

THE PRACTICE OF COUNTING PRAYERS:
USE OF *TESPIH* AND *ZIKIRMATIK* IN EVERYDAY LIFE IN TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

DECEMBER 2011

Approval of the Thesis:

**THE PRACTICE OF COUNTING PRAYERS: USE OF *TESPIH* AND
ZİKİR MATİKİN EVERYDAY LIFE IN TURKEY**

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ABSTRACT

THE PRACTICE OF COUNTING PRAYERS: USE OF *TESPİH* AND *ZİKİRMATİK* IN EVERYDAY LIFE IN TURKEY

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December, 2011, 119 pages

This study explores the ways in which objects are used in the organization of daily life, by specifically focusing on the use of prayer beads and their mechanical and digital variations. For this purpose, a framework based on material culture and practice theory is employed to understand how Islam informs and guides the organization and the conduct of daily life around the pervasive prayer practices, the ways objects are used for these purposes and how practices and products co-evolve by influencing each other. Fieldwork with devout Muslims, who are using prayer beads together with mechanical and digital counters for their daily praying practices, is conducted by employing ethnomethodology. Findings on the ways in which objects are used, utilized, appropriated and adopted within the socio-cultural and political dynamics of Islam in Turkey are analysed regarding the social and practical aspects of daily life such as the organization of daily life and daily practices, the core issues shaping these practices, thus objects, how identity discourse reflected on/by the use of objects and the ensemble of products that is orchestrated for a meaningful organization of daily life around prayer practices.

Keywords: objects for worshipping, use of objects, prayer practices, counting prayers, prayer beads, *tespîh*, *zikirmatik*, some daily Islamic *tarika* practices and daily life, organization of daily life, material culture of prayer practices

ÖZ

DUA SAYMA PRATİĞİ: TÜRKİYE'DE GÜNLÜK HAYATTA *TESPİH* VE *ZİKİRMATİK* KULLANIMI

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Tez Yöneticisi : Öğr. Gör. Figen IŞIK

Aralık 2011, 119 sayfa

Bu çalışma tespih ve tespihle birlikte veya tespihe ek olarak kullanılan mekanik ve dijital sayma gereçlerinin kullanımı üzerinden, ürünlerin gündelik hayatın organize edilmesindeki rolünü ve önemini incelemektedir. Bu amaçla maddi kültür yaklaşımı ve pratik teorisi benimsenerek nesnelerin gündelik hayatta kullanımı üzerine genel bir teorik çerçeve ve daha özel olarak da Türkiye bağlamında İslam ve gündelik dua pratikleri üzerine bir teorik çerçeve oluşturuldu. Bu teorik yapıya bağlı olarak, gündelik pratiklerinde tespih ve sayma gereçleri kullanan dindar insanlarla yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapıldı. Aynı zamanda bu kesimin gündelik hayatı ve nesnelere kullanma yolları üzerine gözlemler yapıldı. Sonuç olarak, gündelik hayatın pratik ve sosyal organizasyonunda nesnelerin neden ve nasıl kullanıldığına dair derinlemesine bir anlayış sağlandı. Sonuç olarak, İslam'a dayalı gündelik hayat pratiklerinin organizasyonunda ve gündelik hayatın sosyo-kültürel ve politik dinamikleri üzerinden kimlik söylemi bağlamında nesnelerin hangi şekillerde kullanıldığı, uyarıldığı ve adapte edildiği gösterildi. Ayrıca, bu nesnelerin pratikleri değiştirme, dönüştürme ve üretme yolları, bir yandan da bu pratiklerin nesnelere nasıl değiştirdiği incelendi.

Anahtar sözcükler: ibadet için kullanılan nesnelere, nesne kullanımı, dua pratikleri, dua sayma, tespih, zikirmatik, İslami tarikatlarda gündelik ibadet pratikleri ve günlük yaşam, gündelik hayatın organizasyonu, dua etme pratiğinin maddi kültürü

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Figen Işık, who guided me with her knowledge in the area and wisdom throughout the process and did her best for me.

Second, I would like to equally thank Gülay Hasdoğan and Fatma Korkut who supported me in all possible ways throughout the process. If it was not their support, the completion of my thesis would be impossible.

I would like to thank especially Canan Emine Ünlü, whose wisdom, approach to education and above all her character that I have always adored, for listening to me, sharing my concerns, standing by me and being more than a teacher for me. It would also equally be impossible if it was not her support in all possible ways.

I would like to thank the examining committee members who shared their knowledge and help me improve my study with their valuable comments.

I cannot thank enough Asli Günay, my dearest colleague, who managed my administrative work with utmost sensitiveness and made it possible for me to complete my process.

I am also thankful to my colleagues Sedef Süner and Anıl Ilgaz who visited their neighbours to arrange me participants for my field study.

I would also like to mention my dearest colleagues and friends Armağan Karahanoğlu, Senem Turhan, Dalsu Özgen, Renk Dimli Oraklıbel, Ayşe Meltem Yılmaz, Ayça Aydın and Aernout Kruithof for their precious support and being there for me at the moments that I needed most.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents who gave their best for me; to my mother, Lale, especially for substituting alarm clocks and to my father, Ali, in particular for serving me tea, thereby keeping me awake in long study nights.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introducing the Topic

This study is inspired by a brief ethnographic study conducted within the scope of a graduate course, titled as *Seminar on Ethnographic Field Research*, which has been offered by the Social Anthropology Program within the Department of Sociology at the Middle East Technical University (METU), in the Spring Semester of 2009-2010 academic year. The course was supervised by Assist. Prof. Dr. Aykan Erdemir (METU), Robert Hayden (University of Pittsburgh), and Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir (METU). The main aim of the course was to introduce the students to the methods of ethnographic field research and familiarize them with the basic techniques of conducting an ethnographic study. The site studied within the scope of the course, *Hacı Bayram*¹, was selected by the course instructors. The study was assigned without a specifically formulated research question so that the students could develop their own topic of interest *in the field*.

Hacı Bayram is a religious site which is visited by Muslims from all around Turkey. The visitors' main interest in coming to Hacı Bayram commonly ranges from asking remedy for their various illnesses and deficiencies or seeking solution to their difficulties of various sorts by the virtue of praying to Hacı Bayram Veli² or just praying for Hacı Bayram Veli. It is believed that praying to Hacı Bayram Veli is a powerful ritual that grants such prayers and wishes. For this reason people from all over Turkey, from all sorts of backgrounds and from almost all social classes come to visit Hacı Bayram. Hacı Bayram, with the

¹ *Hacı Bayram* is the name of a Saint. The area, that consists of the *Mosque of Hacı Bayram*, the *shrine of Hacı Bayram*, the *Temple of Augustus* and the *shopping area* opposite to these, is referred to as "Hacı Bayram" in daily language.

² The Turkish word "*Veli*" stands for "*Saint*" in English.

Temple of Augustus, dating from 25 B.C., which shows that this area has been regarded as a worshipping site for centuries, is rendered as a divine and sacred place for Muslims. Opposite to the worshipping complex, a shopping area lies where products for religious purposes are sold. Due to its spiritual and economic functions, Hacı Bayram, by the local people in the area, is referred to as a religious site which serves for all the needs of a devout Muslim.

Having been educated as an industrial designer, I was interested in the wide variety of products that are offered by the shops in the site. Not only souvenirs of Hacı Bayram Veli but also products ranging from nutrition to electronics, textile to cosmetics, books to CDs and all sorts of products for various religious practices are sold there. Some examples of these products are non-alcoholic perfumes, non-alcoholic room sprays for mosques, laptops teaching verses from Qur'an, dolls reciting Qur'an, the Islamic versions of commonly known board games to teach children the precepts of an Islamically appropriate life, bottled Zamzam water¹, pocket-size portable prayer rugs, various kinds of veiling and *tesettür*² clothing, and the like. From traditional products to technological ones, a large variety of products, which are intended for teaching religion and living an Islamically appropriate life, are sold in the area. When I first visited Hacı Bayram, I thought that the relationship between the material and the spiritual and the material culture of the area that I observed were tempting for an academic research.

Among these products, the traditional prayer beads –‘tespih’s– along with mechanical and digital counters that are used to count prayers, constitute a product category which includes both traditional and technological examples of the same sort. Prayer beads, which consist of a row of beads on a string have been used for centuries, and become traditionally common in numerous different religions. Yet, besides the traditional prayer beads, the mechanical counters and their digital versions that I came across in the shops at Hacı Bayram are quite new for the purpose of counting prayers. These are called *zikirmatik*³. When I first visited the site I wondered what this variety of products for

¹ Zamzam water comes from a sacred well in Mecca, and Muslims try to drink from this holy water during their visits to Mecca or Hajj pilgrimage.

² *Veiling and tesettür* are the clothing of believing Muslim women consisting of headscarf and long overcoats.

³ *Zikir-matik* is the Turkish name given to mechanical or digital counters. *Zikir* is the Turkish word for allusion. -matik is a Turkish suffix used to suggest automation, quickness or practicality, for example ATMs, are called *Bankamatik* in Turkish, a usage similar to *banko-mat* or *vendo-mat*

counting prayers meant for their users, and in which socio-cultural and practical context these were used. Moreover, I thought that there should be a difference between using the traditional prayer beads and the mechanical or digital counters in terms of both user-product interaction and conducting praying practices. Therefore, I asked why and how people use these products and utilize them in their daily lives, and how praying practices have been affected by these newly introduced zikirmatiks.

1.2 Aim and Scope of the Study

Industrial design, which is a profession determining various aspects of the interaction between users and products, is among the most influential agents in shaping objects in the modern world, thus in the creation of its material culture. However, as Miller (2006: 348) argues, design, along with architecture, shows an “extraordinary blindness” to “the consequences those objects [their products] would have for those who used them, or the processes by which consumers might try to appropriate and transform them”. Based on Miller’s argument, this study focuses on prayer beads and its mechanical and digital variations, and aims to explore how and why these products are used, appropriated and adapted within the daily life of devout Muslims by inquiring into the ways in which these products are involved in the conduct and organization of daily life and daily practices.

Having been trained as an industrial designer, employing my background on the relationship between users and products, I adopt an interdisciplinary perspective to the use, appropriation and adaptation of prayer beads, and mechanical and digital counters in the socio-cultural context of everyday dynamics of living Islam in Turkey within the specificity of daily prayer practices. By conducting semi-structured interviews with a group of practicing Muslims and observing their daily life and worshipping practices, I aim to elaborate on the above questions. To keep the sample varied I talked to members of a tarika who were all female, to frequenters of a mosque who were all male and the shopkeepers in Hacı Bayram who were again all male, and were both conducting daily worshipping practices and selling the products used for worshipping practices. The interviewees in my sample can be called as devout Muslims, who accept five pillars of Islam and Islamic principles as a definitive guide to their lives.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of five chapters: introduction, theoretical framework and the specificity of Muslim prayer beads, method, results and discussions of the field study, and conclusion. Mostly the narrative is supported by related visuals. Unless the source is indicated most images are photographs that I took throughout the field study.

After the introductory chapter a general theoretical framework explaining the approach to objects and understanding their role in everyday life is constructed. Starting with the structuralist approach, which explains the intricate relationship between mutual constitution of products, users and social context, and continuing with meaning attribution to products, practical arrangements that products make possible within the organization of everyday life, practice theory and the logic of operations are focused on to understand the use of products in daily life. In addition to this general framework, details on the context of using prayer beads are explained, i.e. how Islam informs materiality, practices and daily life, how Islam informs daily life within the Turkish context, and the specificity of Muslim prayer practice and the history and use of prayer beads are elaborated on.

The third chapter explains the field study conducted to understand and empirically demonstrate these topics within the specific case of particular religious groups. In this chapter the initial inspirational ethnographic study is thoroughly explained as well, as it demonstrates the field and explains how a researcher gets familiar with a field to which s/he is an outsider. The main study is explained with detailed descriptions on the sample, the ways of entering into the field, conduct of the study and the personal reflections.

The fourth chapter focuses on the analysis of the findings of the field study, which is structured by context mapping. The concepts raised in this analysis are further interpreted by focusing on how Islam informs daily life of Muslims, inquiring into specificity of prayer practice, and how practices and products co-evolve together, elaborating on the meaning attribution by the users and tactics developed by the users, the findings of the field study are discussed through the concepts raised within the theoretical framework in the second chapter.

Lastly, the concluding chapter summarizes the study by drawing conclusions and suggestions for further design research and practice.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THEORISING THE USE OF PRODUCTS IN DAILY LIFE AND THE SPECIFICITY OF MUSLIM TESPIH

We are surrounded by objects in our daily life. These objects form a repertoire which provides a meaningful organization of daily life. This organization consists of the mutually working practical functions and socio-cultural aspects which are enabled by objects. As Shove and Southerton (2000) demonstrate in their study on the normalization process of freezers in UK that this process is shaped by various aspects which in turn shape freezers. They demonstrate that these aspects range from the image created by advertisements to the parallel developments from other domains such as the use of microwave thus frozen food, car ownership, establishment of supermarkets etc., aspects that orchestrate the intertwined social and technical relationships that are involved in the normalization process of freezers. Similarly, this study focuses on these relationships and attempts to explore their theoretical implications to understand the use of products. By focusing on prayer beads and their mechanical and digital variations the complex web of relationships that make up a product will be demonstrated. To explore the relationship between user and products, a broader literature, firstly defining the approach to study of objects (products, things, stuff and tools) and general theories on the relationship between object, subject (user) and social and practical contexts will be explored. So, the use of products will be explored within the broader term 'object's which stands not only for products designed for a specific purpose but also artefacts, things, tools, i.e. the stuff that are utilized and shaped by individuals. Then, building on this framework the specific case of Islam in Turkey and the Islamic prayer beads will be elaborated on to explore the intertwined relationship between various aspects of product use.

2.1 Theorising Use of Objects in Daily Life

Objects are used, appropriated and adapted for “social and practical arrangements” they make possible (Shove et. al., 2007: 10). Rather than being plainly used to accomplish some certain ends, a variety of objects are orchestrated to organize and shape daily life and practices so that to make the world in accord with what it should be like. Also by being carriers of meanings and ways of expressing and transmitting these meanings as well, objects make, maintain and reproduce social and individual relationships.

Before explaining the aspects of social and practical use, it might be useful to introduce the structuralist perspective to explain the intricate relationship between objects, subjects and social context, and the role of objects in individuals’ lives, for such an approach, by analysing the elements of socio-cultural mechanisms and the relation between these provides an in-depth understanding to unfold the relationships that make up a product. Bourdieu (2003), who holds a structuralist approach to the knowledge on objects, explains that new knowledge is constructed by being interpreted through the pre-existing knowledge, which was constituted earlier by the same interpretation process, in which that the mental schemes are “constituted in the course of collective history, and acquired in the course of individual history” are embedded schemes (Bourdieu, 2003: 247). Language or knowledge on objects are interpreted through these schemes, which are formed socially and individually by divisions in the society. Like language is constructed on antagonistic adjective pairs, stemming from the division of labour and social stratification, objects as well fit to these schemes of division. So, to invoke Bourdieu (2003: 247) again, “being product of the incorporation of the fundamental structures of a society, these principles of division are common to all the agents of a society and make possible the production of a common, meaningful world, a common-sense world”. These embedded schemes produce classifications which work through a mechanism of distinction. Likewise, knowledge on objects work through an intricate and intertwined relationship among the objects, subjects and the social context, and “function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will”, which falls into embedded schemes of distinction (Bourdieu, 2003: 246).

So, this relationship can be defined as a mutual constitution of object, subject and social and practical contexts, where each element both structures and is structured by the other elements. For Miller (2010: 50) “material objects are the setting”. By forming a common-sense world, objects “make us aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate” (Miller, 2010: 50). What Miller (2010: 50) calls “the humility of objects” explains the capacity of objects to determine what takes place in the course of daily life by working through embedded schemes. In Miller’s (2010: 50-51) own words:

“They work by being invisible and unremarked upon, a state they usually achieve by being familiar and taken for granted. Such a perspective seems properly described as material culture since it implies that much of what makes us what we are exists, not through our consciousness or body, but as an exterior environment that habituates and prompts us.”

Here, objects are emphasized as indispensable part of society and social construction and reproduction that create a meaningful organization of daily life (Miller, 2005; Miles and Paddison, 1998; Bourdieu, 2003). Therefore, “material objects are routinely studied as traces of social relations and macro-social trends in technology, economics or political structure” (Shove, 2007: 6).

Due to their very materiality, objects shape cultures. To invoke Miller again (2010:53):

“Before we can make things, we are ourselves grown up and matured in the light of things that come down to us from the previous generations. We walk around the rice terraces or road systems, the housing and gardens that are effectively ancestral. These unconsciously direct our footsteps, and are the landscapes of our imagination, as well as the cultural environment to which we adapt.”

With the implementation of structuralist theories from 1970s onwards, the dichotomy between object, subject and context started to be resolved, and ‘material culture studies’ could represent itself as an analytical study of objects devoid of the negative association with fetishism of objects (Miller, 1998).

Due to the phenomenological relationship between objects and subjects and the very materiality of objects, i.e., their actually being there, each object gets involved in people’s

lives in various ways, specific to that object and the specific use context (Shove 2007; Dant 2005; Miller 2005). As Dant (2005: 109) exemplifies, a car, a wrist watch and a suit are involved in a person's life in different ways specific to the context and the specific use of these objects, and offer different ways of interaction, specific to these objects; thus connect people to their social domain in different ways. As Miller (1998: 6) states, "Each of these domains possesses considerable specificity in comparison to the other, and in turn generates considerable internal diversity". For example, Miller (2010: 4) in the chapter of his book, *Stuff*, titled as *Why Clothing Is Not Superficial*, explores clothing by focusing on the ways of wearing and textural qualities stating that these were "highly specific" to clothing. And according to Miller, except for material culture many disciplines disregard the specific ways in which objects get involved in individuals' lives.

Material culture studies inquire into materiality of objects and the specific character of their materiality. While focusing on the object, object is not fetishized but regarded as "the best way to understand, convey and appreciate humanity" (Miller, 2010: 4). Therefore, material culture studies focus on objects to arrive at beliefs or drives of a society (Miller, 2005; Knappett, 2005; Prown, 1993; Kingery, 1996; Berger, 1992). For Miller (2010), material culture is not an end in itself but a means for analysing objects. This study which focuses on prayer beads and their mechanical and digital variations, likewise, adopts a material culture approach to the intricate existence of the objects within material specificity to explore the use of objects.

2.1.1 Meaning of Objects

The intricate relationship between subjects' cognitive process, socio-cultural processes and the role of objects that function through embedded structures are explained in the previous part. As Shove et al. (2007:4) states "material objects consequently feature as semiotic intermediary, carrying meanings and resources for the construction of individual and collective identities". Objects are seen as signs and symbols and are rendered as means for the circulation of meaning and the reproduction of interpersonal relations. This phenomenological embedded structure of semiotic mechanism is studied by numerous disciplines, approached from within their own perspective and focus.

Thorstein Veblen, who is regarded as the first sociologist to recognize the social significance of consumption (Miles and Paddison, 1998), in his book *The Theory of Leisure Class*, 1899, inquires into objects focusing on social dynamics. Veblen argues that objects are a means of expressing, transmitting, and maintaining meanings on wealth and social status. According to Veblen (2005), division of labour between men, women and children dating back to predatory cultures, naturalized consumption of well prepared goods by the superior, noble man, while some were left for the sustenance of ignoble, inferior women and children. Some goods, such as alcoholic beverages, came to symbolize superiority as they were consumed by the noble, successful men. This pattern of social communication by using superior goods and consuming excess and right kind of goods to express wealth and status became incumbent on modern man (2005). Later, studies from philosophy, psychology, linguistics and anthropology, which analysed the world of objects in association with language, regarded objects as *communicators* of a communication system (Douglas, 2000: 75). Objects are used for stating something about their owner, regarding who s/he is, his/her kinship relations etc. within the social context s/he lives in (Miller, 2010; Douglas, 2000; Shove et. al, 2007).

