Umarah Al- Bahili, it is
that an invocation of this verse replicated the prayers or that the benefits accrued from its recitation were equal or greater than those availed from daily prayers. But what Shaykh Zakariyya would instruct his disciples was the importance of adhering to his verse in between prayer times, so that the spiritual benefits gained from its recitation helped the Sufi focus his attention on the Almighty and to the omnipotence (alam al-jabarut) of His presence over the two worlds – known and unknown. Proper recitations of this verse impresses the overarching presence of His throne over all the worlds, and a simultaneous force of Divine words help purify the heart of the mystic.

Shaykh Zakariyya stated that the session of zikr should be started with this verse, since through its remembrance and repetition there are numerous benefits that can be accrued on the heart of the mystic.

\[\text{Allahu la ilaha illa Huwa,}\]
\[\text{Al-Haïyul-Qaiyum}\]
\[\text{La ta'khudhuhu sinatun wa la naum,}\]
\[\text{lahu ma fis-}\]
\[\text{samawati wa ma fil'ard}\]
\[\text{Man dhal-ladbiyashfa'u 'indahu illa bi-idhmihi}\]
\[\text{Ya'lamu ma baina aidihim wa ma khalfahum,}\]
\[\text{wa la yuhibtna bi sha'im-min 'ilmibi illa bima sha'a}\]
\[\text{Was'la kuriybus-samawati wal ard,}\]
\[\text{wa la ya'udhubi bifdhubuma}\]
\[\text{Wa Huwal 'Aliyul-Adheem}\]

reported that the Prophet once said: 'The one who recites it after each of the obligatory prayers, death will be the only thing preventing him from entering Paradise.'

59 This sura imparts the lesson that true virtue lies in the practical deeds of manliness, kindness and good faith. The sura ends with an exhortation of the Faith, Obedience, a sense of Personal Responsibility and Prayer.

60 Bahauddin Zakariyya, AlAwrad, p. 88, in Huda, Spiritual Exercises, p. 158.

61 Ibid.

62 Al Quran 2:255-86
Translation: God, there is no God but He,  
The living, the eternal, self subsisting, ever sustaining.  
Neither does somnolence affect Him, nor sleep.  
To Him belongs all  
That is the heavens and the earth;  
And who can intercede with Him except by His leave?  
Known to Him is all that is present before human beings  
And what is hidden — in the past and future,  
And not even a little of His knowledge can grasp  
Except what He will.  
His throne extends over heaven and earth,  
And He tires not protecting them:  
He alone is all high and supreme.

The recitation of the Ayat ul- Kursi must be followed by two rakats, or cycles of prayers. These prayers though similar to those normally performed differ in the aspect that they are not bound to any particular time. After the completion of these two rakats of prayer the shaykh next instructs his disciples to continue reciting the Sura Fatiha, considered to be the heart of the Quran.63 This is then backed up by the recitation of the following supplication or dua

Allah you are the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth,  
There is no God but the One God present, the Praised One,  
The One living, eternal and never dying,  
The Majestic and Blessed One,  
He is the Power of all Things.64

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63 Spiritual Exercises of the Suhrawardi Sufis, pp. 158; Al Quran 1:1-7.  
64 Ibid.
The exercise continues right to the evening after the sunset prayers (maghrib) when the *zikr al-Quran* constitutes of the following *suras* from the holy Book: Firstly, *Sura al-Kafirun* when the *zikr* of these *suras* the disciple, as instructed by Shaykh Zakariyya, should continue reciting the following *dua*:

Peace be on you Oh Master of the night,
Peace be on you Oh Master of the universe,
You are the Most Generous, the Supreme source of Knowledge,
I testify that there is no God, but only a single God, and like no other,
I testify that Muhammad is the servant of Allah,
I testify that Heaven and Hell are true places,
And that your Magnificence is true and your healing powers are true.
I testify that the path is truth,
Allah, accept our prostrations and prayers to you only,
Allah, please take our sincere love for you and increase our faith,
Allah, please forgive my shortcomings and bring me past the veil that separates us,
You are the Praised One, the Merciful and the Compassionate.

