CHAPTER III
Al-Ghazali’s Dhikr Concept

A. Al-Ghazali and Socio-Cultural Condition of His Life Time

Understanding Al-Ghazali’s thought especially his view of *tasawwuf* without first understanding and considering social-cultural condition of his life time which encircle his growth and thought, can give a bad image and partial conclusion, because basically *tasawwuf* is the product from his era. Then, a knowledge about his life will really help if people are about to understand his thought, because adjoining study about his reality of life, they will also study and review all thoughts that work out on that time, indeed frequently criticize its basic.\(^1\)

Born in Ghuzala, Thus district, a city in Khurasan, Persian on 450 H/1085 AC is Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ghazali. Since child his parents had given him a name Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ghazali. Then after his married he had a child namely Hamid. Since then, people had called him as Abu Hamid (Father of Hamid).\(^2\)

By analyzing his period, al-Ghazali finally reach at the final conclusion that the time when he lived is the time which is generally going on downgrade, especially on moral aspect which is getting worse and worse. He is also looking for positive powers surround him to block those destructions but his efforts are always wasted away. The figures that are trusted to give resolution even had been affected from the impact of moral crisis on that time.\(^3\)

The history records that Moslems before al-Ghazali was going on downgrade and drawback on various aspects; on side of social-politic Abbasiyah empire had been brittle, on the side of civilization and culture they are losing


\(^{2}\) Zainal Abidin Ahmad, *Riwayat Hidup al-Ghazali*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975), p. 27

\(^{3}\) Al-Ghazali treat it like doctors who should cured diseases have been infected by those diseases itself. The disease has been rampant so that doctors also fall sick and people are on destruction. Al-Ghazali, *Al-Munqiz min al-Djalal*, (Bairut: Lebanon: al-Sha’biyah, unidentified year), p. 151
ground significantly., in fact almost losing its identity. Meanwhile al-Ghazali feels that esoteric knowledge has died within the soul of Moslems which cause degradation of moral among Muslims. To rekindle that, al-Ghazali writes a book, *ihya’Ulu>m al-Di>n*.

In the field of education and psychic, people are drowning on destitution of intellectual and moral. Disorientation of life is attacking Moslems so that the passion of world loving dominates the society. At the result, in the field of religion (esoteric knowledge) which demands implementation and total comprehension intensely, is precisely being utilized by people to look for popularity, position and degree around center of dominance. In another word, the advancement which develops is not counterbalanced with the advancement of spiritual, moral, and religion. Because the motivation that underlain the development of science and culture, generally, is only the cover to pursue the wealth.

`Al-Ghazali himself once becomes professor in school of Nizhamiyah in Baghdad ever experiencing skeptics and spiritual disputation too long, because realizing that the job he did is not intended sincerely only for God (*lilla>hita’a>la>*), but it is motivated by the passion of fame and high position. It happens also to the science he studied; in fact its basics are so crumbly because it is obtained only by physical senses which are so relative, so that the science for him does not give sense of security and salvation guarantee.

This condition makes al-Ghazali hard to take a choice between living from being scholar on university that gives him the wealth and fame, or living as a *sufi* that promises final salvation yet must be done alone and full of simplicity. After thinking of it for long time, finally he decides to leave Baghdad to have an outlying life (*Uzlah*).  

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4 *Intelektualisme Tasawwuf*, p. 120  
5 *Ibid*, p. 122  
7 Ghazali, *Al-Munqiz min al-Djalal*, p. 152
In the thoughts field of his era also cannot escape from problems in the context of occurring polarization and pluralism of context from various groups which every group claimed the most truthful. It appears dichotomy “scholar of spiritual” pointed to sufi and scholar of material directed to fuqaha, also between sufi and theologian. These contradictions finally can be harmonized by al-Ghazali by combining both of them.