Objects are not only signs or symbols that stand for social and individual meanings but also maintain and reproduce these meanings and relationships (Shove, 2007; Miller, 2010; Douglas, 2000). As an example, Hebdige (2001) reveals in his study, *Object as Image: The Italian Scooter*, that objects not only represent and express social groups and reinforce identities, but they also come to produce them. Hebdige (2001) explains the process in which social images and meanings are created, and how these images are later used, manipulated and reproduced to distinguish certain groups. In his study, Hebdige (2001) demonstrates that how user clubs of Lambretta and Vespa used distinct signs such as pennants, badges or colours to distinguish their group and regenerated further distinctions such as berets or cowboy hats to foster and express their identity and thereby created further divisions among user clubs.

2.1.2. Objects as Physical Entities

“Objects are not just semiotically communicative: they are also pragmatically useful” (Shove et. al., 2007: 5) point out. Shove et. al. (2007: 4) argue that objects are “useful, or perhaps even have agency in enabling and shaping action”. Due to objects’ very physicality, subjects interact with objects and objects are used in the accomplishment of certain practices (Shove et. al, 2007; Dant, 2005). As Warde (2005: 131) states “engaging in particular practices and that being a competent practitioner requires appropriation of the requisite services, possession of appropriate tools, and devotion of a suitable level of attention to the conduct of the practice”. Moreover, subjects appropriate the material world for the accomplishment of certain tasks (Graves-Brown, 1960: 1). For Reckwitz (2002: 252), “carrying out a practice very often means using particular things in a certain way”. For this reason, objects are involved in daily life of subjects, affecting how things are done; thus, shape how daily life is organised. Dant (2005: 109) calls this as “embodied interaction with objects” and as “material interaction”. As Shove et. al. (2007) summarize, stuff are required for the “design and conduct” of daily life, therefore, they are substantial for the “accomplishment of daily routine”. Hence, Shove et. al. (2007) emphasize that there is a close relationship between subjects and objects and the arrangement of daily life, which is revealed in ways of doing and knowing.

Dant’s (2005) case of automotive repair services is a good example in this sense. Dant (2005: 115) explains the process of undoing the nut of the wheel bearing of a car which he argues as a “non-symbolic interaction” in Blumer’s terms. Dant examines how technicians employ tools to accomplish this action, to overcome the friction force and undo the nuts. He explains the process in which levers are used and appropriated or hands are involved in certain tasks to show how body and tools are employed for the accomplishment of a practice in a “habitual way” (Dant, 2005: 122). The primary aim of the use of these tools is not giving social message(s) in this case, but the accomplishment of a certain task. However, these different ways of doing and knowing things, in which “conscious intention” lies in the past actions, imply a socio-cultural construction (Dant, 2005). So, he emphasizes the routinized, sub-conscious and collective nature of daily practices.

As mentioned before, objects shape practices but they are also shaped by practices. “The elements (of material, of image and meaning, and of competence) that are integrated in practice may themselves evolve, whether as a result of technical innovation or shifts in norms, expectations or know how” (Shove et. al, 2007: 72). Shove et. al (2007) examine photographic practice to demonstrate the co-evolution of objects and practices. As a result of the changes that have brought about by digital photography, photographic practice has become considerably cheaper. So, the events photographed have started to increase in number, and storing photographs in digital media and storing them in large numbers, rather than photo-prints have started to provide relative economy. These in return have changed the occasions that the photo cameras are used. Also, the filing of photographs in photo-albums has been replaced by digital filing which has created differences in the ways people have maintained and organized their files. In addition, viewing of photographs, digital versus printed version has also created changes in terms of practices and the group of objects attained to the conduct of the photographic practice. Shove et. al’s study shows how objects and practices co-evolve together and create an ensemble of objects through which daily practices are organized. Similar studies show how objects evolve to create new practices or alter existing ones and how practices change the objects devoted to these practices (Hebdige, 2001; Miller, 2010; Keane, 2005).

However, to clarify, practices are not only defined as doing things. Miller (2010) in his example on clothing that demonstrates different clothing from over the world stresses the *ways of using* and *ways of doing*, as well. As Miller (2010: 15) argues the debate on clothing is “not just what you wear, but on how you wear it”. He gives the example of Trinidadian “saga boys” who were a group that combined their identity expressed in their clothes with the way they talk and walk (Miller, 2010: 15), in that wearing as a practice encompasses the way the body is moved and objects are used. He also gives the example of the ways and manners of wearing an Indian sari, so that it stands for a variety of expressions ranging from modesty to eroticism, intertwined with the cloth and the way it relates to body and the way it is worn (Miller, 2010).

Reckwitz (2002: 249), who uses the two correspondent terms for the word ‘practice’ in German as ‘Praxis’ and ‘Praktik’, makes a clear definition of practice:

“A ‘practice’ (Praktik) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.”

As Reckwitz (2002: 250) argues, the meaning attributed to “everyday vocabularies” such as body, mind, things, knowledge etc. are significant for an understanding of practices. As Reckwitz (2002: 251) explains, body is not an external element that the individual must instrument, but “the routinized actions are themselves bodily performances”. Practices are also mental activities, where mental patterns are part of the carrying out of the practice as well. Things (objects) are “necessary components of many practices” that also “enable and limit certain bodily and mental activities (Reckwitz, 2002: 252-253) as in the ancient Greek term *techné* which implies for an intertwined relationship between knowledge and doing (Parry, 2007). For practice theory, knowledge is “more complex than ‘knowing that’. It embraces ways of understanding, knowing how, ways of wanting and of feeling that are linked to each other within a practice” (Reckwitz, 2002: 253). So, a practice is defined as “a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (Reckwitz, 2002: 250). Therefore, practice theory places practices as the fundamental unit of social analysis where “both social order and individuality” are consequences of practices (Shove et. al, 2007: 12).

Practices are neither individual nor holist (Warde, 2005). Reckwitz (2002), explains it by comparing homo economicus and homo sociologicus theories with cultural theory. Practice theory, which is a cultural theory itself, explains human action and social order as a mix of “subjective interest” and “consensus to norms and roles” (Reckwitz, 2002). Bourdieu (2004: 108), although he implies for the same “regulated improvisations”, explains practices through interplay of past and the future. “A past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles” (Bourdieu, 2003: 117). Therefore, practices are a blend of individual and social knowledge that are embedded in the mental schemes of individuals (Reckwitz, 2002; Bourdieu, 2004).

To invoke the structuralist approach of Bourdieu (2003, 2004) again, an “immanent law”, embodied schemes, in which the social practices acting as structuring structures which themselves are structured, form the “unconscious order” of society, which he calls as *habitus* (Miller, 2010: 53). Bourdieu (2004) states that past and the norms and values belonging to it are carried to present, in that they shape the current practices. This new set of practices, act as the past of future, so resulting in new practices for the future. According to Bourdieu, this functioning is not necessarily conscious, nor the knowledge is solid, but by living in the *habitus* and being raised up in that *habitus*, individuals have embedded knowledge on these practices, which is expressed in their routinized behaviour. So, these routinized practices with mundane objects do not suggest a static context (Bourdieu, 2004; Reckwitz, 2002; Warde, 2005). For Bourdieu (2004: 108), *habitus* is a structure of dispositions that produces and reproduces practices. This mechanism of disposition and/or distinction is a process regenerated from within the intricate and embedded relationships that are explained earlier and enable “agents to cope with unforeseen and ever changing situations”. So, “a practice represents a pattern which can be filled out by a multitude of single and often unique actions reproducing the practice” (Reckwitz, 2002: 250). Ways of doing change continuously, which shape or reshape objects, thus altered objects affect practices in return. However, it is not only ways of doing that are changed but also ways of knowing change as well. So, this creates a dynamic social structure of social regeneration.

De Certeau (1984), elaborating on the same distinction mechanism is interested in the *logic of operations* of users. He inquires into the *ways of doing*, i.e. the logic of practices within power relationships, by which he means that, users develop tactics within the dominant power to cope with the dominant power, which constitutes the strategies. For De Certeau (1984), analysing and revising Foucault’s concept of social practices, power is “the strength of the man of influence or imposed order”. For Foucault (1980), functioning of the society is based on power relationships. Power or the common sense, or the objective structures guides subjects in the *habitus*. Accordingly, Foucault (1980: 139) states that “power is what says no”. For Foucault (1980: 141), power can be exercised by an institution or an individual or it is exercised in the sense of common sense and “power is ‘always already there’, that one is never outside of it.” To invoke Foucault (1980: 142) again, “relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations for which they play at once a

conditioning and conditioned role”. He states power such as the one held by the government, directs ones behaviours and thought (Foucault, 1980).

For Miller and Tilley (1984: 5), “Power enables agents (individual or collective) to significantly and non-trivially alter, or attempt to alter, the conditions of their existence and outcomes of determinate situations in specific social and material contexts”. As Miller and Tilley (1984: 6) suggest “where there is power there is also resistance or a plurality of resistances”. For De Certeau (1984, p xix), most everyday practices (talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.) are tactical in character and “must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into ‘opportunities’”.

De Certeau (1984, xvii) defines tactic as “the ingenious ways in which the weak makes use of the strong, thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices”, the actions of the weak, who try to operate in the society, which he calls as tactics within the mainstream strategies. Practices and objects are manipulated for these tactics. Objects are rendered as significant for the conduct of daily practices and daily life in that they define how daily life is realised and organised. Within this approach, users are regarded as active conscious individuals who act within certain social norms and logic of practice, and manipulate the object world accordingly (De Certeau, 1984). For Shove et. al. (2007), yet, objects as well are active in this sense, as they affect and are affected, thus co-evolving with practices. Moreover, body and things, namely the physical component, and mind and society are seen as a whole, which operate together (Warde, 2005; Dant, 2005; Reckwitz, 2002; Bourdieu, 2003). These are neither the agent nor intermediary nor instrument of one another. Hence, practices imply a whole, embedded understanding of the whole materiality. The next part will be about the specific use context and specific practice of prayer. Islam and how it informs daily life and practices, the socio-cultural context of Islam in Turkey, and the specificity of prayer practices will be focused on to move towards a more focused analysis of prayer beads and their mechanical and digital variations.

2.2 Islam, Turkey and Daily Life

In the previous part the role of objects in organizing practical and social details of daily life is explored and the intricate relationship between object, subject, practices and social

context within this organization is emphasized. In this part of the chapter, these relationships, particularly around prayer beads and counters, will be specified.

For the specific case of this study, which focuses on prayer beads and mechanical and digital counters that are used to perform Islamic worshipping practices, how Islam informs materiality, daily practices and the organization of daily life will be inquired into. Moreover, the particular case of Islam in Turkey will be briefly opened up to frame the socio-cultural use context of these objects. Therefore, by elaborating on the specific ways that these objects are involved in Muslims' lives and the specific ways of using and doing with these objects, the relationships that shape the prayer practices and daily practices and thus result in alteration or adaptation of objects and their use will be unfolded.

2.2.1 Materiality and Islam

Spirituality and religious faith are commonly thought to be devoid of materiality, time and place (Kieran, 2008). Moreover, these terms appear to be even contrasting (Miller, 2006). Indeed, most religions and spiritual conduit feel the need to define its position about materiality. Materiality (should not be mixed with materialism), the fact that objects *are there*, that objects exist as physical entities is mostly regarded as illusionary or too much attachment to objects would result in deterioration of human essence (Miller, 2006). In Miller's (2005: 1) own words "there is an underlying principle to be found in most of the religions that dominate recorded history. Wisdom has been accredited to those who claim that materiality represents the merely apparent, behind which lies that which is real". So, although the approach varies among each tradition, most religions inquire into the relationship with materiality not necessarily against materiality, yet surprisingly resulting in a common-sensical moral judgement that religion(s) holds a position against materiality.

On the other hand, for centuries, materiality has been appropriated and objects have been used and adapted for religious rituals and for the expression of faith. Objects in this sense have been central to the conduct, facilitation, organization and arrangement of practicing faith. In her article *God in the Bits and Pieces of Everyday*, Patricia Kieran gives many examples of material objects which are used in religious rituals to create tactual, auditory, olfactory

sensations so that the whole being, as physical and spiritual entity, is stimulated; thus religious conduit is enhanced and enriched. “In many religious traditions religious believers use the world of objects, of sensory materials, as a medium and aid to religious belief and worship” (Kieran, 2008: 15).

Muslims all around the world, as well, use particular objects, such as headscarves, caps, prayer rugs, prayer beads and the like to practice their faith. There is the underlying principle in Islam to make things easier (Bardakoğlu, 1999) that directs Muslims to an instrumental approach towards material objects. Furthermore, Islam sees the world and the created living and non-living things in it as a reflection of Allah and His grace; thus this world is valuable and should be respected (Demir, 1995; Özdemir, 2006). Islam advises a life in harmony and unity with all that is created. In other words, for Islam, this world and cosmos is created for human, and it is advised to live a life of harmony and unity with all that is created (Demir 1995; Özdemir, 2006). Unlike in India, where it was believed that spiritual illumination could only be possible by rejecting material world, Muslims who try to avoid materiality and forbid the offerings God made lawful are criticised and frowned upon in the Qur’an (Atalay, 1993). However, although a harmonious and mutual relationship with materiality is advised, the ways to approach materiality and the manners in this relationship are clarified in the Qur’an. “Eat of their fruit when they ripen, but pay the due thereof on the day of its harvest, and waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not Al-Musrifun [those who waste by extravagance]” (The Qur’an: Al-An’am, 141). Muslims are advised to consume worldly blessings reasonably, without ending up in extravagance or wastefulness (Demir, 1995; Özdemir, 2006; Harman, 1999; Atalay, 1993). So, while being advised to get their share on materiality, the manners of use are pointed out in Islam.

2.2.2 Islam and Daily Life

Religion and society have always been closely linked. “The beliefs of a religious tradition never stand in isolation, either from one another or from the life of the community in which they are held. Any given society given religion is also part of a people’s culture.” (Kurtz, 1995) During the history religion has always influenced the way life was organized

socially and physically. As an extreme example, Middle Ages, in which religion dominated the social life from institutions to inter personal relationships, could be taken. So the effect of religion, namely Islam in this study, on society in terms of how Islam informs daily practices, daily life and socio-cultural context should be explored.

There are various definitions of religion in literature. However, there is no agreement on a clear-cut definition of religion nor a specific approach to define it among scholars. Neither an explanation on the Latin origins of the word, 'religio', interpreted either as 'to reread' or as 'to bind together' provides a clue. Some definitions focus on the spiritual experience dimension of religion while some definitions focus on the function of religion. Repstad (2006) calls these categories as "substantive definitions" and "functional definitions", where substantive definitions approach religion as a spiritual phenomenon and emphasize the metaphysical aspect of religion, such as spiritual experience of God or philosophical inquiry into the knowledge of God (Repstad, 2006; Khan, 2007; Iqbal 1930), and functional definitions focus on the impact of religion on individuals or society.

As cited by Repstad (2006: 17) R.R. Marett defines "native religion is something that is not so much thought as danced out" in which he emphasizes the routinized and habitual way of religious practices and taken for granted way and view of life. Kurtz (1995: 10) refers to religion as a "sacred canopy", a term that he borrows from Peter Berger which means that religion "provides a sheltering fabric of security and answers for both the profound and the mundane questions of human life" such as "how can we get food for our family today?" is a question religion seeks to answer, by informing the 'vision' on how life should be organized. Kurtz (1995: 47) sees a clear link between religious precepts and how everyday life is constructed. He explains the extent to which religion, in general, informs daily life with the discipline and ethics it advises. For Kurtz (1995), "religious life is coterminous with everyday life", as he states, religious rituals "help to frame daily life by regulating such matters as hygiene, diet and sex..." Similarly, according to Arens (2005: 373), religion is a "way of life" rather than "a view of life". Religious tradition is 'diffused' throughout a believer's life, where "many daily activities such as eating become acts of faith that reflect a worldview and/or link the individual in a special way with the religious community" (Kurtz, 1995). Likewise, Arens (2005: 382) evaluates religious practices within action theory and states that both worshipping and other religious actions are

“communication praxis” by which he means religion is a way of communication, not only with God but among the people of society as well.

Some scholars make use of categories derived from common traits of religion. Most definitions categorize these traits in two: beliefs and ritual practices and have further sub-categories based on these two dimensions. Durkheimian point of view states that every religion has two categories as beliefs and rites. As cited by Repstad (2006), Smart similarly defines two categories of belief divided further into six dimensions: the dogmatic, mythological, ethical dimensions, and the ritual, experiential, social dimensions. Kurtz (1995) defines four concepts: the beliefs, practices (rituals), the sacred, and the community. Another frequently used classification, according to Repstad (2006), is that of Stark and Glock’s that defines five dimensions of religious commitment as the belief, religious practice, experience, knowledge, and consequential dimensions. In their categorisation the ‘religious practice’ dimension includes rituals and devotion, the ‘consequential dimension’ “includes the effects that religion has in the lives of individuals, in their everyday life”. For Repstad (2006), such dimensions, as each religion emphasize differently on these, can be used to define specific religions in terms of their impact on society.

For Islam, the ritual and lifestyle dimensions are said to be emphasized (Repstad, 2006). Islam is a monotheist religion where *faith* (iman) and *doing right* (ihsan) are the essences of Islamic religion which are expressed through worshipping practices (Kassam, 2006). The aim of a Muslim’s life is defined as either being a ‘server of God’ (Kassam, 2006) or achieving spiritual transformation which in Iqbal’s (1930) words defined as ‘searching ego’ to join Allah. There are five pillars¹ that are incumbent on a Muslim. The Qur’an², *Hadiths*³ and *Sunnah*¹ are the first references for a Muslim to inform his ethics, values and

¹ *Shahadah* is faith in Allah and His Messenger Muhammad. *Salat* is the ritual prayer performed five times a day. *Zakat* is almsgiving and *Sawm* is fasting from daybreak to sundown during the month of Ramadan. The last one, *Hajj*, is pilgrimage to Mecca.

² The Qur’an is the holy book of Islam. According to Haleem (2005, p ix), “The Qur’an is the supreme authority in Islam. It is the fundamental and paramount source of the creed, rituals, ethics, and laws of the Islamic religion. It is the book that ‘differentiates’ between right and wrong, so that nowadays, when the Muslim world is dealing with such universal issues as globalisation, the environment, combating terrorism and drugs, issues of medical ethics, and feminism, evidence to support the various arguments is sought in the Qur’an. This supreme status stems from the belief that the Qur’an is the word of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad via the archangel Gabriel, and intended for all times and all places.”

³ “In Islam *hadith* is the term applied to specific reports of the prophet Muhammad’s words and deeds as well as those of many of the early Muslims; the word is used both in a collective and in singular sense. After the Prophet’s death, his companions collected reports of what he said and done, and they recounted the reports

daily life (Kassam, 2006; Iqbal, 1930; Haleem 2005). Yet each *tarika*² has different opinions on and application of Islam, based on different interpretations of Qur'an, Hadith and Sunnah. As stated by scholars, there is no Islam but Islams (Saktanber, 2002, 2002b; Mardin, 2006).

As Mardin (2006) argues, "Islam has a more direct relation to the content of social structure than many other religions". It can be argued that this structure results from the view of Islam on this-worldly relationships emphasizing harmony with materiality. For Kurtz (1995), "religion is not a part of the structure of Islamic society... it *is* his or her life" and he emphasizes the five pillars of Islam, stating Salat on its own, that frames the entire day of a Muslim, is a daily practice. The Qur'an, the fundamental and paramount source to Muslims, as well, is emphasized as a source book, which organizes all the aspects of life (Özdemir, 2006).