*Zikr Namaz i-Khifran*

The above *zikr* is limited only till the completion of the evening prayers, after which the ritual continues with a fresh series of invocation exercises. Here between the late evening and the night prayers the mystic needs to continue his spiritual exercises comprising primarily of recitation from the Holy Quran. This *zikr* should begin with two *rakats* of prayers where the Sufi begins with the recital of *Sura Fatiba*, to be followed by the next verse,

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63 *Sura 109*
64 *Sura 112; Spiritual Exercises of the Suhrawardi Sufis*, p. 159.
Sura Baqara. Since the latter is a long, in fact the longest, verse in the entire Book, it is prescribed by Shaykh Zakariyya that the mystic should read only the first twelve verses, out of the two hundred and eighty six, as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Bismillah bi- Rahman ni- Ribim} \\
&\text{Alif Lam Mim} \\
&Dhalika al- kitabu la rayba seebudan ilmuttaqaena \\
&Al ladhina yu minoona bi al- ghaybe wa yuqemoona al- salata wa mimma raqgahabum \\
yunfiquona \\
&Wa al- ladhina yu minoona bima onzila ilayka wama onzila min gablika wa bi al- akbiratibum yuqinoona \\
&Ulaika Aala budan min rabbitim wa ulaika humu al- mufthboona \\
&Inna al- ladhina kafaroo aswaqon alebyim aandhartabum am lam tundhirbum la \\
yunoona \\
&Khakum Allahu ala guluhibim wa ala samihim wa ala absariibum ghithawatum wa \\
labhum adhabun adheemun \\
&Wa mina al- nase mar yaqulu amanna billahi wa bi al- yaumi al-akhiri wa mahum bi \\
mumineena \\
&Yukhadi oona Allaha wa al- ladheena amanu wama yakhsda oona illa annsabum \\
wama yashuroona \\
&Fi gulubibim maradan faza adhabu Allahu maradan walabum ghadhabun alimin \\
bimakanu yakalbubuna \\
&Wa idha qila labhum latsisidu fi al- ardi qalu innama nabnu mursibuna \\
&Ala innabum hum al- mufthduna walakinla yashuruna.\end{align*}
\]

Translation: In the name of Allah, the Most Benevolent, Ever Merciful

1. Alif Lam Mim

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68 Sura 2
69 Bahauddin Zakariyya, Al-Awrad, p. 94, in Spiritual Exercises of the Subrawardi Sufis, p. 159.
70 Sura 2:255-66
2. This is a book free of doubt and involution, a guidance for those who fear God,

3. Whoever believes in the Unknown and fulfill their devotional obligations, and spend in charity of what We have given them;

4. Whoever believes in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed to those before you, and are certain of the Hereafter.

5. They have found the guidance of their Lord and it is these who will be successful

6. As for those who deny, it is all the same if you warn them or not, they will not believe.

7. God has sealed their hearts and ears, and on their eyes is a veil, for them is a great deprivation.

8. And there are some who, though they say: 'We believe in God and the Last Day', (but in reality) do not believe.

9. They try to deceive God and those who believe, yet deceive none but themselves although they do not know.

10. Their hearts are sick and God adds to their malady. And grievous is the penalty they incur because they are false to themselves,

11. When asked to desist from spending corruption in the land they say: 'Why, we are reformers.'

12. Yet they are surely mischievous persons, even though they do not know.

The above two invocations constituting the main body of the ritual of zikr al-Quran is beneficial for the mystic in acclimatising him to the inner meanings of the Quran, once he is in complete submission to the Divine words. Shaykh Zakariyya is wary of those categories of mystics who attempted the zikr al-Quran without a proper understanding of the Divine
words of the Lord, and the essences it carried in the realm of spirituality. Thus Shaykh Zakariyya was of the opinion that once the mystical state (bah) was achieved, Sufis should attempt the zi'kr al-Quran in accordance with the true meaning of the Quranic verses. It is only then that the layers of veil that separates the heart of the mystic from experiencing the true illumination of the Divine (nur-i-ilahi) are removed and the heart is free from the polluting elements that have so long deprived its spiritual succour.