At least that is the objective conditions that surrounding al-Ghazali’s life time. As a responsive person he always communicates and with his era that full of tension because of many sects from ethnic line, language, regionalism even ideology of nation. Facing the condition at that time that full of social politics fragmentation and uncontrolled mind as well as the spread of narrowing concept and less of *tasamuh* among Muslims, al-Ghazali finally in the steady way went through *tasawwuf* way as his theological foundation. His real reaction toward his condition is reflected in his work *Ihya’Ulu’lm al-Din* besides in many of his works he discussed many about moral and spiritual as an effort to maintain oneness of truth and reality through a call to get back to Allah

**B. Al-Ghazali’s Dhikr Concept**

In previous discussions have explained the substance of *dhikr* in Sufi’s perspective that can be concluded it is when Allah has driven someone’s heart, so Allah is in. Before arrive at this level, there are many steps of *dhikr* should be passed through, its total has many variations. To arrive at the substance of *dhikr*, Sufi should perform the lowest level of *dhikr*, is *dhikr* by tongue to the highest level, is *dhikr haqiqi*.8

In *al-Arba’ in fi> Us> u> l al-Di>n*, al-Ghazali said *dhikr* is one of religion principle should be obeyed and kept. Further he said that *dhikr* has many skins that every skin has connection with surface of other skins. The deepest part of those skins is contents as the substance of *dhikr*.9

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8Ghazali in Ibnu Ataillah, *Dhikr Penentram Hati*, (Jakarta: Zaman, 2013), p. 139. See also: the Kind of *Dhikr* in chapter II

The first skin is oral *dhikr* (*dhikr* by mouth) that does not followed by heart, for example what is said by Abu Usman when he was asked by his follower about oral *dhikr* that can not give enjoyment in the heart. The answer is simple, be grateful, it could be jewelry of your mouth, this level is customary for the beginner.\(^{10}\)

Adorning tongue by *dhikr*, in addition to couched self to the next level, and also as a shape of thankfulness of mercies given by God. Tongue, one side can cause power of their owners and other people, but on the other sides, tongue can also be devastating to the owner. So keep the tongue by *dhikr* is also very useful.\(^{11}\)

In line with al- Ghazali, Abdul Qadir al-Jilani commented in *dhikr* by tongue very wisely and do not underestimate. For him oral izikr is a manifestation of the heart so people do not forget God, this step has important role as the beginning steps before finally entering into the next level, which *dhikr* spreads throughout the body, turns to the heart, and then rises to the soul.\(^{12}\)

The oral *dhikr* basically is the first step of determination of heart. Because in the early step, *dhikr* is easier when done by an oral then be extended to other forms of *dhikr*. Likewise, when someone does *dhikr* in congregation, it will be a lot to know other members and very helpful for beginners. With the closeness, every congregation will also keep their behavior, both in terms of speech and behavior. And of course, would be embarrassed to do things that are not good.

The second skin is oral *dhikr* is followed by heart but there are still elements of forced coercion in order to get one’s teeth. This step is often taken by the Sufi, they encourage their followers to do *dhikr* as fulbul.\(^{13}\) The third skin is the *dhikr* of heart followed by oral with self-awareness. And the last is a content of *dhikr* that has been fused with the heart. The last is *dhikr* haqiqi or the substance of *dhikr* is when Allah has been in command in the heart.

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\(^{10}\)Qusyairi, *Priniples of Sufism*, p, 204
\(^{13}\)For example what is done by Sahl at-Tustari as quoted by Schimmel, Sahl said to his follower: try calling all day long “O God, O God, O God” and do it again next day and next day again, until it becomes a habit speech. Schimmel, *Dimensi Mistik dalam Islam*, p.214
Further, Ghazali explained that *dhikr* has a beginning and an end. The beginning of *dhikr* gives a sense of peace and love, and eventually also gives a sense of peace and love. While its step is by doing the compulsion to their selves for the beginners to arise a sense of peace and love to God that they always call and remember. Then eventually emerge stronger sense of restraint for not remembering His name. So something that originally was the result eventually becomes the cause. Something that at first was the fruit, eventually led to something.\(^{14}\)

At the fourth level or core of *dhikr*, there are tremendous benefits of *dhikr*. But that does not mean the level of *dhikr* in under it has no effect, all levels of *dhikr* bring some positive impact but not as big as like at the highest level. *Dhikr* spoken verbally but does not reach the heart has very effect,\(^{15}\) as well as *dhikr* by unstable heart.\(^{16}\)