Muslims, both to furnish their lives and to get their share from the world and also to perform religious rituals in a religiously lawful way, appropriate materiality in various ways. So, Islam, by organizing all aspects of the daily life of a believer and shaping the believer's whole practice, can be seen as the daily life itself of the believer. Invoking Islam's emphasis on the routine and embedded structure of daily life of Muslims again, it can be argued that Islam is a practice in the sense of routinized type of behaviour where, as Reckwitz (2002) defines, any practice involves "forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, things and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how states of emotion and motivational knowledge". It can be argued that Islam is a practice, which means that Islamic faith is embedded in the daily life of a devout Muslim and it reproduces its own routines, practices and daily structure and produces its mundane practices in every aspects of life. In the next part of this section, how this broad discourse of Islam on materiality and everyday informs daily life of a Muslim in the socio-cultural context of Turkey will be focused on.

among themselves in order that living memory of Muhammad's example might influence the community. As preferred for subsequent generations these reports or hadith, take the form of usually short unconnected pieces, each of which preceded by a list of its authoritative transmitters." (Speight, 2009).

¹Sunnah is the actions and sayings of the prophet Muhammad. These "complemented the divinely revealed message of the Qur'an and embodied a paradigm and a model, constituting a source for establishing norms for Muslim conduct" (Nanji, 2009).

² Tarikas are the religious sects in the context of Islam.

2.2.3 Islam in Turkey

Turkey represents the only example of a country of secular Islam (Saktanber, 2002b). There is a set of histories and intricate relationships between ideology, politics, economy, and culture that forms the social structure of the country. As a collection of ethnographic studies on Turkey edited by Kandiyoti and Saktanber (2002), *Fragments of Culture*, demonstrates that the cultural structure of Turkey is fragmented into plural forms.

The Turkish Republic was founded by the elites of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. The elite, who later became the founders of the Turkish Republic, defined themselves “more in tune with the West” (Mardin, 2006: 251). These elites, due to their educational background in modern schools, were critical of the Ottoman state system and law that were mainly influenced by the Sharia rules, which are the rules that regulate state law and moral codes according to Islamic principles (Mardin, 2006). Furthermore, there was “the secret conviction of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk that Islam was one of the primary causes for the ‘backwardness’ of the Ottoman Empire” (Mardin, 2006: 233). So, a state structure based on Islamic rules was stated problematic. Therefore, laicisation of the Turkish Republic was realised by demolishing its links with the Islamic Ottoman Empire (Mardin, 2006; Kandiyoti, 2002) and after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Atatürk and the political elite of the Republic who were “oriented towards an urban, secular Western lifestyle” made some reforms (White, 2002: 192). These reforms, from language to alphabet from clothing to the comportment of the sexes in public life, are referred to as an “onslaught” on the Ottoman social life by Kandiyoti (2002: 10), as these imply the dramatic changes in the traditional, conservative, Islamic, rural lifestyle supported by the Ottoman Empire (Kandiyoti, 2002; White, 2002; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Saktanber, 1995). White (2002: 192) explains the social structure formed due to these foundation processes of the young Republic as follows:

“Early republican Turkey was mostly rural and relatively undifferentiated in terms of social class. The political elites were characterized less by their economic standing than by their literate education and orientation toward an urban, secular Western lifestyle far from the lifestyle of the rural provincial population, in which Islam played a fundamental role.”

Literacy and closeness to the Western lifestyle were regarded as the traits of development and the signs of belonging to upper social class groups, and a complex web of relationships between religion and progress has evolved within the context of Turkish Republic's westernisation movement. Saktanber (1995: 88) states that the word "backwardist" (*gerici*), on a mythical plane of signification, is connotatively associated with "religious opposer to progress and development", and these two terms, *progress* and *development*, are also associated with westernisation and modernization. Therefore, the word 'backwardist' (signifier) which refers to a person who is opposing to progress and development (signified) "becomes the signifier of a specific sign: '*religionist*' at the connotative level" (Saktanber, 1995: 87).

As Mardin (2006: 260) states "the history of Islam in nineteenth-and twentieth-century Turkey has usually been appraised as the experience of the declining influence of Islam and the triumph of secularisation". With the start of multi-partyism in 1946, and education becoming incumbent on every citizen, new career paths were created for people both from cities and provinces (White, 2002). So, various social groups gained visibility in political life. Islamic ideologies from 1980s onwards, started to "constitute themselves as an alternative to western-oriented secular modernisation" (Saktanber, 1995: 25), which is referred to as Islamic revitalisation or resurgence. White (2002: 193) summarizes how the pursuit of Islamic ideologies in combination with cultural structure gained expressive character:

"The traditional social cleavages in Turkey between conservative Islamic rural lifestyle and westernised urban secular elite were linked to national institutions (the bureaucracy, the military, schools, universities, folkloric clubs etc.) through which the state has tried to propagate its concept of a secular, westernised citizen. Thus when conservative rural people gained sufficient political mass in the 1980s and began to create an alternative urban culture, their own institutions, and to change the nature of the schools and bureaucracy, the contest was perceived to be one of identity (urban/non-urban, secular/Islamist) to which the other characteristics of urban poor, such as their class position, was subordinated."

Based on the fundamental drive of the conflict between the seculars and Islamic groups, identity discourse becomes the core of Islamic daily life and identity expression (Saktanber, 2002; Navaro-Yashin, 2002, Sandıkçı and Ger, 2010). "Islamists came to forge identities in

distinction from secularists” as Navaro-Yashin points out (2002: 223). They wore different kinds of clothes, ate different kinds of food, and bought these goods from specialized shops, which are enabled by the market innovation brought about by Turgut Özal (Navaro-Yashin, 2002: 223). In 1980s, when Turgut Özal, the earlier prime minister, who himself was raised in a religious family in a provincial town in Turkey, was elected as the 8th president of the Turkish Republic, he encouraged the Islamic capital to make investments as well as the secular capital (Navaro-Yashin, 2002). Economic liberalisation, privatisation and opening to the world market in the same period resulted in economic ‘boom’ (Kandiyoti, 2002; White, 2002; Navaro-Yashin, 2002). Moreover, multinational companies such as Colgate, which introduced the *misvak*¹-flavoured toothpaste, and other clothing companies were interested in Islamic market and got their share in Turkish marketplace (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2007). Kandiyoti (2002) argues that “the fragmentation brought about by political economy of post-1980s, precipitated both a greater fragmentation of social identities and an increasing complexity in their public articulation”.

Navaro-Yashin (2002) argues based on her study focusing on commodification that, veiling has become an object of political identity expression, through which believing Muslims differentiate themselves and further their ideology. Sandıkçı and Ger (2010), who are also focusing on veiling, argue that next to the political identity discourse reflected on outlook, personalisation and aestheticization of practices are also important dynamics for the Turkish market. As they further (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2010: 32) argue that “religion, like other institutional and social structures such as gender, class, and ethnicity, influences consumption choices and provides individuals with another set of resources and ideals for identity construction.”

Islam, which is argued to be life itself, presents itself in every aspect of daily life of a Muslim by informing his/her fundamental attitudes towards materiality and daily practices. Hence, in the context of Turkish everyday in combination with the drive for a modernized and westernised lifestyle, Islamic faith produces intricate relationships. Islam functions in producing and reproducing practices and becomes an important ingredient informing identity conflict in the society. In the following section the specificity of the ritual prayer

¹ “According to the Muslim faith, because it was used by the prophet, cleaning the teeth with *misvak* is regarded as part of the *sunna*” (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2007: 194).

practices in which prayer beads and counters are used will be explained to understand the practical use context of these objects.

2.3 Specificity of Prayer Practices and Prayer Beads

Along with the general information on socio-cultural context, the use context of prayer beads and mechanical and digital counters, and prayer practices, during which these objects are used, should be explored on. The specific character of these practices, the place of these in daily life and use of prayer beads for the accomplishment of these practices and the specificity within Turkish everyday should be focused on to understand the specific context of prayer beads and mechanical and digital counters.

2.3.1 Counting Prayers and History of Prayer Beads

People pray for many reasons. Every religious community and everybody have their own way of praying, and meanings attached to prayer (Mosher, 2005). For Iqbal (1930), praying is an intrinsic act, as human subjects can only be satisfied in an ideal world. Similarly, for Kelly (2004), humans hope that the current situation will change by praying. So, people pray to God to ask for help or remedy (Apaydın, 1999; Kelly, 2004), to unite with God (Kelly, 2004), or to achieve a spiritual illumination (Iqbal, 1930).

In all these prayer practices keeping up with some certain numbers of prayers, thus counting appears as a core issue. And objects have been used, appropriated and adapted to be able to count prayers. Counting and praying have become more obsessive practices for religious people where the prayer beads which are the objects used to accompany these practices by providing tactual stimuli, are utilized to concentrate the attention on the prayer practice itself (Kelly, 2004; Tenny-Brittian, 2005) so that the object also becomes central to this obsessive pervasive practice.

Unfortunately, there is no record of how, when or why the practice of counting prayers was initiated, nor when the beads started to be used for counting practice. Yet, it can be inferred that counting prayers precedes 'prayer beads' since etymological sources state that

the word 'bead' was derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'bede' which means to pray (Klein, 1966; Doerr and Owens, 2007; Tenny-Brittian, 2005; Wiley and Shannon 2002; John D. Miller, 2002).

Likewise, the history of prayer beads is rather ambiguous and a systematic historical record cannot be found. In every religion and culture there are different worshipping rituals and different numbers of prayers devoted as a worshipping practice each day. Accordingly, the number of beads on prayer beads varies and ways of counting differ.

First, about 5000 years ago, Hindus were known to count their prayers by using pebbles in a pouch (Tenny- Birttian, 2005; Sarıcı, 2008; Doerr and Owens 2007; John D. Miller, 2002). Also knotted rope, both as a counting tool in general or for counting prayers in specific, was a common tool (John D. Miller, 2002). Prayer beads, similar to their contemporary form of beads lined up on a string, date back to before 7th century A.D. (Yıldırım, 1971).

Hindus, depending on the sect, used different prayer beads with different amount of beads (John D. Miller, 2002). Those who pray to Siva would use 32 beads (John D. Miller, 2002), with larger beads of darker colours (Sarıcı, 2008) (Figure 2.1), while those who pray to Vishnu would use 108 beads (Miller, John D., 2002), with smaller beads of lighter colour (Sarıcı, 2008) (Figure 2.2).



Figure 2.1 Hindu prayer beads for praying to Siva (accessed on Aug 7, 2011, from http://www.asbramchic.com/Asbram_Chic/shop.html)



Figure 2.2 Hindu prayer beads for praying to Vishnu (accessed on Aug 7, 2011, from http://sivacom.net/kore/index.php?main_page=popup_image&pID=4)

Buddhists are known to use prayer beads with 108 beads (Figure 2.3), which is the number of desires that a Buddhist needs to overcome to achieve Nirvana (Doerr and Owens, 2007). Also some columns around sacred buildings or number of punishments or volumes of sacred writings belonging to Buddhist culture are known to hold the same amount of number (John D. Miller, 2002). However, there are no clear indications which comes first to give Buddhist prayer beads their bead number. The short version of Buddhist prayer beads consists of 18 beads, which represents the main apostles of Buddha.



Figure 2.3 Wooden prayer beads with 108 beads (*accessed on July 2, 2011, from <http://www.josssticksandgems.co.uk/Meditation%20Tools.htm>*)

Judaism is stated as not having used prayer beads (Sarıcı, 2008) and there is no record of special tradition explained for Jews.

Christians, depending on the sect or the monastery's tradition use different number of beads (Sarıcı, 2008; Doerr and Owens, 2007). Some use the prayer beads with 33 beads, where the amount 33 represents the number of days Christ lived on earth after his resurrection (Doerr and Owens, 2007). Some use prayer beads that have 150 beads, in which every 15 times of 10 divisions are spotted by differently shaped beads (Sarıcı, 2008). Some others use prayer beads with 150 beads, which have 3 parts of 50 beads. Each set of prayers are distinguished in distinct ways such as differently coloured or differently shaped

beads (Figure 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6). It can be seen that the object has been shaped and appropriated to be able to accomplish the practice of counting.



Figure 2.4 Prayer beads in which prayers are distinguished by colours of the beads (*accessed on July 2, 2011, from http://www.cluthas-ave.com/index.php?p=1_2&PHPSESSID=26fb04eb53a2d13ab691db9cb62fd17*)



Figure 2.5 Prayer beads in which prayers are distinguished by shape of the beads (*accessed on July 2, 2011, from http://www.solitariesofdekoven.org/assets/pb02_lrg.jpg*)

In some sects to obey the command “pray without ceasing” (1.Thess 5:17, in Tenny-Brittian, 2005) excess amounts of prayers, such as 12000 times a day which basically encompasses whole of the day, are prayed (Tenny-Brittian, 2005).

There are also other forms of prayer beads such as in the form of a fish. As the initials in Latin phrase ‘Iessus Christi Theoyios Soter’ (Son of God holy Christ) forms the word ‘ichtys’, which means fish in Latin, the symbol of fish is sacred for Christians (Sarici, 2008). Therefore, prayer beads in the shape of fish consisting of 8, 9, 11 beads are used as well (Figure 2.7 and 2.8).



Figure 2.6 Christian prayer beads with cruxifix (accessed on July 2, 2011, from <http://www.pas-jablonec.cz/en/religious-rosaries.html>)



Figure 2.7 Prayer bead in the shape of fish (accessed at July 2, 2011, from http://urun.gittigidiyor.com/11-LI-BALIK-TESTBIH-ZAZA-TESTBIHI-BALIK-TESTBIH_W0QQidZZ38013020#aciklama)



Figure 2.8 Prayer bead in the shape of fish (accessed at July 2, 2011, from http://www.tesbicibaba.com.tr/resim_goster.asp?img=images/products/00/08/58/858_buyuk_1.jpg)

After they had been forbidden during Reformation and especially recently from 1980s onwards, there is a renewed interest in praying with the praying beads in USA (Doerr and Owens, 2007). Besides the spiritual functions the very materiality of prayer beads is emphasized for the bonding with the divine during the praying practice. The tactual stimuli that accompanies prayer and the repetitive movement are stated as beneficial for the span of concentration and feeling the prayer for meditative purposes (Wiley and Shannon 2002; Doerr and Owens, 2007; Trenny-Brittian, 2005). Especially for those who are diagnosed with ADHD, it is advised to pray by using prayer beads (Trenny-Brittian, 2005).

2.3.2 Counting Prayers and Muslim Tespîh in Turkey

Muslims as well, except for Wahhabis¹, have been using prayer beads to count their prayers. As in many other cultures, counting is the core of their practice and therefore, prayer beads are central to this practice. Muslims call their prayer beads *tasbeih*, in modern Turkish *tespîh* (Wesnick, 2009), which is derived from the Arabic root “sebh” (Yıldırım, 1971). It means to respect Allah or to “accelerate” in worshipping Allah (Yıldırım, 1971: 9). There are several worshipping acts in which *tespîh* is used in Turkish Islamic context, which implies for the close relationship between worshipping Allah and *tespîh*. Therefore, for Turkish context the word *tespîh* will be used in this study.

Likewise, as will be introduced later, adaptation from other domains which find specific usage in Turkish Islamic context such as mechanical and digital counters will be referred to as *zikirmatik*, which is the name given to these objects by the participants of the field study. Also the phrase for the *tespîh* used in *salat* will also be used as *namağ tesbîhi* sticking to the terminology of participants of this study.

In Islam, faith on its own is not sufficient; a proper Muslim has to practice his belief by performing worshipping practices to show his belief in Allah fully (Harman, 1999; Bardakoğlu, 1999; Kılavuz, 1999; Altıkulaç, 1999; Apaydın, 1999). One has to practice to repeat, reinforce, improve, enhance and enrich his conduit. Several objects aid these practices. *Tespîh* is the most prevalent of these as it aids counting, which is the core of

¹ Wahhabis are a *tarika* in Islam and they disapprove of prayer beads as it is a *bid'ah* (reprehensible innovation)

these prayer practices. There are two sorts of worshipping practices in Islam in which prayers are counted; thus accompanied by tespih: *Salat*-daily ritual prayer and *Dhikr*-allusion.

Salat is one of the five requirements of belief in Islam that is performed five times a day but, devout Muslims may choose to do more than five. It is important to keep up with salat times and Muslims are expected to be punctual, as missing the times or performing the salat in forbidden time intervals are regarded as sins (Apaydın, 1999). Every adolescent Muslim is required to perform the salat, except for women who are having their menstruation. Salat, as stated in Qur'an helps to keep people away from evil or sin and it is stated as a moment of joining, remembering and honouring Allah (Apaydın, 1999). Moreover, as stated by the Prophet Muhammad, salat is the first thing to be asked of Muslims on the day of judgement (Hadith: Tirmizi, Salat, 188, in Apaydın, 1999). Also it is encouraged in the Qur'an to perform the salat: "...keep up the prayer: prayer restrains outrageous and unacceptable behaviour. Remembering God is greater..." (*The Qur'an: Al-Ankebut, 45*) Hence, it is a meritorious and important practice for Muslims.

In this central worshipping practice, devout Muslims use tespih. It was advised by the prophet Muhammed, to recite 33 times *Subhanallah* (*Glory be to Allah*), 33 times *Alhamdulillah* (*Praise be to Allah*) and 33 times *Allahuakbar* (*Allah is great*), after each salat (Yıldırım, 1971). The prophet Muhammad was sensitive on numbers in general so, Muslims pay utmost attention to keeping the numbers. To be precise, Muslims in Turkey use *namaz tesbihi* for counting prayers for salat. *Namaz tesbihi* consists of 99 beads and there is an indicator bead after every 33 to inform about the change of prayer (Figure 2.9). Some tarika within Islam, pray the first prayer 34 times so their tespihs are arranged accordingly having an indicator bead after 34 beads, and in this case their *namaz tesbihi* consists of 100 beads (Sarıcı, 2008).



Figure 2.9 Namaz tesbihi with 99 beads that has an indicator bead after each 33 beads

Dhikr, is a kind of prayer (Parladır, 1988), it is a remembrance of Allah (Kassam, 2006; Sells, 2009). Dhikr of Allah, either by reciting one of His good qualities or His name, Allah, or His Messenger, is a devotional act that reinforces one’s bonds with Allah, is a communication with Allah, is appraisal to Him, as well as emphasis of His glory (Kassam, 2006; Cilacı, 1988; Yıldırım, 1971). The following verse explains the importance of dhikr: “... Remember Me, and I will remember you” (*The Qur’an: Al-Baqara, 152*). Prophet Muhammed as well, emphasized the importance of dhikr in his words (Miller, John D., 2002): “Verily, there are 99 names of God and whoever recites them shall enter into Paradise.” “Whoever recites tespîh ‘I extol the holiness of God’ and tahmid, ‘God be praised’ a hundred times, morning and evening, will have all his sins forgiven”.

Although it is not one of the five pillars, due to the good deeds promised for those who perform dhikr, devout Muslims try to dhikr as much as possible. So, they spend most of their time by praying and counting these prayers. To count the extreme numbers that the prayers are recited in these pervasive practices, Muslims use tespîh with 100, 500 or 1000 beads (Figure 2.10) or zikirmatik. In Qur’an the words “tespîh” or “dhikr” are used interchangeably. *To dhikr* or *to tespîh* is asked of Muslims as stated in the Qur’an (Yıldırım 1971). So tespîh becomes the central object for this pervasive practice.