What was then the main motive of Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya behind such a strict application of the ritual of zi'kr al-Quran? The answer lies in the words of Shaykh Zakariyya, that the main intention behind the practice of zi'kr al-Quran should be a pure and unpolluted heart with the power of remembering the Creator at all times of the day so that it is never deprived of the blessings from the Divine. Shaykh Zakariyya however refuses to consider the zi'kr al-Quran as a mystical innovation for the initiating Sufis. Rather he argues that the seed for this particular Suhrawardi ritual is embedded in the routine practice of five daily prayers where it is mandatory for the worshipper to remember God, at all times of the day, in order to surrender his self to the Almighty through the act of prostration. However Sufis being a strict follower of the path of spiritual enlightenment, it is mandatory on their part to surpass the limited means of worshipping towards a more sustaining mode of remembrance of the Divine, and for Zakariyya the practice of the zi'kr al-Quran is instituted precisely for that purpose.

Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya was careful enough to categorise the practice of zi'kr al-Quran with the various types of remembrances. First is the Namaz Noor (Prayer of Light) where after completing two rakats of

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71 Huda, Spiritual Exercises, p. 160.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Bahauddin Zakariyya, Al-Awrud, p. 95, in Huda, Spiritual Exercises, p. 160.
regular prayer the mystic should immerse himself in the ritual of *zikr al-Quran* in the particular order as enumerated by the Suhrawardi master. He should begin *Sura Fatihah*, followed by *Sura al- Burnj* and *Sura al- Tariq*, ending with *Sura al- Zumar*. Then one should prostrate oneself and recite the following verse,

Oh the Living, the Eternal, the Gracious
You are the Magnificent, the Dearest, the Wisest of all,
You are the most Generous, truly Muhammad is the Messenger,
There is none but You,
You are the Greatest of all.

The above verse should then be followed by the necessary prostrations and recitations, after which two more *raqats* must be read with *Sura al- Fatiha*, *Sura al- Kafirun*, along with five repetitions of salaams. After this the mystic should return to the practice of *zikr al-Quran* by reciting verse 35 from the famous ‘Light Verse’ or the *Sura al- Noor*:

God is the light of the heavens and the earth.
The semblance of His light is that of a niche
In which is a lamp, the flame within a glass,
The glass a glittering star as it were, lit with the oil
Of a blessed tree, the olive, neither of the East nor of The West, whose oil appears to light up even though
Fire touches it not – light upon light.
God guides to His light whom He will.
So does God advance precepts of wisdom for humankind,
For God has knowledge of everything.

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76 Sura 85
77 Sura 86
78 Sura 39
79 Sura 24
The *Namaz i-Noor* is followed by the *Namaz i-Raushni* or the Prayer of Enlightenment, in which those Quranic verses are read that pertain to light, enlightenment, together with the unveiling of the darkness that blinds the heart. In this form of *zikr al-Quran* the Sufi begins with the usual two *rakats* of prayers followed by the *Sura al-Fatiba*, read two thousand times and the *Sura al-Ikhlas* seven times. After the *zikr al-Quran* has been successfully completed the mystic should round off with two *rakats* of prayers and in the end the following invocation:\(^81\)

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Oh the Living, the Eternal

There is no God but God, the Courageous

Oh the Living, the Eternal

There is no God but God, the Merciful

Oh the Living, the Eternal

There is no God but God, the Most Compassionate.
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This is perhaps the only instance in the entire set of the *zikr al-Quran* where the ritual does not come to a close with the final recital of the supplications. Since Shaykh Zakariyya implores his disciples to carry on with the practice of reciting the following verses five times with as much concentration as with the earlier verses, so that the meaning and essence of them does not escape the mind and heart of the mystic:\(^82\)

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Creator of the heavens and the earth,

You are everywhere in this world and in the hereafter,

You provide truth to your followers.