For Ghazali, enjoyment of *dhikr* will not arise and obtained except by a sense of peace and love. Meanwhile, love will not raise and grow up when *dhikr* is not done continuously, train self from one step to another step within a long time, until it becomes a habit. This is why the command of *dhikr* in the Qur'an emphasizes quantity “*dhikran kathi>ran*” compared to the quality. Then after truly feel peace, people will break away from all things other than God. Ghazali gave an analogy like as people who fall in love. As if they were only with their beloved one.\(^{17}\)

*Dhikr* practice of *Sufi* is coupled with *fikr* or meditation, both with seclusion or in daily practice. *Fikr* included as a reflection of some aspect of the divine reality and manifestation. *Fikr* allows performer to concentrate on the *dhikr* and prevent the rambling thought.\(^{18}\)

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14 Ghazali, *Rahasia Doa dan Dhikr Imam al-Ghazali*, p. 42
15 Hadist that shows this *dhikr* is narrated by Tirmidhi, he said: Hasan and Hakim said: the narrator is straight from Abi Huarairah, is “know that Allah does not accept *dhikr* of inattentive heart.”
17 Ibid, p. 43
The substance of dhikr is still divided into two parts by Ghazali, *khafi* and *jali dhikr*. This division is not a level, but still at the same level. The first is when the heart has been completely forgotten except to God, while the second is when the heart has gone out of it the purpose of dhikr itself.\(^{19}\)

Same as other Sufi discussed about *khafi* and *jali*, Ghazali also expressed an opinion on that matter. Apparently he is more likely agree with the group that promoted *khafi dhikr*, for him *khafi dhikr* is “better”, it in one side does not disturb other peole, in other sides *dhikr khafi* is also believed free from show off and the nature of the hypocrites. *Khafi dhikr* is like fasting and *sirri* charity, which both is no one knows except the performer and God. Last, Ghazali said *khafi dhikr* is the highest element of worship and alms.\(^{20}\)

For Ghazali, the heart is like flint hard, but basically there is a fire in the stone hidden. Violence is sometimes makes the human heart is not easy to feel and know the creator. However, further Ghazali, violence does not mean that it is impossible to be fighted and give off the light from inside that fire. Here, the role of *dhikr* works. *Dhikr* can melt the hard heart of men and bring light a fire in it. But apparently it is not enough just by *dhikr*.\(^{21}\)

**C. The Virtue of Dhikr**

As we understand, what that all being taught by Islam must have a purpose and benefits why it is taught. It is also there in *dhikr* that is commanded by Allah in the Qur’an. However, Ghazali when talking about the virtue of *dhikr*, he looks very normative, where everything is based on what is in the Quran, Hadith and *atsar* of companions.

1. **The Virtue of Dhikr in al-Qur’an**

Ghazali asserted that in the Quran many verses clicking the virtue of *dhikr*. As in surah al-Baqarah, “Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith”\(^{22}\), further Ghazali

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\(^{21}\)Ghazali, *Mutiara Ihya Ulum ad-Din*, p. 308.

\(^{22}\)Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]:152
commentated that verse by explanation given by Tsabit al-Banani, I know when my God remember me, when I remember Him, He remember me. In another verse said: “O ye who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allah, and do this often” Allah also said in this verse, “Then when ye pour down from (Mount) Arafat, celebrate the praises of Allah at the Sacred Monument, and celebrate His praises as He has directed you, even though, before this, ye went astray”. In other verse Allah said, “and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt”, according to Ibnu Abas, that what meant by this verse is two, first, it means that Allah remember them greater then you remember Him, second, remembrance of Allah has great reward then other worship.

About the reward excellence of dhikr when compared with other worship, Ghazali see that this fact cannot be seen except by using mukashafah approach. However, that needed to know is that dhikr has greater virtue than the other worship that done continuously with presence of the heart.