Figure 2.10 Tespib with 500 beads

The significance of tespib can be pointed out to be due to the fact that one of the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad was realized with tespib. As Yavuz (2006) argues, such stories and miracles that are told in holy books, attach symbolic value to random objects thus those objects are regarded as sacred objects. According to sahabah¹, notables of the city asked the Prophet Muhammad how they would understand that Muhammad was a prophet. Muhammad responded by saying that the pebbles in his hand would witness his prophecy. The pebbles in his hand started *to tespib Allah*. So, those who saw and heard the dhikr of pebbles accepted Islam (Sarıcı, 2008). It can be argued that, since the myths explains that one of the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad was realized with prayer beads and as it is advised in Qur'an and Hadith the tespib is sacred for Muslims. Also, the statements of the obligation to pray a lot and that tespib and salat will be asked of Muslims in the judgement day, result in attachment of symbolic meanings to the object. As Yavuz (2006) argues, it is the symbolic value of the objects that they gain through the stories told about them. He explains that the objects in which the sacred is realized, gains symbolic value. He gives the example of Moses' stick, with which He realized several miracles, as

¹Sahabah (sahabe in Turkish) were the companions, disciples, scribes and family of Prophet Muhammad, and by later scholars their testimony was accepted as "basis of the developing Islamic tradition" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahabah>, accessed on Aug 7, 2011).

explained in the Qur'an: "Remember when Moses prayed for water for his people and We said to him, 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Twelve springs gushed out..." (*The Qur'an: Al-Bakara, 60*). This object, Moses' stick, gains sacredness, moreover symbolizes Allah's unbounded power and almighty. As Yavuz (2006), argues, these random objects due to miracles Allah realized over them, dissociate from profane and become sacred. Moreover, these objects symbolize an aspect of Allah, related to the story. It can be argued that for Islam, tespih is associated with belief in and closeness to Allah.

Therefore, due to its practicality and sacred connotations tespihs are prevalently used in Turkey. Sarıcı (2008), who is a notable collector of tespih in Turkey observes an interesting formal approach, stating that in the West (namely the Christian world) beads are fixed in a chain as the Christians use the praying beads only for praying, but in the East (Muslims) beads move freely on a string as they are also used to spend time or for leisure as well.

Indeed in Turkey prayer beads are used for several other purposes, besides being used to count prayers. Sarıcı (2008: 128) lists in his book *Pieces for Prayer* (The Turkish title of the book is *Dua Taneleri*), the function of tespih as follows: Tespih is a(n),

- 1- proudly demonstrated collection item in various exhibitions
- 2- accessory
- 3- means of expressing fanaticism (Figure 2.11)
- 4- convenient tool to relieve stress
- 5- meditative tool
- 6- sign for rowdiness, when swing at hand
- 7- tool that makes the brain focus on it thus helps fighting with addictions
- 8- thing that prevents expression of aggression
- 9- colour passion (as some beads change colour within usage)
- 10- passion for material (especially in amber)
- 11- symbol of character
- 12- distinguishing symbol for tarikas
- 13- tool to aid in dhikr
- 14- tool used for counting prayers
- 15- tool for naming the 99 names of Allah
- 16- tool for counting 33 times three prayers at the end of salat
- 17- a crafts piece...



Figure 2.11 Tespih which shows fanaticism, the colour of the beads stands for a football club in Turkey

Based on the above list of the functions of tespih, it can be argued that tespih is used for conveying social messages, personal betterment and counting prayers within the Turkish context. Besides the practical functionality of these also individual, social and spiritual meanings are attached to tespihs. They are personal objects which are carried at hand and which are highly visible. Therefore, there are various tespih with different aesthetic properties, which address different personal tastes. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, tespih will be explored by focusing on the counting prayer practice of devout Muslims.

2.3.3 Non-traditional Products for Counting Prayers: Tespihs, Zikirmatiks and Virtual Applications

In Turkish market, next to traditional manual tespih, there are non-traditional tools such as mechanical or digital counters which are adapted for counting prayers and renamed as

zikirmatik. There are also software applications for mobile phones, tablet PCs etc. The products for counting can be categorized under four headings: manual products-tespih, mechanical products-mechanical zikirmatik, digital products-digital zikirmatik of different sorts and virtual products- software applications and mobile phone applications which work through haptic feedback.

There is no systematic account of how this practice of counting come to existence nor how and when an ensemble of products for this purpose was adapted, appropriated or started to be used in Turkey. So, there is no record about these objects of any sorts. Therefore, to form this section on the recent history of tespih, products on the Turkish market are surveyed, by visiting blogs, forums and online shopping sites and visiting two religious sites in Turkey, namely Hacı Bayram in Ankara and Eyüp Sultan in İstanbul, which supply products for the purposes of religious worshipping practices. Also the information collected from the semi-structured interviews with shopkeepers in Hacı Bayram on the history, meaning and use of tespih and zikirmatik are used to demonstrate the current products. Therefore, reliability of these sources should remain as a question.

According to information derived from the interviews, products sold in these sites are introduced to market by retailers who are situated mostly in Konya, Turkey. Also those who went to Mecca to perform their Hajj (pilgrimage) or Umrah visits brought new products as souvenirs for their relatives. As the shopkeepers say textiles such as prayer rug, veiling and tesettür and craftworks such as tespih or silver Zamzam Water service set were produced in Turkey. However, recently, with the introduction of Islamic versions of small electronic appliances, electronic products started to be imported from China. As the shopkeepers explain, entrepreneurs from Turkey propose an idea and agree on the cheapest design with manufacturers in China. So, these products are manufactured in China and imported to Turkey. It can be argued that this production process based on low-cost manufacturing might be the reason for most electronic and plastic products to resemble other small electronic appliances.

Until recently, only tespihs with 99, 100, 500, or 1000 beads have been sold at these sites. The differentiation between tespihs was based on the materials used to produce the beads, the form of the beads and their alignment on the string. Plastics, different kinds of trees

such as olive tree, date-palm, rosewood, or shells or bones of animals, such as tortoise shell, or ivory, semiprecious stones such as cornelian, mother-of-pearl, turquoise, or gem stones such as emerald, sapphire, and types of amber are some of the materials of which the beads of tespih have been produced. Even rose water essence was added to the raw material of the beads to make scented tespih, which added a new sensational experience to counting prayers (Figure 2.12).



Figure 2.12 Rose water scented tespih of 99 beads

About 20 years ago, mechanical zikirmatik started to be sold at Hacı Bayram, as the shopkeepers in the site state. Mechanical zikirmatik has a form of cylindrical prism of a size that can more or the less fit in a palm, and has a diameter longer than its height (Figure 2.13). This mechanical zikirmatik is made up of metal and the surface has a shiny metal finishing. It has a mechanical screen on the round surface of the cylinder. If one is to grasp the mechanical zikirmatik at hand with the screen facing towards the user, there is a handle that can be worn around the index finger and a mechanical button that can be pressed by thumb. This mechanical button makes a ticking sound when pressed to count

prayers and the user sees the turning number plate on the mechanical screen. There is also a knob at the flat surface of the cylinder. This knob can be turned to reset the counter.



Figure 2.13 Mechanical zikirmatik

This is a simple mechanical counting tool, which has no indication that it was made for counting prayers. It seems to be a profane object for counting. Indeed, it is used in other contexts. For example, this object can be seen at the security check at the entrance of shopping malls, where it is used to count the customers entering the mall. According to shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram, these zikirmatiks are used to count animals at farms or to count products on an assembly line, yet, Muslims adapted it for counting prayers.

During the course of time, some zikirmatiks got specialized for Islamic purposes. There used to be versions of zikirmatiks that beeped after every 33 total, to signal for the change of prayer for Salat. According to shopkeepers, although customers bought and used these zikirmatiks, these are not sold in Hacı Bayram anymore, as retailers are not offering these.

In time, compasses were added to show the direction of Kaaba, where Muslims must head to, to perform Salat (Figure 2.14). This version of zikirmatik, although looks similar to shiny metal ones, is made up of plastics, yet it has a shiny metallic colour. It has a mechanical screen, as well, but, this time it is on the flat surface of the cylindrical prism. The mechanical button is still on the round surface but the product form of this version suggests a different grip. Hand grips the zikirmatik from the round surface. This grip provides a more comfortable and user friendly usage. However, this time the reset knob disturbs the hand. The handle is made up of a strap that suggests a more flexible attachment in comparison to the metal circle of the metal zikirmatik that fixes the grip. Also bolts of this version are camouflaged with plastic pieces placed on them. The cheap compass added to the back surface gets easily broken down, even while being displayed on the shop stands.



Figure 2.14 Front view and back view of mechanical zikirmatik, which has a compass embedded to the back side to show the direction of Mecca

These relatively large objects are making a lot of noise when the mechanical button is pressed to count the prayers. So, public usage of these is not preferable. Nevertheless, these mechanical zikirmatiks, which are manufactured in China by the order of retailers, are still sold at religious sites like Hacı Bayram and Eyüp Sultan and on online shopping sites for about 5 TL.

About five years ago, digital zikirmatiks were introduced. First version of these has a similar formal structure to the metal mechanical zikirmatik (Figure 2.15). It is still large, at the size of a palm, and is made up of plastics. There is a digital screen, a counting button and a reset button that are outlined with shiny grey colour, on the round surface of the cylinder. Rather than a shiny grey surface on one of the flat surfaces, it is completely black with a sportive look as if suggesting a stopwatch. The button for counting still makes a ticking sound. These are also priced the same as mechanical zikirmatik, about 5TL.



Figure 2.15 Digital zikirmatik

In time, different variations of digital zikirmatiks were introduced to market. Those were mostly applied forms of small electronic appliances, such as mp3 players (Figure 2.16) or tamagotchi toys (Figure 2.17). Probably the form and colour preferences were based on the available moulds and raw material that the manufactory had. Only the function was changed to turn them into a counting tool. According to shopkeepers in Hacı Bayram, the colours and forms of these zikirmatiks were used to distinguish between tarikas.



Figure 2.16 Digital zikirmatik in the shape of mp3 player



Figure 2.17 Digital zikirmatik in the shape of tamagotchi toy

With the introduction of *ring zikirmatiks*, which are smaller and can be worn around the finger like a ring (Figure 2.18), according to interviews, zikirmatik started to be more commonly used in daily life of Muslims. Ring zikirmatik has a plastic body at the size of a tip of the thumb. A tiny digital screen and a counting button are placed on the front side. There is a transparent silicone strap, which goes through the back side. This strap can be tied around a finger like a ring. The transparent strap is barely visible from the outside and the small body part remains within the palm. This version makes no ticking sound. So unless the user pays special attention to show the ring zikirmatik it is barely noticeable. So, ring zikirmatiks have been integrated into the daily life easily, as the interviews reveal. Keeping the large amount of numbers is easier with zikirmatik, and usage is more practical. Ring zikirmatik is cheaper than other versions and costs about 2TL.



Figure 2.18 Ring zikirmatik

Moreover, to aid people in counting their prayers, there are applications offered for mobile phones (Figure 2.19 and 2.20). For example, the iPhone application demonstrated in the pictures below works by moving the thumb as if rolling the beads of a tespih (Figure 2.21). In this case, prayers are counted with haptic interaction. In addition, there are software programs which can be downloaded to PCs and tablet PCs. These applications can be downloaded from forums, blogs and online application stores.



Figure 2.19 View of iPhone screen. A: the icon for “*praying the tespih*” application

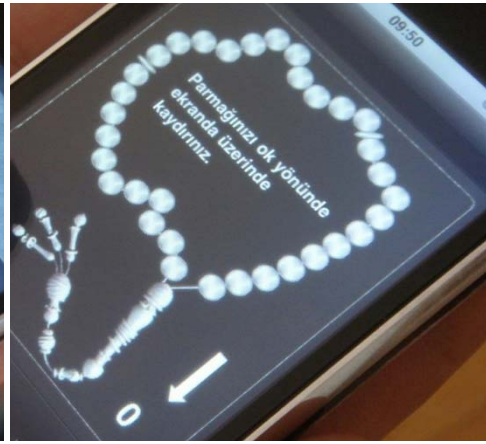


Figure 2.20 View of iPhone screen which explains how to use haptic tespih

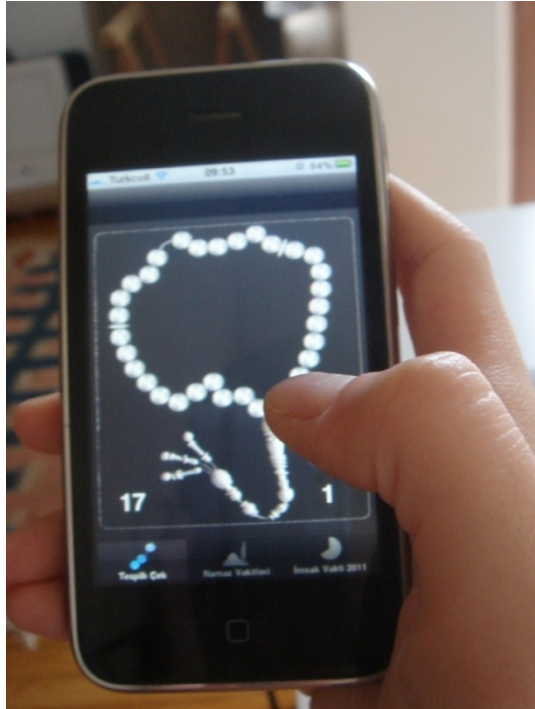


Figure 2.21 Counting prayers with iPhone

The current products and services in the market demonstrate a great variety of objects, from traditional taspah to adaptations from other product domains to virtual haptic applications, devoted to the practice of counting prayers. This pervasive, obsessive practice seems to create a variety of means for devout Muslims to accelerate in their conduit. Through these objects Muslims can keep an account of their improvement in their practices. The next chapter will explain the field study conducted to understand how and why these objects are used and adapted within everyday life of devout Muslims.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

3.1 Background

As explained in the introduction, this study is inspired by the introductory ethnographic study conducted on a religious site in Ankara, Hacı Bayram, within the scope of a graduate course entitled *Seminar on Ethnographic Field Research* which has been offered by the Social Anthropology Programme within the Department of Sociology at METU during the Spring semester of 2009-2010 academic year. The wide variety of products encountered at the site and the initial questions asked on these objects, led to the formulation of the aim and research questions of this thesis.

This inspirational introductory ethnographic study on the religious site Hacı Bayram and the subsequent visits to a similar site, Eyüp Sultan in İstanbul, and a general brief survey on religious media are explained in this section as they demonstrate the material culture of the sample group to which I was a total stranger. These background studies explain how I got familiar with the sample group, their ways of doing with objects and their everyday life which is organized around religious precepts. Even learning their discourse such as saying “May God be with you” instead of “Goodbye” and learning the specific ways of shaking hands in which they use their both hands and recite a prayer half whispering half audible were significant steps that enabled me to communicate in the field. Such details and getting familiar with their codes of conduct made it possible to navigate during the fieldwork where I interviewed devout Muslims. Therefore, these initial encounters are explained to demonstrate what sort of a background led to the accomplishment of the fieldwork for the thesis.

3.1.1 The Inspirational Ethnographic Study on Hacı Bayram in Ankara

Hacı Bayram is a sacred religious site located at the old town centre (*Ulus District*) of the capital city of Turkey, Ankara. The site consists of *the Mosque of Hacı Bayram Veli*¹ adjacent to *the shrine of Hacı Bayram Veli* and next to it lays *the Temple of Augustus*². Opposite to this worshipping complex, there is a shopping area. The larger area, expanding to *the Ulus Square* is called *Hacı Bayram Quarter* (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 Hacı Bayram Quarter (accessed at Jul 23, 2011, from <http://maps.google.com/maps>) marked
A: The Mosque of Hacı Bayram Veli, B: The Shrine of Hacı Bayram Veli, C: The Temple of Augustus,
D: shopping area, E: Ulus Square and the Monument of Atatürk

¹Hacı Bayram Veli was born on 1352 in Ankara, near Hacı Bayram. Hacı Bayram Veli was the founder of the Bayrami Tarika (Sümer, 1999). Named along with Hacı Bektaş Veli, Mevlana Cellaeddin Rumi, Yunus Emre, he is regarded as one of the notables of his time, who served for the enlightenment of people (Yalçın, 1999). He died in 1429, in Ankara, where his shrine is located today (Levend, 1946).

² The Temple of Augustus is an ancient Roman temple built in B.C. 25-B.C. 20.

During the three months, from March 2010 until June 2010, while the group of students from our social anthropology class were studying the site, *the Mosque of Hacı Bayram Veli* and its surrounding were going through rapid changes due to the renovation project that started around those times. The aim of the renovation, which was implemented by the Great Municipality of Ankara, was to develop Hacı Bayram as a centre of belief tourism in Ankara, although this site had already been regarded as one of such places in Turkey, which serves both for spiritual and also commercial functions. About a year later, on February 14, 2011, the mosque and its surrounding were reopened with a grandiose opening ceremony.



Figure 3.2 Women spending time or praying at the courtyard of *the Mosque of Hacı Bayram Veli*, before the renovation project

One day while I was sitting on the benches and spending time around the courtyard of the mosque I was somehow involved in a conversation: A woman asked me whether I was there to pray to succeed in the central university entrance exam. Before I had time to reply

another woman overhearing what the woman asked me asked whether offerings to *Hacı Bayram Veli* were responded. The first woman who talked to me replied “Oh, I trust *Hacı Bayram Veli* a lot” and explained her story of not being able to get pregnant, and how her wish came true by coming to Hacı Bayram and offering some 7000 prayers for 7 consecutive Fridays. She told that she recently made another wish for her husband to get a job, and this also came true, so she was there to accomplish another 7000 prayers for 7 consecutive Fridays. She took out her tespih from her pocket and started to count her prayers (Figure 3.2. and 3.3).



Figure 3.3 Young women praying the tespih at the courtyard of *the Mosque of Hacı Bayram Veli*

The shopping complex consists of small shops lined in a row (Figure 3.4), where souvenirs of *Hacı Bayram Veli* and all other sorts of products that are required for various religious practices are sold. According to shopkeepers in the site, there are two places in Turkey that

mainly serve for all the needs of a Muslim, one is Hacı Bayram in Ankara and the other is Eyüp Sultan in İstanbul, therefore, people from all over Turkey, from all sorts of background and from almost all social classes come to visit Hacı Bayram.



Figure 3.4 A view from the shopping stores of Hacı Bayram

Shops offer a wide variety of products, which are not only meeting the needs of devout Muslims, but also from nutrition to electronics, from textile to books, from cosmetics to souvenirs, demonstrate a developed market (Figure 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7).



Figure 3.5 A view from the stand of a shop at Hacı Bayram that demonstrates the variety of products sold at the area



Figure 3.6 A view from the stand of a shop at Hacı Bayram



Figure 3.7 A view from the inside of a shop at Hacı Bayram that demonstrates the variety of products sold at the area

As in every touristic place, souvenirs are sold at the shops. However, they are not exclusively specific to *Hacı Bayram Veli*. Most souvenirs are plaques to be hang on the wall (Figure 3.8) or calligraphic statues to stand alone (Figure 3.9), that are inscribed with *Allah* or *Muhammad*'s names or with certain prayers. These inscriptions are applied with some apparent aesthetic concern rather than plainly writing Allah or Muhammad in Arabic.



Figure 3.8 Plaques on which Allah and Muhammad's name are inscribed



Figure 3.9 Caligraphic statues in aestheticised forms of Arabic word for Allah

Bottled Zamzam water (Figure 3.10) is another example of these souvenirs. There are various forms of bottles in which holy water from Mecca is contained. Despite some forms such as hand-grenade (Figure 3.10 on the left), these water bottles made of PET are regular bottles. The graphics on the bottle have some pictures from Mecca and Arabic letters.

