

# The Etiquettes of the *Hadra*

Paraphrased from the *Mudhakara* lesson of Sidi Shaykh ‘Abdullah al-Haddad al-Fasi

The *Hadra*, also known as the ‘*Imara*, is the practice wherein you bring to presence (*is-tihdar*) the One whose name you are invoking. By bringing His presence to your heart you invoke Him and express joy and delight in him, rejoicing with your rational faculty (*aql*) and your heart (*qalb*). You invoke Him knowing that He hears and sees you, and you remember Him knowing that you are in His Divine Presence (*Hadra*).

The *Hadra* is also known as the Wine (*khamra*), and that is because it is remembrance combined with movement and bending of the legs and shifting of the body. A person immersed in the *Hadra* may sometimes lose sense of himself and be annihilated from it and completely absorbed in the invocation of the One he is remembering (*al-Madhkur*). Shaykh al-‘Alawi says regarding this:

*They rose in a state of drunkenness*

*Because of the glad tidings;*

*They did the ‘imara out of gratitude to Allah*

The etiquettes of the *Hadra*, generally speaking, are three: to ensure that it is done in the appropriate time, the appropriate place, and with the appropriate brethren:

*Zaman*—proper time

*Makan*—proper place

*Ikhwan*—proper brethren

- Suppose we are in a gathering and a person experiences a spiritual state (*hal*) when the call for the prayer is made (*iqama*)—do we join that person in the *Hadra* and ignore the *iqama* or do we offer the prayer? Of course, the most appropriate thing to do in that situation is offer the prayer and not participate in the *Hadra*.
- Another etiquette of the *Hadra* is that we only do it when it does not cause harm or annoyance to other people. Suppose we did a *Hadra* upstairs and people were down here sleeping, or if there were sick people resting and children sleeping, or if there were people here who would not like it—would we have the *Hadra* and annoy those people, wake up the children, and disturb the sick? No, we would not.

- A small group of people, say three to five people, should not do the *Hadra* when the rest of the people are sitting around and watching them and laughing or criticizing them.
- When we are in the *Hadra* we do not lift our feet off of the ground or jump off the ground. Our feet should be firmly planted in the ground with our knees bending.
- When we are in the *Hadra* our heads should be upright and erect, not looking down or side to side, or raised up. Sayyiduna ‘Umar رضي الله عنه once saw a young man bent over and crooked during the prayer. He went over to him and said, “Raise up your head! Do not cause our religion to die—may Allah cause you to die!”
- When we are in the *Hadra* our eyes should be closed. We should not be looking around at the brethren. During the *Hadra* people experience spiritual states that cause their faces to make different expressions, so if someone is opening his eyes and looking around he might see an expression that causes him to laugh or causes him to be frown, and he will forget that he should be in the *Hadra*.
- During the *Hadra* we should listen the singers (*munshidun*) and follow their rhythm in our movement. We must ensure that our cadence is in sync with the rest of the brethren in the circle.
- When, during the end of the *Hadra*, the singer says “*Muhammad Rasulullah!*” everyone should stop the *Hadra*. No one should continue with the *Hadra* after that; “*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah!*”—what more do you want than that? Allah says, “*Those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah’s Messenger—it is they whose hearts Allah has tested for piety.*” Allah also says, “*O you who believe, do not raise your voices over the voice of Allah’s Messenger, lest your good works are made null unbeknownst to you.*”
- When the *Hadra* is completed people sometimes begin chatting with each other. This is wrong. When the *Hadra* is completed the reciter (*qari*) should select some passages from the Quran and recite them. Immediately preceding the *Hadra* the body is purified by the remembrance and sitting down. No one should give *salams* to people here and there or raise his voice and talk. Allah says, “*Allah has revealed the fairest of statements, a Scripture consistent, paired [with threats of punishment]; the skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it, and their flesh and hearts then soften with Allah’s reminder.*”
- During the *Hadra* there should be no free-mixing or intermingling between men

and women. This is pervasive in some so-called spiritual orders but it is impermissible in Islam. Some people mistakenly believe that they have left their human nature and become angelic in nature, and so they feel that free-mixing between men and women is not a cause for distraction—since angels by their nature do not have carnal desires. This is a grave error.

- There should not be a *Hadra* simply because a host wants one. The intention of the *Hadra* is not to conduct a symphony performance for others, rather it is to draw near to Allah. If, during our remembrance, the spiritual state comes to some of the brethren we should go along with them and join them, but not if the spiritual state is absent. The *Hadra* without a *hal* (spiritual state) is *muhal* (impossible).