2. The Virtue of Dhikr in Hadith

Whereas from the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad also said in many times that several virtues of dhikr, such as “people who remember Allah among negligent people like a fresh tree in the middle of a uprooted dry tree. Prophet also said in a hadith Qudsi, “God said, I still remember accompanying my servant as long as his lips moves and calls My name” while in another occasion, the Prophet said “no deeds of a servant could

24 Q.S. al-Ahzab: 41
25 Q.S. al-Baqarah: 198
26 Q.S. al-Ankabut: 45
27 Ghazali, Ihya’ Ulum al-Din, p. 350
28 Ibid, p. 357
29 Hadith narrated by Abu Nua’im in Hilytul-Auliya, and Baihaqi in Syu’bul Iman, from Ibnu Umar with sanad dhaif.
30 Hadith narrated by Baihaqi and Ibn Majjah, dari Abu Ghurairah and Hakim from Abu Dar’da. It is that the narration (sanad) is shahih.
saved himself from remembrance to God”, another hadith explained, “anyone who wants to enjoy the fruits in the garden of heaven, let increase the remembrance of God”, he also said, verily remembrance of Allah in the morning and afternoon is better than *jihad* in the path of Allah, and also giving treasure as much as possible. There are many hadith used to be argumentation by Ghazali’s related to the virtue of *dhikr*.

3. The Virtue of *Dhikr* in *Athar* of Companion

For a more convincing argument, Ghazali also strengthen his explanation about the virtue of *dhikr* with *atsar* of companion (what said by the companions of Prophet), it is becoming important because they are people who live with the prophet, which is certainly more understand about what is done by Prophet’s life at the time. The first is what narrated by Fudhail bin Iyadh, he said, has been arrive at him that God said, My servant, remember Me after dawn for a moment, and after *atbar* moment, surely I will suffice you all time among they both.

Meanwhile, some scholars say, that God said that any slave I view him, and then I found his heart remembrance to me, then I will take care of his business, become his friend, companion and loyal friend. While Hasan al-Basri said that there are two kinds of remembrance, remembrance of Allah among you and among your Lord. How good and great its reward is. Greater reward if the *dhikr* is done when faced with things that are forbidden by God. There are other narrations that every man is in a thirsty state except who always remembers of God.

In short, *dhikr* for Ghazali has prefix and suffix. Both provide a sense peace and love. The final part is from the beginning, but the main goal is the final part. However, it should be understood that the end may not be obtained except through the beginning.

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31Ghazali, *Ihya’ Uloom al-Din*, p. 350
32*Ibid*, p.351
To achieve the goal (the end part of *dhikr*) there are procedures that must be passed. *First*, by turning away from anxiety when the remembrance of God, to the point where the performer experience a love to call Him. *Second*, after growing sense of love, it is definitely he will perform *dhikr* more times, cannot refrain from remembrance indeed. This is similar to someone who dreams to others, of course, he will always remember and mention his name. So, something was originally a result, in the end becomes the cause. Something that was originally a fruit, in the end leads to something. *Third*, disconnect yourself from all except remembrance itself. Everything except Allah is what shoul to be leaved, because the basic needs necessary in the world hamper people to the remembrance of God.\(^{33}\)

So that one can achieve the *dhikr haqiqi*, he should do it continuously, and do every day. In other words, he should make *dhikr* such as daily work to be done. In Sufism it is called *wirid*. Al-Ghazali formulated the virtue and discipline in order to improve the quality up to the substance of *dhikr*. The *wirid* is divided into two times, the daylight and night.

**D. Division Of Wirid**

1. *Wirid* in Daylight
   a. The First *Wirid*

      It is between sunrise light up to sunshine rises. It was a glorious time, this was confirmed by the word of god in al-Qur’an surah al- An’am verse 96: “He it is that cleaveth the day-break (from the dark)” and al-Falaq 1: “Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn a subuh”. This time is recommended to praise God, it is depended on Q.S. ar-Rum 17: “So (give) glory to Allah, when ye reach eventide and when ye rise in the morning”, Q.S. Thaha 130:

\(^{33}\) ibid, p.358
“and celebrate (constantly) the praises of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun, and before its setting”. The etiquette are: let’s get up on time, then pray and take ritual ablution to pray dawn prayer. It can be done at home, then go to the mosque, then mosque continued by tahiyyatul masjid prayers. While waiting for the dawn congregation should read istighfar and tasbih until the dawn prayer comes. After doing the dawn prayer should remain silent while reading the kalimah toyyibah.