For the worshipping practices there are various products considering specific occasions. For example, for people who are mobile during the day, and who need to perform their salat in different places, there are pocket-size portable prayer rugs (Figure 3.11), so that they can both feel free to travel and accomplish their worshipping practice hygienically in an Islamically appropriate way.



Figure 3.10 Bottled Zamzam water



Figure 3.11 Pocket-size portable prayer rugs

There is also a wide variety of products to aid in Hajj duty, ranging from specialized orthopedic slippers to ornamented '*ehram*', from specialized undershirt to specialized hand bags. *Ehram*, worn during Hajj duty while submitting oneself to Allah, is supposed to be a plain white loose dress. This symbolizes that all Muslims are equal in the eyes of Allah. However, for aesthetic concerns, ornamented *ehram* is popular among customers.

Since it is known that there is pick-pocketing around Kaaba¹, the shopkeepers constantly warn their customers and offer them either specialized undershirt against pick-pocketing (Figure 3.12) that has an inner pocket sewn in which pilgrims can store their money and identity cards safely, or the specialized hand bag to keep their money or identity cards. The hand bag is not significantly different from a little bag, which is hung diagonally from shoulder to hip, to wear under the ehram, but Hajj undershirt against pick-pocketing is completely innovative and specific to Islamic use context. Besides, for those who cannot go to Mecca to perform Hajj pilgrimage there is 3D Mecca-visit offered by the shops at Hacı Bayram (Figure 3.13).



Figure 3.12 Specialized undershirt against burglary that has an inner pocket sewn, in which pilgrims can store their money and identity cards safely



Figure 3.13 3D Mecca visit

¹ “Kaaba” is a cube-shaped building in Mecca, and it is regarded as the most sacred site in Islam. Muslims who come to Mecca to perform their Hajj or Umrah pilgrimage circle around the Kaaba seven times.

Some products that are specifically targeted for children are also interesting to demonstrate the extent of products in the market. Although, children, for the boys until the age of 14 and for the girls until their menstruation starts, are not responsible from religious duties, to teach the life-style, values and practices of worshipping, there is a wide variety of products aimed at children, ranging from Islamic versions of common board games such as Monopoly (Figure 3.14) to praying doll, *Elif*¹, which are dressed according to Islamic dress codes, recites verses from Qur'an, sings hymns and explains the five pillars of Islam (Figure 3.15), from laptops teaching verses from Qur'an (Figure 3.16) to photo-camera imitations showing views from Mecca (Figure 3.17). Most of these products have photographs of Kaabe or mosques that are stuck on them, but their forms are similar to their common versions or common electronic goods.



Figure 3.14 An Islamic version of a board game for children

¹ *Elif* is a name for women in Turkish, *Elif* is also the first letter of the Alphabet of Arabic Language.



Figure 3.15 Praying doll *Elif* for girls that prays and recites the five pillars of Islam



Figure 3.16 Laptops for children that teach verses from Qur'an and prayers for salat



Figure 3.17 Photo-camera imitations showing views from Mecca for children

There is also a wide variety of cosmetic products, produced according to Islamic precepts. These cosmetics do not contain any ingredient, which is produced from the items that are forbidden in the Qur'an, such as alcohol or lard, or conservatives produced of these (The Qur'an: *Al-Bakara* 168, 172, 173, 219; *Al-Maida* 3).

*Pilgrimage fragrance*¹ is an example of Islamically appropriate cosmetics (Figure 3.18). Devout Muslims believe that alcohol in perfumes will be absorbed through their skin. Since consuming alcohol is forbidden in Islam, they use non-alcoholic essences that are named as *pilgrimage fragrance*. Most of the time these essences are named after known brands such as Davidoff (Figure 3.19). There are also non-alcoholic mosque spray (Figure 3.20). Since applying kohl² on the eye lids is a Sunnah, there is a variety of kohl and products offered to store kohl, such as kohl which has its own mirror attached (Figure 3.21) or pencil shaped kohl that has a pencil sharpener on the lid (Figure 3.22) or little containers of various sorts made of brass or silver to store powder kohl.

¹ *Pilgrimage fragrance* is translated from the Turkish phrase *haci misi*.

² Kohl means eye liner.



Figure 3.18 Pilgrimage Fragrance



Figure 3.19 Pilgrimage Fragrance; Davidoff essence



Figure 3.20 Mosque spray



Figure 3.21 Kohl



Figure 3.22 Kohl with a pencil sharpener attached to its cap

As an M.Sc. student in Industrial Design, within the scope of the course on ethnographic field research, I studied the material culture of Hacı Bayram over the products sold at the shopping area. Within the framework of this introductory study, I regularly visited three shops there on a weekly basis for three months. At the very beginning, without having a structured question in my mind, I just spent time in the shops and listened to customers and shopkeepers to get information with unstructured-interviews on how they relate to products and to commercial market. Later, I decided to focus my exemplary ethnographic study on the dilemma of shopkeepers. Shopkeepers were trying to live their lives as proper Muslims according to religious precepts but on the other hand they were practicing against their religious principles such as unjust profit, or unfair trade. The below quotation explains the dilemma of these shopkeepers as expressed by one of them:

“Everything is commercial. Isn’t design for commercial benefit? Somebody sew an inner pocket to an undershirt and sells it for seven Liras instead of three Liras. Everything is for economic reasons. I, myself, am trying to sell tespihs in the name of God. It is easy to sell that what is beloved, it is easy to sell in a place like Hacı Bayram. I wish I had enough money to quit this job. Being a shopkeeper at Hacı Bayram should not be like that!”

Variety of products and well-developed religious market that I encountered raised several questions inspiring this study. The material culture of the sample group was tempting to inquire into. Having been educated as an industrial designer I considered relating my own educational background to my initial questions on how people relate to these products.

Moreover, these products were used for the accomplishment of some tasks, and new products were being introduced at the area, which probably influenced the way people relate to these products and practices that these products enable. By integrating a wide repertoire of objects to their daily life, devout Muslims can organize their daily life according to religious precepts.

3.1.2 Visits to Eyüp Sultan

After completing the introductory ethnographic study, during the process of formulating the main questions and the scope of my thesis study, I made several unstructured visits to Hacı Bayram, and also visited a similar site in İstanbul, Eyüp Sultan, to familiarize myself with the field and products sold in the religious sites in Turkey. I continued collecting data by gathering sample products from the Islamic market, documenting these products by taking photos if possible, making unstructured observations and inquiries, and taking notes about all the process in the form of a field diary.

Eyüp Sultan in İstanbul, which is a sacred religious site similar to Hacı Bayram, consists of a mosque, a shrine and small shops and restaurants. Eyüp Sultan as well offers both spiritual and commercial functions for devout Muslims. During the holy month, *Ramadan*, when Muslims are fasting, there is a tradition of breaking the fast at the courtyard of *the Mosque of Eyüp Sultan* (Figure 3.23). On August 2010, on one of these fasting days and later in September 2010, and in January 2011, I made several visits to the site to examine the products sold at the site.

As in Hacı Bayram, souvenirs are sold at Eyüp Sultan (Figure 3.24). These souvenirs are mostly figures or plaques with prayers or Allah's or Muhammad's names inscribed that are decorated with carved ornaments or flowers.



Figure 3.23 People gathered at Eyüp Sultan to break the fast (*accessed at Jul 7, 2011, from <http://img.internethaber.com/other/6.20090822073851..jpg>*)



Figure 3.24 Figures with prayers inscribed on them, that are sold as souvenirs

Products for children are more varied in Eyüp Sultan. In addition to similar products in Hacı Bayram such as board games (Figure 3.25), there are prayer rugs of kid's size (Figure

3.26) and VCDs teaching Qur'an are promoted on LCD televisions, which are installed at the shop stands (Figure 3.25).



Figure 3.25 Board games and VCDs teaching Qur'an for children

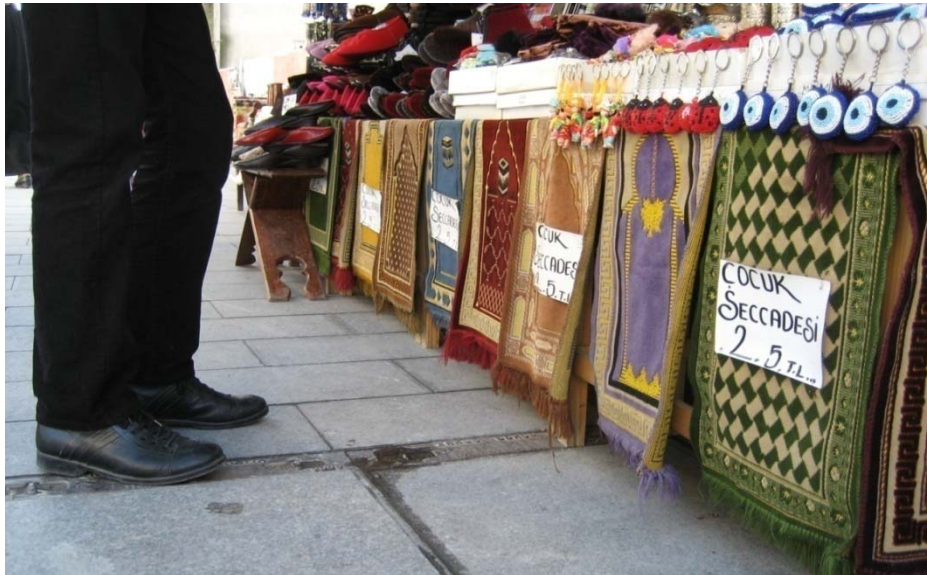


Figure 3.26 Kid's size prayer rugs for children

There are differently categorized products in Eyüp Sultan. For example, in Turkey, people attach or hang *cevşen*¹ on their bodies, clothing or possessions for protection against evil forces. Although such charms are forbidden in Islam this application is continuing in Turkey. People attach *cevşen* to their new-born babies, or hang them on the rear mirror of their cars. In Eyüp Sultan *cevşen* is specialized for such specific usages and promoted as *cevşen* for babies, *cevşen* for cars, or prayers for cars (Figure 3.27).



Figure 3.27 Cevşen for cars, Cevşen for babies, beaded prayer, prayers for car, *Enam Prayer* for cars (from left to right respectively)

The following example of alarm clock can be argued to be specialized to Islamic culture in the same manner. The form symbolizing Arabic origin standing for Mecca and Islam are applied to an alarm clock, which informs people five times a day on salat times (Figure 3.28).

¹ “Cevşen” is a prayer written on a piece of paper, which is wrapped in a cloth.



Figure 3.28 Islamic alarm clock, which informs about salat times

Hafız¹ Pen, which is a pen that plays Qur'an from a recording or that can recognize the Arabic alphabet and recite what is written in the text are popular at Eyüp Sultan, even though they are significantly expensive in comparison to all the other products sold at both of the religious sites (Figure 3.29).



Figure 3.29 On the paper price of pen which reads the Qur'an is indicated. The pen itself is stored in the boxes.

¹ The Turkish word "hafız" stands for the person who can recite the whole Qur'an by heart.

3.1.3 Survey on Religious Media

In the meantime, I started surveying the religious media as well, that is television channels, daily newspapers, and internet forums and blogs to familiarize myself with the life of devout Muslims, their ways of doing with particular objects for worshipping practices and ways of knowing about these practices.

Among the daily newspapers *Bugün* and *Zaman*, which are known with their Islamic approach are surveyed. Also Islamic TV channels such as *Mehtap TV*, *Mesaj TV*, *Hilal TV* are followed, in which daily life issues like colouring one's hair, starting an arcade (a saloon for playstation games) are discussed within Islamic rules if such doings are legitimate or not. Commercials on herbal medicine, veiling and tesettür and Arabic language courses are promoted.

Also, blogs and forums on the Internet are followed where using zikirmatiks is discussed, or online blogs devoted to communal dhikr activities, such as rehearsing a certain prayer for some thousands of time, are surveyed to understand the practice of counting prayers and the objects used to aid in this practice.

I also surveyed some books on daily life and worshipping practices sold in Hacı Bayram and Eyüp Sultan, focusing mainly on the praying practices. Most of the time they list prayers that should be recited daily, prayers to be prayed in condition if there is fear, pain, difficulty, insomnia etc., also some numbers are mentioned or it is advised to continue that prayer till the condition gets back to normal. To familiarize myself with the Islamic way of life, I watched documentaries about Islamic way of life and worshipping practices, besides, biographical films on religious notables such as Said Nursi. Also I surveyed blogs or online shopping sites, which promote religious objects for worshipping, are also surveyed. Among these products, a prayer rug, the Seccadeh 1426¹, which was designed by a Turkish designer, Soner Özenç, and exhibited in many international fairs, is promoted. The electroluminescent phosphor printing technology applied to prayer rug enables it to lighten up as it is directed towards Mecca, thus informing Muslims about the right direction to perform the salat (Figure 3.30).

¹ The year 1426 in Muslim Calendar, stands for the year 2005.

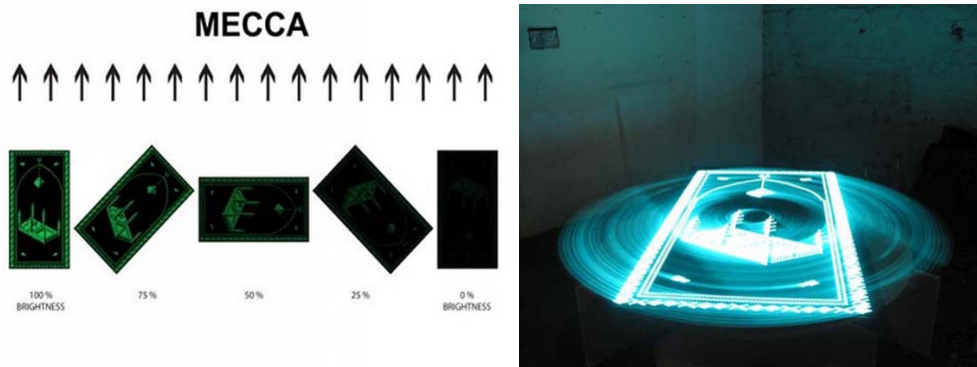


Figure 3.30 Prayer rug which is produced by electroluminescent phosphor printing technology to show the direction of Mecca (accessed at Nov 18, 2010, from http://buzzberry.blogspot.com/2008_03_01_archive.html and <http://www.sonerozenc.com/> respectively)

Digital counters of various forms are demonstrated on internet sites (Figure 3.31), as well as digital Hajj guides (Figure 3.32), Qur'an reciting *batimmatiks*¹ (Figure 3.33) and Qur'an reciting pens (Figure 3.34). Among these the zikirmatik which has been added a tail made of beads to resemble a tespih is eye-catching in that it demonstrates the aesthetic preferences of the users.



Figure 3.31 Digital counter which resembles a tespih (accessed at July 2, 2011, from <http://www.habervesaire.com/haber/1172>)

¹ The Turkish word “*batim*” stands for reciting the whole Qur'an from memory. Used with the suffix “-matik” again to implicate practicality and easiness.



Figure 3.32 Digital Hajj guide
(accessed at July 2, 2011, from <http://www.habervesaire.com/haber/1172/>)



Figure 3.33 Qur'an reciting hatimmatik (accessed at July 2, 2011, from <http://www.habervesaire.com/haber/1172/>)



Figure 3.34 Qur'an reciting pen: "Nur Pen" (accessed at July 2, 2011, from <http://www.habervesaire.com/haber/1172/>)

The recent trend of digitalising and even traditional tespih having variations such as digital counters caught my attention. The tespih in this sense demonstrates a perfect example for

a material culture study since the recent change is observable and the process in which the the introduction of digital variations of tespih is traceable. Also tespih being an object used in daily life being present in everywhere, at home, while travelling, while walking and hanging around, makes it interesting to study and to understand use of an object and its appropriation within daily life. Among these products tespihs and zikirmatiks which are the tools used to count prayers caught my attention as they demonstrate both the traditional and the innovative ways of counting prayers and imply for new ways of counting prayers.

3.2 Design and Structure of the Field Study

The field study consists of semi-structured interviews on the use of tespih and zikirmatik, with three different groups of male and female participants, and observations on the daily life of these groups. Three groups of both male (eight participants) and female (thirteen participants) participants, a total of 21 participants are interviewed to provide a varied sample into use of objects, daily practices and everyday of devout Muslims in Turkey. Devout Muslims accept Islam as a way of life obeying the five pillars of Islam and organizing their daily lives according to guidance of Qur'an, Hadiths and Fatwas who try to live their lives as "Allah's beloved servants", who will be referred to as devout Muslims in this study, are interviewed. Both male and female participants of ages between 15 and 78 were interviewed.

However, it might be necessary to note that this sample should not be thought of as a representative sample providing a definitive insight into the ideals of the whole Islamic groups nor into their ways of doing, knowing and appropriating objects. There are various religious sects and groups even within Turkey having different approaches and traditions.

Also it might be useful to note that this study has been conducted in the capital city of Turkey where secular and Islamic life find expression in a dominant modern secular order. In the parliament elections of June 12, 2011, the Islamic party, AKP, was leading with 49% of the votes where the secular party of a more leftist tradition, CHP was the second with 26% of the votes. In Ankara, AKP was again leading with 49, 2% while CHP followed with 31, 3% of the votes and in the region Keçiören where the tarika gathering house I

visited was located, AKP was leading by 55, 4% which was followed by CHP by 24, 2% of votes, while in Çankaya CHP was leading by 55, 2% which was followed by AKP by 25, 7%.¹ These results demonstrate the political tension between the participants' and the researcher's urban spaces in the society.

The first group consists of three of the shopkeepers, who were between the ages 46-53, out of about ten shops at Hacı Bayram. Shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram are interviewed with semi-structured interviews to collect information on the recent history of *tespih* and *zikirmatik* which does not have a recorded history. The interviews lasted for hours that spread into different days. I asked the shopkeepers who have been working in the area for more than ten years, numerous questions referring to their personal experience on the origin, history, use, meaning, value and social context of *tespih* and *zikirmatik*, (Appendix A).

During this part of the fieldwork, I wanted to tape-record the interviews, but that created tension in the conversation and one of the shopkeepers said: "Voice recording? Let's not get into such things, people won't approve of voice recording anyways". I decided not to insist, so as not to disturb our relationship based on trust and continued taking notes in my field diary, as I did in the introductory ethnographic study.

Second group consists of members of a *tarika*, who were frequenting a *tarika* gathering house of *Nakşibendi*² order, who were twelve women between the ages 15-70, and the third group consisted of male frequenters and the Imam³ of a mosque, a total of four participants who were between the ages 35-78. The accessibility was the determining factor for these groups to be chosen.

I asked about their everyday life and daily practices. I further elaborated on their worshipping practices and how they get knowledge on these practices, and the place and value of this within everyday life. Later I focused on counting prayers and the tools they

¹ The results of the elections were accessed at 23 Sept, 2011 from <http://secim.haberler.com>.

² *Nakşibendi* is one of the largest *tarikas* in Turkey. In Turkey, although *tarikas* were prohibited, *Nakşibendi* people have possessed political power throughout the history of the Republic.

³ "The majority of Sunni Sect of Islam use the term *imam* to mean the prayer leader in the mosque" (Yusuf, 2009).

use to accomplish this practice. I elaborated on their usage of tespih and zikirmatik and their preferences and the reasons behind by focusing on social and practical arrangements that tespih and zikirmatik enable (Appendix B).

Besides the interviews, I made observations in the houses and the mosque that I visited to conduct the interviews. I observed the ritual worshipping practices that I was allowed to participate in, and made notes of my experiences. The observations were interpreted from my perspective and vision I formed via literature survey, attempting to analyse meaning of objects in use, materiality, specificity of counting prayer practice, organization of daily life around religious precepts and the social and practical role of objects in these, ways of doing, and ways of orienting in the *habitus*.