Glory to Allah!

All Praise is to Allah,

There is no God but God,
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\(^81\) Ibid.

\(^82\) Ibid.

164
And God is the Greatest, the Most Exalted.83

**Zikr Shab i-Barat**

*Laylat Ul Qadr*, or the Night of Power, which in common parlance is known as the *Shab e-Barat*, is the night of the full moon in the eighth lunar month of Shaban. This is traditionally an evening when much celebration is done together with the regular norm of prayers and additional prayers.84 The *Shab e-Barat* being universally recognised as the holy day, it is natural that all Muslims irrespective of their spiritual maturity would engage themselves in additional prayers. Thus the degree of additional invocations differs from fifty to a hundred *rakats* of prayers with ten recitations of *Sura 112* in each of the *rakats*, making it a total of a thousand recitations on an average.85

Why is it that all sections of Muslims take part in such vigorous invocations and prayers? That is primarily because of the widespread belief, partly due to the nomenclature, that on this night God decides the fate of entire humanity, but especially those of His believers, for the next complete year.86 Now what is the mystical take on such a ritual? Shaykh Zakariyya instructed his disciples to undertake two hundred *rakats* of prayers that included an elaborate set of verses, like the *Sura al-Fatiha*, one recitation of *Ayat al-Kursi*, five hundred recitations of *Sura al-Ikhlas*. After completing this regime successfully the mystic should return to the recitation of *Sura al-Fatiha* one thousand times, before returning to recite *Sura al-Ikhlas*. After a successful completion of all the *rakats* of prayers together with the recitation of the *salaam* five times, the Sufi should offer prostration along with reciting the following *dua*.87

There is no God but God,

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84 Ibid.
85 Ibid., p. 163.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
The One and only One,
The Creator of the Universe
And deserving of all Praise,
It is He who is Master of all things.
All Glory is to Allah,
All Praise is to Allah
There is no God but God,
God is the Greatest, and
Allah is Magnificent of all things. 88

Zikr fi’l Shaban

While the mystical value of the day of Shab-e Barat cannot be overemphasised it must also be remembered that the month of Shaban itself carries immense spiritual value for the mystic. Since Shaban preceded the holy month of Fasting: Ramadan, and in the words of a very famous hadith, the Prophet of Islam said that Ramadan is a month for God, while Shaban is my month. 89 Shaykh Zakariyya was of the opinion that the zikr activities meant for this month aid the mystics striving and preparation for the coming days of fasting and charity. 90 In his instructional manual he instructed his disciples that on the first night of the month, his disciples should perform two rakats of prayers starting with the Sura Fatiha and Sura Ikhlas. In order to ensure that the blessings of the Divine continue to flow on the mystic these verses should be continuously repeated each night in between the five times of prayers till the last night of the month. 91 And while during prayers the following invocation should be adhered to

Allah, you are the Creator of light
Allah, Glory to you, the Master of the Universe,

88 Bahauddin Zakariyya, Al Awrad, p. 175, in Huda, Spiritual Exercises, p. 163.
89 Ibid., p. 162.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
The soul’s breath comes from you.92

**Zikr fi’l Ramadan**

In the Muslim calendar perhaps the most important month in terms of spiritual chastity is the month of Ramadan, when it is prescribed that from dawn to sunset the Muslims should refrain from all forms of food, drink and worldly pleasures. This month also marks the beginning of the revelations that descended upon the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SAW) as the holy words of God, so that this month is considered to be a gift to the Sufi seekers of Allah, because He has determined this month as the time for reciprocal love. This is so because in this month God draws His lovers closer to Him and benefits them with his blessings.93