Does not stop here, al-Ghazali also recommends for reciting dhikr repeatedly that is a sentence that has the virtues and advantages. It is better when reading every sentence ten times of each sentence, so the number is more noble than one hundred. Because every sentence from those sentences has special power. And for the heart, it has its own delights. While its function for the soul is giving a comfortable from boredom.

According to al-Ghazali, when the reading intensity of the ten sentences is little but repeatedly, it is better than reading it a lot but disjointed. It will give effect in the heart of readers, like water dripping on one point of stone continuously, over time will make a hole in that stone. Conversely, if the stone is watered by too much of water, but the intensity is rare, it is difficult to give results on the stone.
This method is applicable also when reading the Holy Quran, should choose a surah repeat it, so avoid from boredom when reading it. For example, reading al-Fath verse 27, 5 verses beginning from surah al-Hadid and 3 verses from end of surah al-Hasyr. And surah al-fatihah, Kursy verse, the last verse of Surah al-Baqarah, the last verse of Surah at-Taubah, and repeat 7 times of each reading, its virtue is same as dhikr in the morning and evening.

b. Second Wirid

Is between sunrise until dhuha time, noon, of course, at that time is more recommended to do praying dhuha. After do it, should do dhikr and reciting the Quran or useful thing. The basis of the injunction in the Quran is the word of God QS. Shad verse 18: “It was We that made the hills declare, in unison with him, Our Praises, at eventide and at break of day,” and the QS Ad-Dhuha verses 1-2, which means: “1. By the Glorious Morning Light, 2. And by the Night when it is still.”

c. Third Wirid

It is the time, middle between sunrise and dhuhr, of course, at this time do not forget dhikr. But there is an additional practice that needs to be added. First, work for the necessities of life without any desire to accumulate wealth. Should work appropriately just by-equipped to serve the God. Do not be afraid of poor, because the rich are actually almighty God, therefore close to God is close to wealth.

The second is nap, is very recommended (sunnah) when the purpose is to help wake up at night, such as for eating a meal to

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35See: Ihya’ Ulu’m al-Dir’i, p. 397 – 398.
help the fasting day. Or when no nap and does not interfere night waking, the time should not be used for anything that causes inattentive to God. In this case nap is a better way, to avoid bad thing. The main alternative when he does not take a nap should go to mosque to do iktikaf and prepare for dhuhur prayer.

d. Fourth Wirid

The time is before dhuhr until after dhuhr prayer, this is one of the shortest time and better to do wirid. Where at this time the wirid is sunnah prayer and dhuhr fard, followed by dhikr and read verses of al-Quran.

e. Fifth Wirid

The time between mid dhuhr and Asr, at this time is condemned (makruh) to sleep for those who already sleep at earlier time, because not allowed to sleep twice a day. Most scholars say, three cases were condemned by God, laughing without something odd, eating without hunger and nap without awake at night. Al-Ghazali gives dosage sleep in a day. Day and night was number 24 hours. So, simple sleep in the day and night is 8 hours. When at night sleep less than 8 hours, then the shortage is completed at the daylight.

This time was the longest series of wirid, they i’tikaf in mosque by reading kalimah tayyibah and reciting holy Quran, so that avoid sleeping and doing bad things that can foul the heart. This wirid is the most memorable for slave in the evening, as the word of God, and what is in the heavens and in the earth are all
bow to the God, willing or unwilling, as well as their shadows in the morning and evening.  

f. Sixth Wirid

Ashar is time of sixth wirid, doing sunnah prayer and ashar prayer in congregation as before, but this time was different in due course.

g. Seventh Wirid

It is last part of wirid in daylight is when it starts from sunset until arrive maghrib time. Here, should be read istighfar, tasbih and reading surat asy-Syam [91], al- Lail [20], an-Nas [114] and al-Falaq [13]. Sunset then finished the series of daylight dhikr, should do muhasabah what has been done today and yesterday. If day is not better than yesterday, so he is the loser one.