3.3 Conduct of the Study: Entering to the Field

3.3.1 Reunion With the Shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram: Semi-structured Interviews on the History of Tespih in Turkey

Shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram, who have been working there for about twenty years, which means that they witnessed the introduction of the zikirmatiks, are interviewed on the history of tespih and zikirmatik. During the interviews, history of tespih, introduction of zikirmatiks, use and meaning of tespih and zikirmatik, and the economic, social and technological aspects of these are inquired.

I had already established friendly relationships with the shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram due to the introductory ethnographic research that I had conducted on the dilemma of shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram. We had had long chats previously and I had spent long hours sitting in their shops and observing. Also they had been willing to teach me Islam as they live as ‘conscious Muslims’ and had appreciated my inquiries. So I decided to consult them for the history of tespih.

When I went to Hacı Bayram to conduct a pilot study to test my semi-structured interview format and to make appointments for the actual interviews I was welcomed warmly and open heartedly by the shopkeepers. They addressed me with my name shaking hands and

saying: *“Oh Damla girl! Where have you been?”* and making jokes: *“Are you going to ask about tespihs again?”* I was offered tea and a seat to update each other about the time passed.

Strategically, I chose the more introvert shopkeeper for my pilot study and made appointments with the other two more talkative shopkeepers for my actual interviews. I was invited early in the morning, at 08:00 am, by both, so that there was two hours time before the first customers appeared in the site around 10:00 am, besides I was told to visit them whenever I wanted. So, I made several visits early in the morning to conduct my semi-structured, face to face interviews. Both interviews lasted more than 2 hours, so the interviews had to be continued the other day. This also gave me the opportunity to review my notes of the interview and elaborate further the other day on some topics that I had missed during the interview while trying to listen, respond, and take notes at the same time.

They did not prefer me recording the interviews as I explained before and I did not insist not to disturb the friendly, open and relaxed atmosphere we were sharing that was based on trust. So after each interview I transcribed the whole conversation based on my notes. I was especially sensitive and careful in keeping the exact words and wording people used although some language specific expressions and inflections might be lost in translation. Also I was paying attention to wear my long overcoat on the mornings that I visited the shopkeepers, so that my presence in their shops would not disturb the customers and they would be willing to have me in their shops. This precaution of modifying the way I dress gave the opportunity to move more freely in the field as I experienced in the introductory study, so I was paying attention to keep up to dressing codes.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews on the Use and Appropriation of Prayer Beads

Based on my experience on ethnographic field study as explained above and survey on literature on ethnographic research conducted with Islamic groups in Turkey, I knew that entering to the field and establishing trust with the people would be the core of my fieldwork. Also, as I have witnessed within the introductory ethnographic study that every student taking the course had different interactions in the field, due to their gender,

character, approach, and perspective. So, I knew the relationship between participant and the researcher, and having a connection was vital for the conduct of such a study.

I have very well learnt that *correct entry* to such a field was being advised by some authority figure in the group. This argument was verified in the field later on, which I would argue as being related to discursive transmission of Islamic knowledge. Although, most demanding of all was to find a way in, as I had no such relations and neither people around me did. If it was not to a series of coincidences that I will explain below, this study would not be realised.

I was so hopeless to find such a conduct for correct entry that I was even complaining to my hair dresser about it. I was explaining to my hairdresser that I needed to talk to people, who were performing the salat, dhikr, and were using tespih or zikirmatik, for my thesis. In spite of the hopeless expression on my face, there was a strange sparkle in her eyes while her voice tinkled: “*You’re just at the right place for that!*”, and she continued explaining that her sister was involved in a tarika and they had dhikr meetings and *sobbets*¹ in their gathering house. Not being able to believe what I was hearing, I reacted with joy after some seconds, and asked if we could make an appointment with her sister. She said that she could even take me to the gathering house of the tarika and to their meetings, where I would have a number of women to complete my research. So, I quickly requested to make an appointment with the sister leaving me some time to prepare a research proposal to explain my research to my possible participants, and also giving me some time to make a pilot study before meeting with my actual participants.

During the time I was making this plan in my mind, my hair dresser was explaining me that she trusted me in that I would not cause any harm to her sister and her community, likewise they would not hurt me as well. I was going to inquire into their *ways of using* objects, *ways of doing* and *logic of operation*. I was not going to inquire into their beliefs and political stance nor was I going to spy on them or criticise their ways.

¹ The Turkish word *sobbet* can be translated as *chat* into English. It is a kind of meeting in which the leader of the tarika talks to an audience of tarika members.

So my hairdresser called her sister right there and made an appointment for me. She said if they liked me there, they would help me with all sorts of things. Just finding informants to speak about their practices, values and how they related to objects for the purposes of daily practices and tactics was what I needed help with.

Upon this development, I arranged a meeting with my supervisor. We structured the outline and the content of the interview. Later, I made an appointment via my colleague, with one of her neighbours, for a pilot study. So, I went to the house of my first participants, who were an old couple, to conduct my interview. They welcomed me with insecure and worried faces, however they offered me a seat in the living room of their upper middle-class flat, furnished with ornate furniture and a large screen plasma TV. I told them my research and assured that their identities would not be revealed under any circumstances.

This couple was living for the blessing of Allah, and agreed to talk to me because we would be talking about Allah, since the conversations in which Allah's name was recited were also meritorious. Apparently, the couple and their children were worried of such a visit as I understood from the ringing phone at my presence from the son who wanted to check whether everything was alright. The wife and I immediately felt connected, and she even told me that at first they were worried to have me in their house as there were all sorts of bad people around, and these delicate topics about one's belief were not ordinary topics to be talked with everyone. On the other hand, my mother as well was anxious. She cautiously warned me to call her after I finish the interview, as one would never know what would come out of strangers. I can argue that the *otherness* discourse and the possible threat from the other was a demanding issue for the accomplishment of this research and building trust with the interviewees.

After this interview, I revised my interview format and added further questions. I was learning something new or some other aspect of approaching things, so it became clear to me that I should feel free to inquire into areas that I feel worthy of elaborating on.

On 3rd March 2011, I and the hairdresser head to the house where the religious meeting was to take place. We met in front of the hair dresser to walk to my car. That was the time

I noticed my hairdresser was a covered woman as well because it was the first time that I saw her out. She gave me the directions to the house. We ended up in front of a regular apartment block. The flat was at the basement floor, with lots of shoes left at the outside of the flat's door. We were a bit late and the meeting, in which one woman was talking about *Hacı Bayram Veli*, had already started. I felt into the topic, but I was still a stranger from the cultural stand point; with all the women sitting on the floor, next to each other, stuffed in a room where no place was left to move and one was stuck between the hip and knees or feet of others, where it was impossible not to touch anybody.

This meeting was called *sobbet* (chat), although it was a monologue of the leader of the gathering house of the tarika. One of the women asked whether she could give me a headscarf, suggesting, in between the lines, that I should cover my head. I said that I had my own, and took my shawl out of my bag to throw over my head, half covering half revealing my hair. But, I could see this act of mine was appreciated by the older women around as I understood from their gestures.

After the meeting, the hairdresser introduced me to her elder sister who liked me and decided to help me. She did not even ask me about my project. She was convinced by her sister's explanation before. She told one of the younger women to conduct an interview with me. This woman was my first participant. She was a bit anxious at first. I explained to her the aim of my study, and she agreed on participating.

I asked whether she would be disturbed if I took my headscarf off, she said "*estagfirullah*". I wanted to make clear that I was there to conduct a research, not to become a member of the tarika. From my previous experience, I knew that the participants might tend to see me as a potential candidate to join their religious order, and the inquiry would lose its focus becoming a missionary trial. Therefore, by taking my headscarf off, I wanted to preserve my position as a researcher.

This first interview lasted more than an hour. We conducted the interview in an empty room in the house that became my interview room for the rest of the research. After my first visit I made an appointment via my hairdresser again, to get permission to visit the house. My first participant arranged another interview for me. As far as I could hear from

the other room, my first participant was trying hard to convince women to participate in my research. She was saying that there was nothing to be afraid of and it was mostly on *tespîh* and *zikîrmatik*.

The second participant was a young girl of age 16, who hesitated to talk with me. When I asked about her daily worshipping practices, she was not sure whether to reveal every detail or not. At that moment an older woman entered the room, my participant asked her whether she should explain me the *vird*¹. Although the woman said there was no reason not to, she continued naming the prayers without giving the exact numbers that she repeated them.

After that visit I called my hairdresser to make an appointment for another day. She said I need not to call every time and I could visit the gathering house on my own whenever I wanted, as the women in the house liked me. Nevertheless, I insisted on making an appointment. I made the third interview which was arranged by my first participant again. This time I interviewed a university graduate from the Department of Textile Industry Education. She did not continue with Ms. programme because of the debate on headscarf going on around that time. She was different than the other woman in the house; she taught children and earned her own living, was unmarried at the age of 30 and had her own car, which was quite different than the other members of the group. Our conversation was friendly and sincere. She sarcastically told me: *“Those from you are not usually interested in us. It is weird that you chose such a topic”*. After these initial interviews, my presence in the house was accepted by most of the women and I was introduced to most of the regular attendants.

However, the *otherness* remained there throughout my interviews in the house. I would argue that my university, METU, which is known for its leftist political orientation and me being not a covered woman, strengthened this issue. My participants would ask me why I was interested in them, why I chose such a topic, whether I was assigned this topic by some professor. That is to say, the political identity discourse was present between me and the participants from the very start. Although, I believe, it contributed to the outcome of

¹ “Vird” can be translated as homework. They are certain numbers of certain prayers assigned to *tarikâ* members daily.

the research in that the tension between our social groups stressed the identity discourse reflected on products and every aspect of their lives. However, I prefer not to speculate on what the outcome would be like, if it was summer and I was not able to wear my long overcoat, which I did not take out even in the house, or if I disguised myself by covering my head.

After setting my relationships at the gathering house, and getting a bit more comfortable with being there and with the women there, I decided to try my chance with the male participants, which was also realized by a series of coincidences. My father, who is a pedagogy graduate, has been working as a teacher at a public school at Kırkkonaklar, Ankara for fourteen years. Kırkkonaklar was more like a provincial area until ten years ago, and my father who is a beloved and respected teacher at the school, knows everybody around the neighbourhood. Apparently, my father knew the Imam of the mosque in Kırkkonaklar, which is next to the school, as the eldest son of the Imam used to be a student of my father.

My father made an appointment for me, and we went to the house of the Imam together. My father accompanying me was also an important sign which created respect for my research. I found out that the Imam had been to some different places in the West for the purposes of teaching Islam and working as an Imam at the mosques in Germany and Ukraine. So, he appreciated my effort to work on religious matters, as he sees it, and wanted to help me and agreed on being my first male participant. The interview with him lasted for two hours. After the interview we made an appointment to meet some other time to go to the mosque where he would introduce me to potential participants to contribute to my research.

After establishing contacts to connect with both of the groups, I made several visits to the mosque and the gathering house of the tarika to complete the interviews. I kept a field diary in which I made notes during the interviews and jotted my observations. I kept on taking notes as the participants were talking, not to reveal which points I found worthy of noting. For these interviews, I did not even propose to make voice recording, as I knew they would not be willing and that would result in rejection of my inquiry. I transcribed each interview and revised my notes as immediately as possible I can after I finished them,

not to forget any information and observation I had as the time passes, and I paid close attention to keep the exact wording of the participants.

3.3.3 Observations on the Worshipping Practices of Devout Muslims

I always made appointments for my next visit to the *gathering house* of the tarika, so that women in the house would have free time to interview with me. But the scheduling did not always work. During the time I visited the gathering house, the tarika members were busy with raising money to donate to their dormitory, which was being built by the other groups of the same tarika order in Samsun. Women were busy with preparing traditional Turkish food or knitting clothes or selecting goods to be sold at the charity fair, which they were organizing to raise money. So, I was not always able to find somebody who would be free for some couple of hours to participate in my interview. But, this gave me the opportunity to observe their daily life, moreover, even to get involved in their worshipping practices. Regular attendants of the house called these worshipping practices *hizmet*¹ which they got involved in for the blessing of Allah. They regarded the charity fair and preparing food as worshipping.

Some women brought their kids to the gathering house. From babies to children of five years old were brought to the gathering house, where they had some toys and friends to play with. During my spare time in the gathering house, I found the opportunity to listen to and observe mothers who proudly explained that their baby was naming Allah and *baba*² as their first words. In one significant case, I witnessed how a baby of 11 months old, who was given a zikirmatik, started to rock his body back and forth, while his mother enthusiastically joined him, rapping Aal-lah, Aal-lah on her knee. So, I had the chance to observe how religion diffused in people's life and their mental schema, becoming what constitutes them, rather than being an external factor dictating its own rules. Instead, Islam was what life was to them.

During preparation of the food and organisation of the fair, I discovered a special room of the house. In this room products of a retail brand called *Afia* were sold. The room was

¹ The Turkish word "hizmet" can be translated as "service" into English.

² "Baba" in Turkish means "father".

surrounded with shelves on which snacks and beverages of this retail brand and some herbal spices were displayed to be sold. This firm was distributing its products by phone- or mail-order with the statement of Islamically appropriate trade.

I was mostly watching what, how and why people were doing things. Yet, sometimes I also participated in what they were trying to accomplish by brain-storming or helping them with the tasks. After getting involved in these activities and spending some time at the gathering house, when I was making an appointment for my next visit, I was told to come to their meeting on a specific date and time.

This meeting turned out to be a *dhiker meeting*, in which I was expected to cover my head. I always carried my shawl with me while going to interviews and meetings, because at certain points they asked me to cover my head, like they did in this specific occasion. I would not know when it would be necessary to cover my head and I wanted to be prepared for these times when I should cover my head to show that I respected and valued their beliefs. So, in this specific situation I covered my head from the very beginning, taking a place next to my friends in the gathering house of the tarika.

I was told stories about religious group meetings before, spoken and sang out rituals, which are called *dhiker meetings*, in which people pray collectively. I also knew from media sources that people employ different tools for the realization of these meetings, and meditative rituals, like stabbing a needle in their cheeks through their mouths, singing out loud, swinging their body, rocking their heads or even extreme examples of praying with a long prayer bead with large beads at the size of two hands, and passing the beads from person to person as prayers are told. That sort of a meeting was what I would like to learn about. I wanted to participate in such a meeting from the very start when I chose a gathering house of a tarika to find participants for my study. I wanted to observe such a meeting and investigate their beliefs and thoughts on this matter, and to examine use of prayer beads in these contexts. But of course, they do not let outsiders in to watch their most sacred practice. However, after spending some time in the house and establishing trust, I was allowed to be *in*.

The meeting started and everybody was asked whether they had completed their weekly prayers. Then those prayers were written on a notebook and calculated. The hairdresser's sister turned out to be the person who led the ceremony, so at that point I understood why I was accepted by the community. She was the authority in the prayer practice. She told everybody to prepare their *tespihs*. She named some prayers and expected women to repeat these prayers some certain times, they chanted a song together, repeating the chorus "take us as well, to your heaven" several times.

After that, the leader (sister of the hairdresser) distributed some pebbles as the size of a nail and expected women to say a certain prayer at each stone and return them to her again. After the pebbles are counted the amount of prayers that are collected during the meeting were devoted to Saints.

After the devotion, they started to chant a hymn, and with the direction of the other apparent leader of the meeting who was sitting on an armchair, unlike all the other women who were kneeling on the floor, everybody started to chant Allah out loud with a certain rhythm. Some were rocking their heads and some were beating their knees with the rhythm. After some point some of the women started to make a strange sound like exhaling with difficulty, and no doubt it was difficult, while rocking or shaking their head really hard, or making rhythmic movements with all their bodies. Some women were shivering from time to time and some were crying.

The emotional upload was extreme and really intense. The hymn which appeared to last very long stopped at some point, and women calmed down, became relieved and peaceful and the *dhiker meeting* ended.

Then came the second part of the meeting, which was called *sobbet*, that I had attended before. As there was the fair that day the *sobbet* was kept short, the leader advised women to go to the fair and buy things so that they had a contribution to the construction of the dormitory which was a really meritorious thing to do. Finally the meeting ended.

After that I was told I could go there any time I wanted and could interview whomever I would like. But, I needed some time for reflection to make sense of what I witnessed for

my research, after the intense session of this *dhikr meeting*. After this experience I went to the gathering house of tarika and to the mosque some more times to complete my interviews.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FIELD STUDY

The data gathered in the field is analysed by concept mapping. The concepts raised in the initial analysis are further examined and interpreted through theoretical framework. The analysis reveals four categories. First one is the close relationship between Islam and everyday life, in which everyday life is structured around Islamic principles. The role of Islam in conducting and orchestrating practices and informing temporal, spatial and bodily relationships are explained. Within this framework, in which everyday is organized according to mundane practices and sacred practices of Islamic faith, as the second category, two characteristics of the prayer practices stand out which are counting and repetition for which *tespîh* and *zikîrmatik* are used. As the third category, the ways of use of *tespîh* and *zikîrmatik* and the ways some practices conducted with these characterised mainly as disguising and hiding that are shaped by the socio-cultural context are explained. As for the last category, the meaning(s) attributed to *tespîh* as a sacred object/tool, and *zikîrmatik* as a mundane tool, and the values attributed to these due to their physical qualities are emphasized as significant aspects for the use of these objects.

4.1 Organization of Daily Life

Islamic faith is diffused into every aspect of daily life of a devout Muslim, since Islam is a secular (Latin *securaris* meaning present world), earthbound religion in which the quality of relationship with this-worldly creations promises the eternity for the believer (Atalay, 1993). Daily practices both sacred and profane that produce the secular are defined by Islamic principles. These principles are defined in Qur'an, Hadith, Sunnah, Fatwa and *İlmihal*. Qur'an, Hadiths and Sunnah are believed to be direct messages from the divine. Fatwa and

İlmihal are explanations of these messages by the authorities of Islam and are often interpreted through the current social context. Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, is defined as "the supreme authority in Islam" (Halem, 2005: ix), as it is believed that Qur'an is the word of Allah. Qur'an explains to Muslims the essence of Islamic faith, Islamic ethics, Islamic law, true Muslim conduit and worshipping acts (ibadat) (Haleem, xi). Hadith and Sunnah, which are the narratives on the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad, are the secondary source of information for Muslims, and complement Qur'an by implicating *how* the essences could be accomplished, in hope that they will present an example for Muslim conduct for subsequent generations (Speight, 2009; Nanji, 2009). Fatwas are "clarifications of rules regarding such routine practices as prayer and fasting, many fatwas also reflect to a large extent the political, social and economic circumstances of particular Muslim communities" (Dallal, 2009: 239). İlmihal, as the Arabic term *ilm-i hal* meaning knowledge about manner or behaviour, is a guide book for Muslims explaining Islamically legitimate *attitudes and manners* (Altıkulaç, 1999), in various topics issued in sections titled as *food, addictions, dressing and ornamentation, sexual life, marriage, divorce, birth and consequences, covering, using silk dress and fabric, hair, eyebrow shaping and epilation, plastic surgery, using of silver and gold, moustache and beard, using cologne and goods with alcoholic content*, etc. which demonstrate the vastness of Islamic rules and the extent to which daily life is regulated (see İlmihal, 1999).

The principles explained in these sources are interpreted subjectively that results in different discursive traditions and applications among devout Muslims. These principles, which cover a broad range of daily routines from intrapersonal to interpersonal such as bodily care and banking systems, form the guidelines for the life of a devout Muslim. Islamic principles are also referred to solve the daily problems and lifetime problems which do not seem to be religious *per se*, such as deciding to participate in an interview. These principles, which define the requisite worshipping acts, frame the basics of daily life of a devout Muslim, in which the profane routines are organized accordingly. Therefore, both the sacred and the profane are informed by Islamic precepts, in terms of temporal, spatial and bodily relationships, and the means of achieving these relationships.