Together with abstaining from food, drinks and worldly pleasures, this month is the time of intense spiritual rigour for the travelers on the spiritual Path, immersing themselves completely in the following of rigid austerity and continued spiritual exercises, like that of *zihr*. Shaykh Zakariyya wrote that ‘It is recommended if possible that Suhrawardis cease working and sleep and do nothing but read the Holy Quran and recite *zihr al-Quran*.94 In this month prayers should not include the regular ones, but also incorporate the late evening *tarawih* prayers, post-midnight prayers and pre-dawn prayers.95 Each of these prayers should be strictly adhered to and the mystic should try and include as many verses of the Holy Quran as possible in these prayers. Since this month is of supreme spiritual benefit for the devoted, it is prescribed in the Suhrawardi ranks that prayers, fasting, charity and *zihr* should completely engage the mystic so that they are fortunate

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93 Ibid., p. 163.
95 Ibid., p. 163.
enough to achieve a real understanding of Divine union, and concentrate towards this end as much as possible during this month.\textsuperscript{96}

\textit{Zikr i- Ilahi}

The Suhrawardi manual of the master, Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, \textit{Awarif ul- Maarif} provides us with a precise discussion of the ritual of \textit{zikr}. As discussed above the Suhrawardi tradition of \textit{zikr} positioned itself largely on the exercise of \textit{zikr Allah} as mentioned above. In a sense the \textit{Awarif ul- Maarif} too is reflective of this spiritual tradition. It begins by saying that nearly all the Suhraward Sufis had a specific regime of invocations to follow in their daily spiritual exercises.\textsuperscript{97} This included:

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textit{La Ilaha Ilallah} & No God but God \\
\textit{Ya Allah} & O God \\
\textit{Ya Hu} & O He \\
\textit{Ya Haqq} & O Just One \\
\textit{Ya Hayy} & O Living One \\
\textit{Ya Qayyum} & O Existing One \\
\textit{Ya Qahhar} & O Avenging One \\
\end{tabular}

These names are in a sense indicative of the Divine splendours (\textit{anwar i- ilahi}) that are manifested in the diversity of creations.\textsuperscript{98} So that for the Suhraward Sufis it is imperative that their spiritual exercises incorporate these magnificent attributes of God with respect to each of His qualities. It creates in the mind of the mystic an image of completeness of his Lord, who being the only One of its kind in this universe is the ultimate repository of all the characteristics one witnesses in a human self.\textsuperscript{99} The description of the exercise of \textit{zikr} as elaborated in the pages of the \textit{Awarif ul- Maarif} is reflective of the mental state of the mystic in the course of the exercise.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p. 164.
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{AM}, p. 293.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
During the exercise the mystics sit, in a circular position, on their heels with their elbows touching each other. At the same time they make simultaneous movements of the head and of the body. These movements of light swinging actions from left to the right, and also a movement of inclination from back to the front. It needs to be kept in mind that these movements during a session of zikr is not a mindless exercise but rather something that occurs in a measured way with a simultaneous balance in motion. During such an exercise the mystics place themselves in staid countenance, contemplating deeply on the Divine, with their eyes closed and their heads hung low – fixed upon the ground. Interestingly the congregation hall where these exercises are held is most of the times made of wood and is called the taubid khanah (The House of Unity).100

Although Suhrawardi mystics ensured that the exercise of zikr was carried out under strict norms of spiritual etiquette (adab), it goes without saying that the mystical approach of the Suhrawardi saints lacked the intense austerity and notion of self-sacrifice upheld by their fellow Chishtia saints. So that the leading Suhrawardi mystic – Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya – while establishing his religious authority in Multan took great care to ensure that he shared a more than cordial relation with the Delhi sultan Iltutmish. The latter at the same time conferred upon the Suhrawardi master the office of the Shaykh-ul-Islam, enlisting his material and spiritual support for the central authority at Delhi, which at that moment faced opposition from the governor of Sind, Nasiruddin Qubacha – who tried his best to assert his authority over Delhi.101

Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya, inspite of his elitist approach, had such an impact on the hearts of the residents of Multan, across class and religious affiliation, that all the residents and inhabitants of the neighbourhood considered the Suhrawardi saint to be the real ruler of the land, and turned

100 Ibid.
101 Huda, Spiritual Exercises, p. 118.
towards him for spiritual guidance. The Suhrawardi Sufis, unlike their Chishtia counterparts, were never ‘world-rejectionist’ Sufis steeped in austerity, but were rather bent on blending their spiritual (tasawwuf) practices with the injunctions of the Sharia. This, combined with their worldly approach made it possible to attract a large number of followers both from the elite and non-elite sections of the society. These were, in a sense, conscious attempts to acclimatise a new spiritual order in a new region, torn by political and military unrest. Therefore it was necessary to adopt a pragmatic approach, even if it meant an active participation in politics and state affairs. Multan and Ucch presented, before Suhrawardi mystics, an opportunity to understand and in turn adapt to the indigenous culture, religion, ethics and politics so that they can successfully continue with their spiritual mission, without standing separated from the society.

Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya precisely followed this pattern when he set up his khanqah in Multan. Although he took up the office of the Shaykh-ul-Islam under Sultan Iltutmish, he was diligent in upholding the centrality of the Sharia in spiritual activities like worship rituals, zikr sessions, fasting, paying zakat, Quranic recitation, tasawwuf practices. Thus inspite of meddling in state affairs the Suhrawardis were successful in balancing the interests of both tasawwuf and politics, and were able to negotiate political and religious authority to emerge as spiritual masters of their age. An inseparable dimension of the Suhrawardi spiritual domain was their involvement in cultural assimilation, political rivalry, governmental control, dynasties strife, internal tensions and a repeated involvement of politicians in their spiritual affairs. Thus in all counts the Suhrawardi saints of Multan faced a challenging political, social, religious and economic atmosphere than those experienced by their predecessors.

102 Ibid., p. 131.
103 Ibid., p. 133.
It remains undeniable that political involvement and spiritual attainments went hand in hand for mystics of the Suhrawardi order. But at the same time it must never be lost sight of that Suhrawardi mystics, as elaborated above never compromised with their spiritual goals and strove hard to institutionalise a popular form of Sufi piety, through the necessary interjections of Suhrawardi Sufi theology. Together with politics it is crucial to understand, rather than overlook, the Suhrawardi emphasis on prayers, the tradition of the Prophet, additional recitations of the Quran, and above all the specific varieties of *zikr* exercises required by Sufis of the order to follow in their path towards spiritual maturity. The elaborate discussions above on the practice of *zikr* exercises together with additional supplications must be analysed with respect to the Suhrawardi emphasis on elaborate spiritual rituals and practices. This combined with the political and worldly outlook of this mystical order brings out the dynamics of Suhrawardi Sufis on the spiritual Path.

The emphasis of Suhrawardi saints on the external forms of religious practice can be discerned from an incident during the period of Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya. Once he asked a dervish to perform *Zikr-i-Nama*. But when the dervish stood up for two *ra'kats* prayer, the shaykh noticed his improper posture. The shaykh got so irritated with this ignorance towards religious devotion, that he ordered the dervish to leave Multan and settle in Ucch.\(^{104}\) Thus when scholars point out to Suhrawardi saints as rubbing shoulders with sultans and government officials, it is also at the same time necessary to throw light on the strict parameters of spiritual practice set by Sufis of the Suhrawardi order. The spiritual pursuit of Suhrawardi saints, most importantly Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya’s extensive *zikr* rituals, embody the complete spirit of *tasawwuf* philosophy, which was carefully

\(^{104}\text{FF, p. 221.}\)
nurtured in the hearts and minds of the masses of Multan and Ucch, at a time when the socio-political fabric was torn apart by political rivalries.