2. Night Wirid

a. First Wirid

When the sun had set, then do evening prayer and work to turn the time between maghrib and isha’ until when it goes syafaq, the red clouds and where the loss of it, it means isha’ prayer comes. It is based on a verse in surah Thaha “and celebrate (constantly) the praises of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun, and before its setting: yea, celebrate them for part of the hours of the night, and at the sides of the day: that thou mayest have (spiritual) joy.” The composition of this wirid is by doing pray two cycles after the maghrib prayer, the first cycles read al-Kafirun and second cycles read al-Ikhlas. Then, pray four cycles reworked by extending it.

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36 Q.S ar- Ra’d[13]15
37 Q.S. Tha>ha>, 130
After that, pray until sunset *syafaq*. It is supported by hadith which is also written by Ghazali in order to strengthen his argument, “you should pray between *Maghrib* and *Isha* time, because actually praying can eliminate wasted charity that have been done during the day.”

b. Second Wirid

The second *wirid*, its first time comes with time of *isha’* prayer until sleep time, as said by God, “The Night and its Homing.”38 Whereas its step is by doing 3 things. 1) Doing prayer other than *isha’* pray, ten cycles, four cycles before *isha’* prayer, and six cycles after it.

Whereas surat recommended should be red is the last verse of al-Baqarah, al-Qursy verse, the beginning of surat al-Hadid and the last of al-Hasr. 2) Praying 13 cycles that finished by *witir* prayer. Many narrators said Propeth did it, the reason is to give nonesuch for those hard to get up in the third of the night, because not everyone can get up in the third of the night. Then, suggested at that prayer about three hundred verses of certain *surat*, such as: Yasin, as-Sajadah, ad-Dukhan, al-Mulk, az-Zumar, and al-Waqi’ah. If not can do prayers, then let replaced by *surat* before going sleep. 3) *Witir*, should be done before sleeping if cannot wake up at night. It described by hadis narrated by Abu Ghurairah “Prophet willed to me that I do not sleep except after praying *witir*.” However, when they are accustomed to wake up in night and pray, so pray in the end of night is better.

c. Third *Wirid*

38 Q.S. al-Inshiqaq, 17
The next *wirid* is sleeping *wirid*, it sounds strange but it becomes unique and special. Because it can be counted sleep is as a kind of *wirid*, because what if the intention is good, kept its attitude undoubtedly sleep will also be worship. Furthermore, in order to achieve quality sleep, Ghazali mentions several manners are ten, 1) purification 2) prepare a toothpick on its side and pure water, 3) write a will if it has the will, 4) sleep with repent to God, 5) no luxuries with bed, 6) did not sleep before it really sleepy, 7) sleep with facing the *qiblat*, 8) pray before sleeping, 9) take a lesson from the bed, the bed is a small die while awake is a resurrection, 10) prayer after waking up, as a gratitude has been restored to life again.

d. Fifth *Wirid*

This *wirid* time entry when first *nisfu* gone (the first half) to the live one-sixth of the night. And at that time, the servants wake up to pray *tahajud*. Step is ablution, then get ready to read *tasbih* ten times, *Alhjandulillah* ten times, and *la ila ha illah* ten times. Then start with a prayer and pray four cycles and closing with *witir* prayer, if the night had not prayed *witir*. It is also advisable to separate between two prayers when *salam* is by reading *tasbih* hundred times, which aim to enhance the spirit of the rest in praying.

e. Sixth *Wirid*

The time is the one-sixth of last evening this assertion is based on the word of God in *surah* ad-Dzariyat verse 18. This time coincides with the time of dawn, while dawn was time the night angel gone and daylight angel comes. In this *wirid* is *sunnah* for eating meal (*sahur*) for which will be fast, because it feared dawn comes.
Wirid at this time is by doing dawn prayers and then reading “shahida allahu annahu la ila ha huwa wal malaikah” continued reading surah ali-Imran just until verse 18 only and then continued by doing prayer.\(^{39}\) That is all wirid has been advised by al-Ghazali in the afternoon and evening. All wirid formulated by al-Ghazali is as an effort to train, familiarize close to God and remember God, so if it is already accustomed then.

\(^{39}\) See: \textit{Ihya Ulu\textgreater m al-Di\textless n}, p. 391