Islam informs problem solving. Most participants stated that every act of a Muslim is worshipping Allah. Next to worshipping acts, devout Muslims try to implement the

awareness, with which their faith provides them, into every aspect of their lives. Participants of this study refer to Islamic principles to solve the problems they face with during their daily life. For example, as mentioned earlier, the elderly couple who participated in my pilot study stated that they would accept the interview since talking about religion and Allah is even a good deed itself. Thus, even an issue which does not seem to be related to practicing religion is interpreted through the Islamic principles. Also the important events of a lifetime such as marriage and divorce, are defined by the principles of the faith as one of the participants explained me: *“Do you know for how long a divorced woman cannot marry? 3 months and 10 days. For a woman whose husband died? She cannot marry for 4 months and 10 days. These, as well, are worshipping”*. They confront with daily life through the perspective of their faith.

Islam informs temporal organization. Worshipping acts frame the daily life of a devout Muslim. The participants of this study reported that they organized their daily practices in accordance with the time frame of their worshipping acts. Salat, which is the daily prayer five times a day, is one of the five pillars of Islam, so, it is incumbent on Muslims as stated in Qur’an. In addition to salat the participants of this study were performing *nafile salat*¹ and dhikr which encompass most of their daily routine. Placing worshipping acts at the centre of temporal organization, devout Muslims organize their mundane practices accordingly. One of the participants stated that she would not watch television for long hours and would go to sleep before midnight so that she can wake up on time for the morning salat, or they would go out in accordance with the salat time.

Islam informs spatial organization. Depending on the observations in the houses which I have been to, and the information the participants revealed about decoration and plan of their houses, I argue that Islamic faith and worshipping acts, shape the organization of domestic environment and result in the implementation of an ensemble of material goods to facilitate their faith that create a conduit of Islam. Most participants had a separate portfolio of products such as prayer beads and salat tespah to facilitate worshipping acts. The two household that I have been to², had separate worshipping

¹ *Nafile salat* are the additional *salat*, that people can perform at certain times besides the five times that is incumbent on Muslims.

² One of these houses is the house of the old couple that I have visited for my pilot study. The second house is the house of one of the tarika members.

rooms. Some other informants stated that they either had a worshipping room at home or wanted to have one in the future. I was shown one worshipping room. This room had a small closet placed in one corner of the room, which was in the direction of Mecca. On this small closet there was a miniature Kaaba figurine surrounded by a large beaded tespih. In front of this closet with the miniature Kaaba figurine, there were two prayer rugs on the floor heading towards Kaaba. These were the only things in the room. One of the participants, who did not have a separate worshipping room in their house plan, said that their individual rooms at home were already devoid of distractions such as photographs of human portrait, so members of the family were able to pray decently in their own rooms. All the houses, including the tarika gathering house I visited contained a basket filled with tespihs so that visitors could pray by using these tespihs. There are also Allah's or Muhammad's names in calligraphic forms that are framed and hung on the walls. Some participants expressed that they enjoyed having symbols of Allah and Muhammad around, since these reminded them of Allah and Muhammad and their religious duties, thus helped to create close relationships with Allah.

Islam informs bodily organization. Devout Muslims' relationships with and perception of their own body is also informed by their faith. The human body, which is engaged in worldly practices is believed to be the custody of Allah, it will be submitted to Him in the end. So, the participants stated that they paid attention to take care of their body in an Islamically correct way. This attitude sets the fundamentals of cleaning, dressing, eating and personal care practices.

Most participants would do the ablution (abdest) regularly, next to the requisite ablution of salat. They would not stay without ablution during the day. One of the participants explained the reason as follows: "*You never know when Jibril is here to take you away, thus you should keep the custody of Allah [showing his body, implying human body is the custody of Allah] clean and submit to Him when the time comes*". For some others it is only a way of keeping clean in general.

Dressing, the way of dressing such as how much of the body parts should be revealed and the material of cloth are interpreted according to the Islamic rules. Of the 13 women I interviewed, all covered their heads even inside the houses, except for one, who is the only

working woman employed as a cleaning lady in a public school. She would take off her headscarf or put it loosely around her head revealing most of her hair during her time at school, but she covered her head at other times. One of the male participants stated that it was forbidden in Islam for men to wear silk shirt, or to wear a gold ring. So, he would not wear silk and would wear a silver ring instead.

The goods that are used for caring and nurturing the body, such as cosmetics and food, are also informed by Islam. Consumption of alcoholic beverages and items with alcoholic content are forbidden in Islam. The *gathering house* of tarika that I visited several times had a room specialised for selling food. These food were mostly products of Afia (Figure 4.1), which is a firm that has the motto of halal food¹. I was told that there were special shops that sell halal food in Ulus, Ankara, where members of the tarika do their shopping to keep their body devoid of Islamically incorrect ingredients.



Figure 4.1 Screenshot from the website of the firm “Afia” that promotes halal food

The cosmetics they use, as well, do not contain lard or alcohol, for example they use lard-free hand cream. Kohl is special among these, since it is a Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, but instead of using any cosmetics, they use the ones that they buy at Hacı Bayram, as these do not contain any Islamically forbidden ingredients. Some even do not use regular toothbrushes and toothpaste, instead they use *misvak*², which is also a Sunnah of the Prophet, or toothpaste of misvak extract.

¹ *Halal* foods are religiously sanctioned foods which do not contain religiously forbidden ingredients such as pork meat, lard and alcohol nor conservatives produced from these.

² Misvak is a plant that has a brush-like structure used to clean teeth in Muslim societies.

Considering all the topics mentioned above it can be seen that Islam informs every aspect of life of a devout Muslim. As argued in the second chapter, through the theoretical framework, by producing and reproducing mundane daily practices, Islam is not a way of life, but it *is* life itself for devout Muslims. For the sake of worshipping which diffuses into all aspects of life from family life to one's relationship both with his own body and the others are shaped by Islam. Next to worshipping practices, mundane daily practices as well are shaped according to Islam in terms of temporal, spatial and material relations. Therefore, understanding Islam or their belief is the key to understanding daily practices and use of objects to facilitate these practices.

4.2 Worshipping Practices, Counting, Repeating and Use of Objects

For the sample of this study, prayer practices occupy a large space, among all the other worshipping acts in Islam. Almost all spare moments of the participants are filled with praying. While walking, travelling by bus, or waiting in a que they spend their time by performing dhikr, in an automatic, instinctive, routinized way. Salat occupies its own place as a sacred practice without being mixed with other practices. Salat, with the pre-defined time periods, frame the daily life of a devout Muslim. There are also dhikr and offerings which are performed in large amounts that find various applications due to the discursive tradition among Muslim communities. However, dhikr of Allah, counting and repeating prayers is a pervasive practice which goes on throughout the day, so that this sacred practice is combined with profane practices such as travelling, knitting or driving. Two patterns are observed: counting and repeating. These two form the core of the prayer practices. These core patterns shape the worshipping acts, daily life and the objects used to facilitate these. To catch up with these prayer practices which are performed in large amounts, different tools are used and adapted. Likewise, the tools adapted shape the practices and form a blend of sacred and profane wiring daily life of a devout Muslim.

Counting Prayers

Counting is one of the core issues in praying practices. Organization of daily life and orchestration of objects are defined according to these counting practices. Even those who cannot count up to hundreds try to keep an account of their prayers, and try to keep up with some certain numbers. For example, one of the participants, an illiterate elderly

woman, who cannot count up to hundreds, explains her practice as counting 3 or 4 rounds of tesbih. In addition to counting prayers in salat, which is incumbent on Muslims, interpretations and discursive knowledge on the Islamic sources result in different applications. So, the prayers are counted for various reasons; as an assignment, offering, charm, or for the purpose of competition with fellows.

Although some participants stated counting prayers is not important, they nevertheless have some certain sensibilities concerning numbers. They stated some numbers such as seven or 99 to be important, or they said prayers should be counted in odd numbers to symbolize the *oneness*¹ of Allah. They are sensitive to keep up to these numbers and organize their practices around these numbers, to express their respect for Allah and to facilitate their awareness as correct Muslims.

Even the participants who do not give importance to numbers, sometimes count their prayers to devote to somebody who tries to reach a certain amount of prayers, or to compete with others. As one of the participants said: “*Numbers are of course not important but we still talk about how much each of us prayed*”. Based on this example, it can be argued that numbers are used to express the extent of ‘Muslimness’. The more one prays the closer s/he gets to Allah and the more improved s/he is in his/her way to Allah. Counting, thus numbers, obviously add a competitive dimension to prayer practice, in which Muslims compete with each other in their way to Allah and can compare based on the amount of prayers they prayed. Also counting enables Muslims to discipline themselves and to develop their perseverance, which is regarded as a decent quality by most of the religions including Islam and as significant for the spiritual conduct.

Salat is a worshipping practice with its own ritual and ritual objects; prayer rug and *namaz tesbibi*. Mostly, all the other practices are organized around the time frame of salat practice. All of the participants, except for one, who is a 15 year-old student attending public school during the day, perform salat five times a day keeping up with the defined time intervals. The student reported that she performed the salat at the times when she is not at school. Some participants perform *nafile salat* as well.

¹ The Turkish word for *odd* numbers (*tek*) is also the same word for *oneness* or *uniqueness* (*tek*).

For salat, which is one of the five pillars of Islam, as explained before, there is the *hadith* of reciting 33 times Subhanallah (Glory be to Allah), 33 times Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah) and 33 times Allahuakbar (Allah is great), after each salat (Yıldırım, 1971). All participants count their prayers in salat according to this hadith. They are sensitive in meeting this requirement and paying attention to the precision of numbers, which they keep by using *namaḡ tesbibi*.

Except for one sociology teacher at a public school, all participants were using *namaḡ tesbibi* to keep an account of their prayers in salat, so that they do not make any mistake with counting. *Namaḡ tesbibi* consists of 99 beads, in which every 33 beads is divided by a smaller or differently shaped bead called *durak (stop)*, to mark the end of 33 times, so that the user knows s/he should go on with the next prayer from that bead on. Mostly, participants have a separate *namaḡ tesbibi*. *Namaḡ tesbibi* is usually rolled up with the prayer rug after the salat is performed, or if the house has a separate praying room, it is placed next to the prayer rug. The sociology teacher stated that he counted the prayers in salat with his fingers and most of the time he had to skip these 33 times three prayers as he had no time to pray these deservedly. Some other participants also mentioned counting with fingers, if they do not have their *namaḡ tesbibi* with them. For counting with their fingers, they said they developed a counting system which consisted of counting every part of fingers in a hand going over the hand two times which ended up in the number 33. This was probably how prayers were counted in salat before *namaḡ tesbibi*.

Half of the participants (12 women out of 21 participants in total) who are members of tarika, pray by numbers and give importance to precision in numbers as prayers are assigned to them in numbers as *vird* by the leaders of the tarika and being precise is important in general. Although there is no evidence of such numbers in Qur'an, tarikas perform prayers in certain amounts. The participants explained the reason for praying up to certain numbers as the miraculous numbering of the verses in Qur'an and the admirable numerical order of the universe. One of the participants says: "*Moreover, for example praying 70.000 times kelime-i tevhid prayer counts as a hatim. Can you now say that numbers don't exist?*" and she continues explaining: "*Islam is a religion of measurement and a Muslim is a person who lives in measured terms.*"

One of the participants stated that in addition to salat and *nafilat salat*, her daily *virid* was as follows:

1000 times Salavat (prayer to the prophet Muhammad)

1000 times the phrase *lailabeillallah*

1000 times the phrase *ya hafiz*

1000 times the prayer *ilahi serif*

And in addition to these 70000 times of the prayer *kelime-i tevhid* per week had to be completed.

Another woman who is a member of the same tarika explains her daily *virid* as follows:

300 the phrase *estagfirullah*

300 times Salavat

300 the prayer *iblas*

300 the phrase *lailabeillallah*

100 the prayer *Ayet-el kursi*

100 the prayer *Al-fatiba*

I was explained later that these *virid* were assigned to people according to their capacity and improvement in the practice: “*This is for man to improve himself. Think about it like that: For example you were reading 80 words per minute in primary school, is it like that now? It is more now... Likewise, these numbers are to improve yourself in praying to Allah.*”

There is also a belief among people in general that praying some certain prayers would bring luck, money, patience, intimacy etc. Handouts given by tarika advise some prayers to be read in certain amounts for the accomplishment of a promised deed. As shown in the figure 4.2, it is recommended to read some certain prayers for some certain days in some certain amounts to make someone believe in Allah, to recover from an illness, to get a job, to relieve from an uneasy situation, to arouse intimacy among the wife and the husband, to be able to get pregnant for those who cannot etc. Similarly, books or booklets sold at the religious sites like Hacı Bayram and Eyüp Sultan recommend some certain prayers to be recited in cases of anxiety, sickness, insomnia, nightmare, fear and the like (Figure 4.3), relating the practice of prayer with various aspects of daily life. It can be argued that such an attitude makes praying and counting these prayers a behavioral habit as a response to

daily circumstances. Moreover, carrying a tespih or a counting tool becomes a habit for Muslims as well, as there is always a reason to pray.

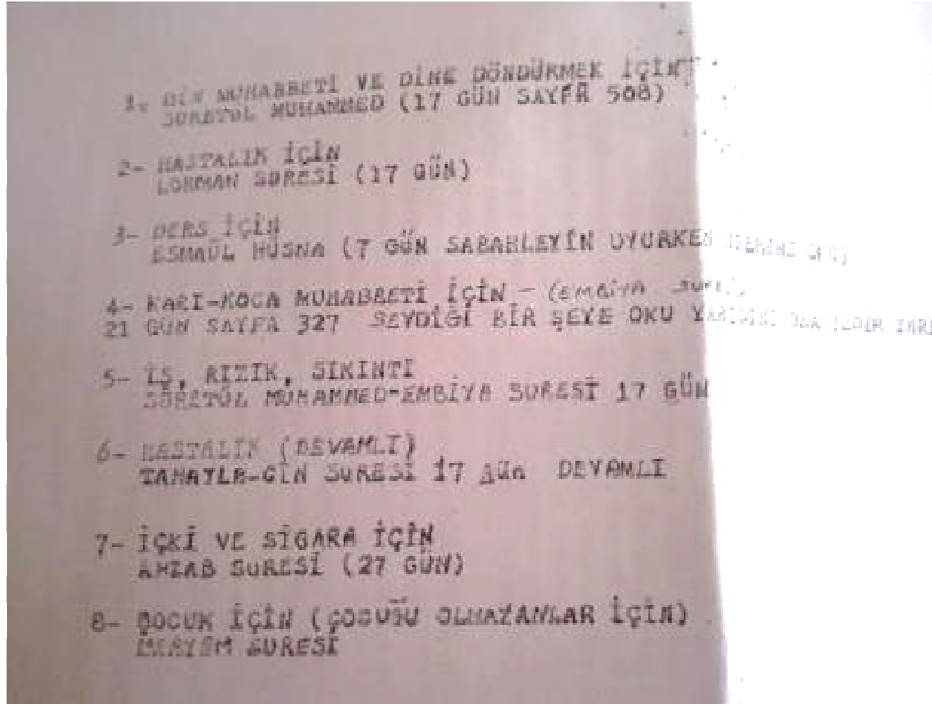


Figure 4.2 An example from a handout given by one of the tarika, documented from the copy of one of the participants

For these prayers, tespih, which contains 100 or 500 beads without any stop, or zikirmatik are used. One of the participants said that when she was in Kaaba, she ordered the craftsman there to make a tespih with 1000 beads for her. Sometimes the tail of 100 or 500 beaded tespih contains some additional beads so that it can be counted how many 100s or 500s are accomplished.

Some participants were observed while they were using safety pin to mark the number of their prayers (Figure 4.4). For example, on a tespih with 100 beads, after the first 100 repetition, the first bead of the tespih is marked by safety pin, which marks the 100 prayers that were accomplished. After the second hundred the safety pin is moved one bead

forward. So, the safety pin attached to the second bead is the mark that 200 prayers have been counted.



Figure 4.3 A book having chapters such as protection, health, evil eye etc., where it is explained which prayers to pray in certain situations

Some others use the safety pin to mark where they are left in the round as well. One of the male participants explained his wife's way of usage of such as follows: *“For example during dhikr phone rings or door bell rings or she goes to check the oven so she marks where she was left and continues from where she was left when her task finishes.”*

One of the younger girls' usage among the participants was quite different. She said she used two tespihs, one was to count up to hundred and the other was to count how many hundreds she had.



Figure 4.4 Tespih marked with a safety pin

Some of the tarika members stated that they preferred keeping an account of their prayers on a piece of paper. This was the way most of the participants used to keep numbers before zikirmatik, but some still continue using paper and pen to calculate the numbers they accomplished. So the use of object is appropriated or some additional objects are combined to be able to perform the desired practice. Users orchestrate a repertoire of products for their own purposes to accomplish their practices as they want.

In this specific case of using safety pins or papers, the concept of *marking* arises. Since that sort of a product is not existing in the market, users are appropriating the object they have at hand or designing their own solutions for a specific problem. They are appropriating, thus customizing another object from another domain, from a profane domain, a safety pin, to facilitate the sacred, the worshipping act. Materiality is appropriated so that it enables particular practices to be accomplished. This shapes the practice as well, in that counting prayer becomes a practice in which both tespih and safety pin are used and in every round safety pin is moved one bead further to count the amount of hundreds.

Mostly, participants who have prayers as *virid* counted their assignments with zikirmatik. They regarded some prayers as less important and preferred counting these with zikirmatik. They also did their homeworks on the go or while being busy with other things, hence they preferred zikirmatiks as it was easier to keep an account of numbers. Zikirmatik marks where the prayer is left. It can be argued that the function of marking remains but the application with safety pin leaves its place to zikirmatik. Zikirmatik, which is a regular counting tool is mass-customized for Islamic purposes and offered to market.

Participants, especially the women interviewed at the tarika gathering house, claimed that with the help of digital zikirmatiks, counting excess number of prayers became easier. The participants stated that they used mechanical zikirmatiks and other forms of digital zikirmatiks as well but these did not find acceptance. As most of the participants stated, early mechanical zikirmatiks were making a disturbing sound when the small handle was pressed after each prayer. It was distracting both for the user and the environment. They were also too big, so it was not easy to hold them in palm thus they were easily noticed by others around. As it is understood from the statements of the participants, zikirmatiks found a more common place in their lives with the introduction of the ring zikirmatiks.

One of the women's usage was significantly different. She had one metal mechanical zikirmatik and two digital ring zikirmatiks of different colours to which she assigned different prayers, and was keeping their numbers separately. It was far easier for her this way, as the zikirmatiks show the total number on the screen. She carried all these zikirmatiks to everywhere in her bag. It is seen that the participant in this case assigns different roles to different objects. In this case, *labelling* occurs as a concept to aid their pervasive practice, so that they can keep an account of each prayer differently by different tangible tools, which forms a portfolio of objects ensembled for sacred praying practice.

Digital zikirmatik seems to have brought about new usage areas. Apparently, zikirmatik have become appropriate for outdoor use. One of the participants stated that "*In daily life I use zikirmatik, outside I mean, while travelling here and there, out of the house. Tespib is too demanding to use outside. Zikirmatik is easier, besides it's practical.*"

Especially with the introduction of ring zikirmatik, women at the gathering house of the tarika stated that in addition to outdoor usage, they could use it while being busy with other practices such as household chores. They can go and have a look at the food in the oven then clean and tidy up the room, and do the laundry while still carrying the ring zikirmatik around. Some stated that they could even continue knitting, and perseverance found it comfortable and easy to use as it could be worn around the finger. One of the participants stated she could dhikr even while driving: *“Thanks to ring zikirmatik I can dhikr while driving now!”* she remarked.

