194998 - Reciting Adhkar More Than the Reported Numbers

the question

How can we reconcile the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) – “Whoever says in the morning and in the evening: ‘Subhan Allahi wa bi hamdih (Glory and praise be to Allah)’ one hundred times, no one will come on the Day of Resurrection with anything better than what he has done, except one who said something like what he said, or more than that'' narrated by Muslim (2692) – and question no. 148699 , in which it says that nothing should be added to the number of times for reciting Adhkar as mentioned in the Hadiths?

Summary of answer

1. In the case of unrestricted Dhikr, there is no specific number of times for repeating phrases; rather the individual may remember his Lord as much as a Muslim is able to.
2. In the case of restricted Dhikr, the basic principle is that the individual should adhere to what has been narrated in the religious Hadiths in terms of wording and number of repetitions, except when the text indicates that he may add to what is mentioned in the Hadith. In that case, if a Muslim adds more than one hundred, there is nothing wrong with that.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Types of Dhikr

Dhikr (remembering Allah) is of two types: unrestricted Dhikr and restricted Dhikr. Both types of Dhikr are mentioned in the verses in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{O you who have believed, remember Allah with much remembrance, And exalt Him morning and

afternoon.} [Al-Ahzab 33:41-42]

{And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the evening and the morning.} [Al `Imran 3:41]

Reciting unrestricted Dhikr more than reported numbers

Unrestricted Dhikr is one that is not connected to a particular time, place or situation; rather a person may remember his Lord by reciting such Dhikr in all situations, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to do. Muslim (373) narrated that `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to remember Allah in all situations.

Reciting this type of Dhikr a great deal is encouraged in Islamic teachings. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.} [Al-Ahzab 33:35]

{and remember Allah much that you may be successful.} [Al-Anfal 8:45]

Muslim (2676) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was travelling on the road to Makkah, and he passed by a mountain called Jumdan. He said: “Proceed, this is Jumdan; those who have distinguished themselves [from others, by focusing on constant Dhikr] have gone on ahead.” They said: Who are those who have distinguished themselves, O Messenger of Allah? He said: “{the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so}.”

Reciting restricted Dhikr more than reported numbers

As for restricted Dhikr, this is Dhikr that is connected to a particular time, place or situation, or is to be recited in certain words and a certain number of times. The basic principle with regard to this type of Dhikr is that one should adhere to what is mentioned in the Hadiths.

An example of this type is the Adhkar that are to be recited following the prayers , the Adhkar to be recited before going to sleep, the Adhkar to be recited in the morning and the evening , and other restricted Adhkar. These are to be done as described in the Hadiths, in terms of the wording and the number of times they are to be repeated.

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: From this it may be understood that paying attention to the specific number of times Adhkar are to be recited is important, otherwise it could be said: add to it Tahlil [saying “La ilaha ill-Allah (there is none worthy of worship except Allah)”] thirty-three times. Some of the scholars said – with regard to the number of times mentioned in the Hadiths, as in the case of the Dhikr to be recited following the prayers – that if the Hadith mentions a particular number for which there is a specific reward, if the one who is reciting it adds to the number mentioned, he will not attain that specific reward, because of the possibility that there is some special wisdom behind that, that may be missed by going beyond that number…"(Fath Al-Bari by Ibn Hajar 2/330).

It says in Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da’imah (24/203): “With regard to the Du`as and Adhkar that are mentioned in the Hadiths, the basic principle is that they are Tawqifi [i.e., they can only be known through divine Revelation and sound texts of Hadith, with no room for Ijtihad] in terms of their wording and the number of times they are to be recited, so the Muslim should pay attention to that and adhere to it, and he should not add to the number of times stated or the wording, or detract from that or deviate from it. And Allah is the source of strength.”

The fact that he should adhere to what is narrated in the Hadiths in the case of restricted Dhikr is indicated by the fact that there is no report from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to suggest that he added to the wording of some Adhkar, such as the Adhkar following the prayer, for example. Rather, when the poor Muhajirin complained to him that the rich ones had also started to recite the Adhkar following the prayer, he did not instruct them to add anything to the number of times that they are to be repeated (thirty-three). Rather he said: “That is the bounty of Allah which he bestows upon whomever He wills.” This indicates that this Dhikr is restricted to a particular number.

Regarding the answer about the Hadith in which it says “Whoever says in the morning and in the evening: ‘Subhan Allahi wa bi hamdih (Glory and praise be to Allah)’ one hundred times, no one will come on the Day of Resurrection with anything better than what he has done, except one who said something like what he said, or more than that,” it may be noted that it is possible that what is meant by “more than that” is more of the same type of Dhikr, in which case this is an exception which allows adding more to what is mentioned in this Hadith, or it may be that what is meant by “more than that” is adding more Dhikr in general terms, in which case what is meant is that he recites the Dhikr mentioned in this Hadith and adds to it another type of Dhikr.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The Prophet’s words, “Whoever says ‘La ilaha ill-Allah wahdahu la sharika lah , lahu’l-mulk wa lahu’l-hamd wa huwa ‘ala kulli shay’in qadir (there is none worthy of worship except Allah alone, with no partner or associate. His is the Dominion and to Him be praise, and He is able to do all things)’ one hundred times in a day, … no one can do anything better than what he has done except one who does more than that” indicate that if someone were to recite this Dhikr more than one hundred times in a day, he will have the reward for one hundred times that is mentioned in the Hadith, and will have a another reward for what he recites in addition to that, and this does not come under the heading of limits that are not to be exceeded, in which there is no virtue in adding to it and it could even invalidate it, as is the case if one adds to the number of times that limbs are to be washed when doing Wudu or adding to the number of rak`ahs in the prayer.

It may be that what is meant is doing more righteous deeds, not reciting more of the same Dhikr, or it may be that what is meant is adding anything of any nature, where it is adding more of the same type of Dhikr or other types of righteous deeds, or adding more of the same type of Dhikr and other types of righteous deeds. The latter is more likely to be the case. And Allah knows best." (Sharh Muslim, 17/17)

In conclusion, Dhikr it is of two types: unrestricted and restricted. In the case of that which is unrestricted, there is no specific number of times for repeating phrases ; rather the individual may remember his Lord as much as he is able to. In the case of that which is restricted, the basic

principle is that the individual should adhere to what has been narrated in the religious Hadiths in terms of wording and number of repetitions, except when the text indicates that he may add to what is mentioned in the Hadith, as in the case of saying “Subhan Allahi wa bi hamdih (Glory and praise be to Allah)” and “La ilaha ill-Allah wahdahu la sharika lah, lahu’l-mulk wa lahu’l-hamd wa huwa ‘ala kulli shay’in qadir (there is none worthy of worship except Allah alone, with no partner or associate. His is the Dominion and to Him be praise, and He is able to do all things).” In that case, if he adds more than one hundred, there is nothing wrong with that.

And Allah knows best.