Such a spiritual ambience helped to influence the population of Multan and Ucch into following a disciplined way of life, shorn of excesses. Once when Shaykh Bahauddin Zakariyya entered a mosque for prayer, people came up to greet him, except one who carried on with his ablutions. The shaykh remarked that the latter was the best among all as he chose to complete his ablutions showing greater respect towards his religious obligations. Such a deep religious consciousness among the common masses was unheard of before the Suhrawardi saints settled down in Multan and Ucch.

Keeping with the demands of a new socio-cultural environment, the essence of Suhrawardi tasawwuf centred on the principles of the Shariah, the traditions of the Prophet, Oneness (tawhid), the ritual of daily prayer, charity, fasting, social welfare, helping the poor and maintaining a strict norm of etiquette. Suhrawardi mystics were committed to the complete development of a new Islamic environment in south Asia, resting on the hallowed traditions of Islam. With such an aim in mind they were not prepared to force an individual steer away from the path of religious tenets for spiritual gains. At the same time it was an eye opener for the ulama who aimed for the throat of Sufis, on grounds that their teachings and exercises were out of tune with the tenets of Islam. Thus although Suhrawardi spiritual exercises conditioned the heart of a mystic towards a more purified state, it nevertheless rested itself firmly on the traditions of the Quran and the sunna of the Prophet.

While we draw a close to our discussion on the Suhrawardi spiritual exercise of zikr, one can clearly delineate the sense of strict mystical sobriety that Sufis of the order attached to this spiritual ritual. For the Suhrawardis

105 Jamali, Siyar-ul-Ariffin, p. 121.
the practice of zikr, through a strict regulation of both the external and internal self of the mystic, was intended to instill a constant routine of remembering the Lord resulting in a purification of the heart as a primary means of achieving closeness with the essence of the Almighty. Not only did the variety of zikr rituals constitute the Suhrawardi focus of spiritual nourishment, but at the same time it demonstrated the importance of completely surrendering to the will of Allah. Such a spiritual exercise was mediated by a strict etiquette Sufis of this order imposed upon themselves in pursuance of their spiritual aims.

Zikr exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis, as elaborated above, not only meant a constant remembrance of God, but at the same time was an attempt to free the heart from the desires of the material world, so that nothing acted as an impediment in the way of the mystic traveling in search for the love of God. The exercise of zikr in a way conditions the spiritual wayfarer to purify his spiritual and physical self and prepare his mind for an intense meditation and contemplation on the essences of Allah. The exercise of Zikr-al-Quran occupies the mind of the mystic in a constant remembrance of the essence and values of the revealed book. Likewise the Zikri-Mubammadi ensures the benedictions of the Prophet and his companions.

It was an exercise that spilled over the limits of the Suhrawardi tariqa, so that even Chishtia masters approved the mystical worth of this ritual. In this regard it was pretty much similar to the amount of respect the ritual of sama, popularised by the Chishtia Sufis, commanded from the Suhrawardi mystics. Both were considered as spiritual exercises of the highest order, intended to bring the Sufi closer to his Lord, thereby facilitating the ultimate aim of union. However it remains beyond doubt that the Prophetic lineage of the ritual of zikr was something even the Chishtia Sufis did not dispute. Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya while arguing for the benefits of a quiet zikr or the zikr i- khafi, stated that the Companions of the Prophet did the zikr al-
Quran in such a way that nobody was able to know till there occurred a verse of prostration (sajdah) and they performed the prostration. So that people knew that they were engaged in remembering thy Lord.\textsuperscript{106} Thus the intrinsic worth of \textit{zjkr} as a spiritual exercise lay not only in the repetition of God's names, as stated earlier, but in following a structured routine of spiritual practice where the \textit{adab} of spirituality became ingrained in the heart of the mystic, along with the realisation of the Truth of God, leading him in the Path towards union.

\textsuperscript{106} FF, p. 191.