As can be understood by the examples, new usage areas are developed by the introduction of zikirmatiks. It can be argued that practicing belief have become possible while doing profane practices such as travelling, knitting, and even driving. Mundane daily practice gets mixed with worshipping practices that form an everyday blended with prayer in its every moment. Also these objects play a role in shaping the practice and producing new practices such as being able to count while doing household chores or counting while driving, which both alter the prayer and driving practices.

Repeating Prayers

Participants, who do not believe in praying by numbers, try to dhikr in all their spare time. In this case repetition and repeating as much as possible is the core of their practices. One of the participants expressed it as follows: *“Does a Muslim ever have spare time?... a Muslim is supposed to worship and recite Allah continuously”*. Another participant said: *“I recite Allah, throughout the day”* and she continued explaining: *“The duty of human heart is to dhikr... Blood travels through the veins with the name of Allah... It is told in the Book [the Qur’an] to recite Allah while sitting, laying and standing. As it is advised to dhikr in all the three states of man, we must dhikr continuously”*. Another participant explained: *“On my way to bazaar from the house, I pray to Muhammad”*. Another participant told that he prayed some certain prayers, each at least three times, until he fell asleep. As it can be understood from these examples dhikr is a pervasive repetitive practice continuing throughout the day.

Even the participants who do not count their prayers accompany their prayers with tespih. Most participants claimed that tespih reminded them of Allah and dhikr of Allah. Only three men and a woman stated that tespih was not important except for being a tool for

worshipping. For others tespih was a means of uniting the prayer with heart, body and language. The very physicality and the materiality of practice gives them satisfaction and peace. As stated by Doer and Owens (2007), Tenny-Brittian (2005), Wiley (2002), and Miller, John D. (2002), prayer beads have a meditative aspect as they provide repetitive stimuli accompanying repetitive words. Also in some cases, as in the *dhikr meeting* repetitive bodily movements also accompany the practice, helping the mind enter into meditative state. The participants at the gathering house of the tarika, who counted their virids by zikirmatik, still preferred tespih for peaceful and meditative praying. They stated that tespih reminded them of praying and they prayed more ‘peacefully’ and ‘satisfied’ while using tespih. They preferred using tespih at home and when they wanted to pray by ‘feeling’ the prayer.

The materiality of tespih holds an important place for the relationship between object and the user. Most participants stated that they *felt* more at ease with tespih, they *felt* the prayer better, whereas zikirmatik was regarded only as a *tool* for counting. Due to the tactile stimuli of tespih uniting the body with prayer, people attach deeper meanings to tespih. The practice combined with its object becomes almost obsessive . But this practice is not devoid of its object. So that in Turkish language, most of the times, dhikr and *doing the tespih* (tesbih çekmek) are used synonymously which implies for the association of dhikr practice with tespih.

4.3 Use in the Socio-cultural Context: Hiding and Disguising Prayer

For the specific case of tespih and zikirmatik which are the objects used to aid the most pervasive practice, the participants stated that they used these objects in various ways either to conduct a practice, express self identity or to organize daily life according to religious precepts. In the current socio-cultural context as regards to social and political aspects of living Islam in Turkey, tespih and zikirmatik find different usages. Two patterns as hiding and disguising are noticeable in this study. In the current socio-cultural context, the participants reported that they wanted to hide or disguise their prayers and the tools they use for prayers because of two reasons. First one is not to catch attention of seculars and not to reveal the extent of their Muslimness. Second one is to obey the modesty codes

of Islam by keeping their prayers unrevealed. It can be argued that Islamic groups negotiate their identity through the use of products. Muslims use and appropriate products for religious purposes to live as proper Muslims and to live as they believe it should be lived like.

As explained in the second chapter the tension between seculars and Islamic groups has long been one of the elements of the core dynamics of Turkish social, political, economic and cultural life. As Saktanber (1995) states “religionists” are associated with “backwardistness” on a mythical plane of signification in Barthesian sense. It can be argued that, this association being stamped as religionist is also reflected on the use of these objects which are intended for religious purposes, therefore, the objects that religionists use are also associated with backwardistness.

All the participants regarded tespih as a symbol of Islam, Allah or their belief. They also assumed that secular groups also regarded tespih as a symbol of Islam and the Islamic way of life, so there is high risk that seculars would associate tespih with *backwardist* and *religionist* connotations. Therefore, most woman participants stated that they avoided using tespih in public places, they would rather use zikirmatik. As one of the younger girls in the gathering house said: *“I don’t prefer using a tespih outside, so that people don’t assume me as boca (religious leader). I mean if you carry a tespih, they treat you as religionist”*. She continued explaining *“Tespimatik [she calls zikirmatik as tespimatik], in buses or so, makes one considerably at ease. Without anybody noticing, I do the virids”*. Some others who do not use zikirmatik, stated that they preferred hiding their tespih in their bag, and dhikr with their hands in their bag, placing their bag on their lap. So, they still continue their practice but by changing the *way of doing* and developing *tactics*, devout Muslims negotiate their identity in the society.

Another participant explained her distress as follows: *“In the past they would only stare, but now they even harass verbally. Saying ‘those’ are here again or ‘they’ are growing in number. They regard us as religionist extremists. Now that there is this kind of a polarisation in society, there is more pressure in comparison to the past. Therefore, I think it is needed to keep it quiet, and be patient for a while, I mean not to provoke ‘them’... Zikirmatik is more comfortable in this sense. Tespih catches the attention of people around... They stare, harass verbally, look down at us, but with zikirmatik you can comfortably pray*

without being noticed. My husband uses zikirmatik as well. In the midst of crowd it doesn't catch attention, that is the most important."

As one of the shopkeepers in Hacı Bayram stated that this went further than being condemned or harassed by the seculars. As he said: *"This country went through a 28 February coup, there was a postmodern coup, ... military bothered the folk. They arrested those who were using tespih and silver rings and such. So people tended towards those digital counters and stuff not to attract attention."* They neither give up their practices nor continue the way they did, but by developing tactics they operate in the society, and position and disposition themselves through the objects they are using.

One of the elderly participants stated that the reason for hiding her tespih was due to ethical reasons. She stated that she did not use tespih in the presence of other men due to moral restraints. She says: *"I won't use the tespih in the presence of other men. With my own kids it's okay, but not in the presence of other men. It is like buttoning up your jacket while coming before a chief, everything has a manner of doing. But I can use tespih here [in the gathering house of the tarika], these places are for worshipping"*.

Some participants stated that the reason for hiding their tespih was due to religious constraints. *"I keep the zikirmatik in my pocket, and I pray conveniently, can one ever understand what I am doing? You can't pray outside, Allah says to hide the worship and the sin both, one should be modest. It would be a conspicuous act to take out a huge tespih and dhikr"*.

One of the male participants explained how he dhikr in buses, paying attention to not to show off with his praying. *"In buses, I hold my tespih between my legs like this [showing how he puts his two hands in between his legs while sitting]. If I sit in the front seat, no body can see. Not to hide, but also not necessary to show. In mosques and such I pray comfortably."* Due to modesty which is regarded as religiously appropriate, they prefer hiding or disguising their tespih or dhikr practice as other people might think they are showing off or being conspicuous of their prayer. One of the participants has a significantly different opinion about this matter. She says she hides her prayer by keeping her tespih in her bag to protect *other* (secular) people from gossiping about her and thus causing them committing sin. She explained: *"In bus, I hold the tespih in my bag like this. I would not prefer praying out in the open in a public that is unaware*

of religion. They'll say, look at her she is praying the *tespib*, so they'll commit a sin just because of me ... That means she is condemning, she'll gossip, that is a sin. So to protect her, I disguise, not to cause her commit a sin because of me". And she continued suggesting a way of disguising a *tespib* as a bracelet (Figure 4.5): "If you say I cannot do without a *tespib*, you can disguise it as a bracelet, with a matching outfit, so nobody would understand you are performing *dhikr*. I used to do so a lot when I was young."



Figure 4.5 Way of disguising a *tespib* like a bracelet, as one of the participants demonstrated

Both the current tension between the secular and Islamic groups that can be dated back to the foundation of the Republic as explained in the theoretical framework chapter, and the religious modesty codes are reflected on the use of objects. Moreover, objects and ways of doing are appropriated as *tactics* to negotiate these distinct identities.

4.4 *Tespib* as a Sacred Object and *Zikirmatik* as a Tool

Participants of this study utilize a variety of material goods to organize their daily life around Islamic principles and to construct a correct Muslim identity. Likewise, *tespib* and *zikirmatik* are used, adapted and appropriated for many purposes, to facilitate worshipping

acts, to construct oneself as a proper Muslim. Zikirmatik, which is a regular counting tool, is adapted as an alternative or a complementary tool to tespih. However, zikirmatik did not replace tespih. Also shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram state that introduction of zikirmatik did not affect the selling rates of tespih. Apparently, these products find different usages, so that they co-exist. The use of these objects and the difference among them are defined by their relationship with their sacred and physical properties. Tespih is regarded as a sacred object which symbolizes belief in or closeness to Allah. It is also a personal object which bonds with the user benefiting from various dimensions of attachment with the products. Hence, there is a variety of tespih in the market addressing different aesthetic and use preferences. Zikirmatik on the other hand, although has some connotations, such as being modern, is regarded as a practical *tool* to count prayers. Due to the indifference among the participants of this study (and to some extent the producers') to its formal and aesthetic qualities, zikirmatik is devoid of religious, sacred, and personal connotations.

Tespih is an object of divine origin and designed for a specific worshipping practice. Its use is central to praying practices. Most of the participants value tespih as sacred and as a symbol of belief in and closeness to Allah. The materiality of tespih, the manifestation of the sacred in material form of tespih is significant for the object, so that some participants state that they do not let other people touch or dhikr with their own tespih. The excerpt from one of the interviews exemplifies the reason why: *"I'll get really irritated if somebody touches my tespih. I'll get extremely annoyed. I won't let others touch my tespih. This tespih is shaped in your hands. Everybody reveals himself in the tespih. The haram and sin are reflected on one's skin. The haram eaten, the sin committed by man is reflected on his skin. Those who live on haram, stink... Likewise tespih is shaped by man, it's the sweat and oil at hand. If a person who lives on haram touches my tespih, the tespih will go mad at me."* The materiality of the interaction and materialisation of the sacred facilitates bonding with Allah, so the object is regarded as sacred.

Although the participant who is a teacher stated that tespih was not actually something sacred, he still thought that such symbols were reminders of Allah and it was nice to have such symbols around. He implied that the very physical existence of religious objects were important, explaining the close relationship between objects and being close to Allah as follows: *"These remind of Allah, and they're good for inner peace of man. It's important to have signs around like the writings of Allah and Muhammad on the wall, and remembering them when we see the*

symbols, thinking of them is important... maybe it's meritorious to take the Qur'an at hand and read it by holding at hand... I usually pray from the memory, but maybe it is important to open the Qur'an and read it from the book. Holding it at hand might be important. As I said faith goes away. As you hold yourself back from something it also holds back from you. So Allah and His symbols are important."

In some cases physical properties such as the number and material of the beads or visual qualities were stated to add to the sacredness of tespih. The sacredness of tespih is closely related to the number of beads it has. Some say that a tespih that has no holy number of beads could be used for other purposes such as an accessory. Since 99 is the number of the names and good qualities of Allah and His Prophet, 99 and 33 are holy numbers for Muslims. A tespih with holy number of beads such as 33 and 99 is regarded as sacred. As one of the participants says: *"For example, the tespih used at the outside during the day should lack a bead. In this way it will not be a dhiker tespih. Then it can be used as an accessory to swing or whatever."* Also the material that the beads are made of contributes to the sacredness of tespih. For example, one of the participants stated that she wants a tespih made of date-palm, as the prophet Muhammad gave importance to date. Some visual properties such as inscriptions of Allah and Muhammed's names in Arabic letters on the beads of a tespih are also agents of sacredness. One of the participants told that she would not use such a tespih as she had kids of her own and they might play with it or drop it on the floor.

The sacredness attached to tespih is reflected on its place in everyday and manner of usage as well. Some participants hang it on the wall, some place it on a higher place if it is fallen on the ground. Another participant stated that he did not prefer using a tespih, which had Allah's and Muhammad's names inscribed on it, outside, since he might need to go to toilet or so and it was not appropriate doing such things with carrying such a sacred tespih. There are also expressions embedded in the use of tespih. All the male participants are concerned with the use of tespih out of the purpose of praying, such as just holding it at hand as an accessory or as a symbol of authority in a group. If a man is swinging his 33 beaded tespih at hand, and showing off with it is a behaviour that is frowned upon. They favour tespih to be held decently at one's hand, even in pocket without showing to anybody. One of the participants said: *"It is not an accessory to swing at hand or so. Swinging a tespih does not fit to man, it is not appropriate, to sway a tespih at hand to catch attention, is not an appropriate social behaviour, kind of friggish I would say."*

Rather than the sacredness there are other meanings attached to the object in the socio-cultural context related to how Muslimness is constructed. The Imam stated that it was a wrong doing to attach sacredness to tespih and there was actually no need for tespih to be used in any circumstance. Nevertheless, he himself uses tespih. He explained the reason as follows: *“It is not appropriate if all the community has tespih but the Imam hasn’t, not having a tespih will be regarded as a lack in belief, so if I don’t have a tespih among these people as the Imam, it will be regarded as a deficit.”* Most participants think that transparent beads and dark coloured beads, preferably black, are more decent and modest, and these should be used outside. They feel that bright and colourful ones imply for conspicuousness, unless they are used in the house or gathering house of the tarika or mosques.

Also another participant provides an interesting example. She stated that she had a lot of tespihs which she tried to match with her different outfits. She always carried a black or brown in her bag as these suit to most of her outfits, and she additionally selected one other vivid colour which matches with the colour of her headscarf.

There are also some assumptions people have about tespih regarding gender difference. Most participants state that women use tespih with colourful smaller beads, while men prefer usually black beaded tespih with 33 beads. As one of the participants explains *“not a single man would use a green tespih, he uses dark colours”*.

Tespih as a sacred object charged with meanings regarding identity, social conduct and religious decency also bonds with users by benefiting from various dimensions of product attachment. Tespih is a personal object which is carried everywhere throughout the day. Its being a gift, having the letters of a relative on the beads, being an award from the tarika leader, or having been brought from a sacred place contributes to the meaning of it and create attachment towards that specific tespih. Also the size of beads and frequency of beads on the string are important criteria. Some prefer tespih which has no space between the beads, and some prefer having space about the size of a bead, so they use the tespih more easily. Some participants personalize their tespih by shortening the string or putting a colourful string through a transparent beaded tespih. Some participants mention the importance of the material that the bead is made of. They say they choose their tespih according to material. There are some materials such as pearl that they do not prefer. As

they believe pearl makes one weary, some participants state that they do not prefer such materials. Some prefer semi-precious materials such as amber which has a textured surface finish and does not slip out of the hand.

Next to the sacred personal object, zikirmatik remains as a profane tool devoid of sacred qualities. A significant indifference to the formal qualities of zikirmatik is eye catching. The form is either adapted from small electronic goods or a regular counter that can as well be used for other counting purposes. As present in some products Islamicisation of formal qualities is not present in this pervasively used object.

I was told by the shopkeepers at Hacı Bayram that different tarika members were using different zikirmatiks or different colours to distinguish their groups. But within the gathering house of the tarika or the mosque that I have been to, this aspect was not mentioned.

Moreover, zikirmatik is regarded as an innovation and a modern tool. For some participants it is a sign of literacy and being modern that it means keeping up with the requirements of leading a modern life. Therefore, participants of this study are keen on using these objects to express that they can also be modern and literate. Closeness to western lifestyle and literacy were emphasized as important signifiers of status in Turkish culture explained in the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusions of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore how and why products were used, appropriated and adapted within the daily lives of devout Muslims by focusing on prayer beads and their mechanical and digital variations. For this purpose, how users relate to products and how products are employed in the social and practical arrangements within everyday life and everyday practices are explored. How objects shape practices while these daily practices shape objects in return in an intertwined relationship are elaborated on. A fieldwork is conducted with participants who use prayer beads and zikirmatiks in their various religious practices. The fieldwork, taking after ethnographic field research as a method, if not an extended ethnography, encompassed getting involved in the participants' daily life and ritual practices, thereby by making semi-structured interviews, observations and unstructured inquiries aimed to explore how and why tespih and zikirmatik are used in daily life.

For this study, perspective of material culture is adopted for the analysis of use of products to provide insight for industrial design discipline. Products are explored within the broader category: objects, which stands for both designed products and tools, things, stuff etc. appropriated by the users. A broad literature on the meaning of objects, practical role of objects in daily practices and daily life, practice theory and the logic of users' operations are explored to understand the intricate relationship between the use of objects and social and practical contexts. How people use and make use of objects besides the proposed usage are shown by explaining the drive behind these usages to provide an in-depth insight

for designers on the intricate and multi-dimensional relationship between objects, practices and their socio-cultural contexts.

The method applied for the fieldwork, which is inspired and enriched by ethnomethodology, contributed to the outcome of the research in many ways. By getting involved in the daily life of a group to which I was a total outsider, I explored the ways to learn about their ways and codes. Moreover, getting involved in their daily life created a trust relationship between me and the participants so that the participants became willing to talk to me about their sacred practices, the objects/tools they used, how they employed objects/tools for certain practical and social ends, and the reasons that lied behind these. In addition, the method enabled me to discover some significant details of the ways in which objects/tools were used and daily life was organized with them, which were taken for granted to a great extent. For example, although the inquiry of my interview focused on the use of tespih, participants never told that they were using safety pins to aid in counting, until I see them doing it during their daily lives. Such details, which, I would name as *discoveries*, hold specific importance for the analysis of the findings of this research but users do not talk about as they take it for granted, contribute to the outcome as an advantage of the method employed.

Some of the findings provide practical information on how to design better tespihs and zikirmatik, not to mention the aim of this study is not to put tespih and zikirmatik into a user test and provide direct input into such a design process. For example, the need of users to *mark* the amount of prayers they accomplished or to *label* distinct prayers to ease their practices are explained within a broad and in-depth perspective on use context. Also the need to *hide* or *disguise* their certain prayer practices for social concerns are also mentioned with an explanation of the social and cultural context. However, these objects tell more about the role, place and use of objects in daily life and the interaction between users and objects which provides in-depth and insightful information for both design research and practice.

Objects are used in daily life to make it in accord with what the individuals think it should be lived like. Therefore, to understand the use of an object within a specific context, that particular context must be understood in-depth multi-dimensionally. Devout Muslims,

who accept five pillars of Islam as a way of life, obey the five pillars of Islam and organize their daily lives with the guidance of Qur'an, Hadith, Sunnah and Fatwas. As revealed in the theoretical framework as well, Islam, producing and reproducing its own practices, is not a way of life, it *is* the life itself for devout Muslims, so, they try to organize their lives according to what Islam advises. Prayer practices, which encompass most of the day, play a central role around which all the other practices are shaped. For example, the salat interrupts the daily life five times in defined time intervals and daily life is structured accordingly. Devout Muslims arrange when to go to bed at night so that they can wake up on time for morning's salat. Besides, prayer practices are most of the time mixed with mundane practices, such as travelling or doing household chores. This type of construction of daily life is enabled by using tespih and zikirmatik in different contexts, in a way that the objects enable co-existence of sacred and profane practices. Moreover, Islam informs mundane daily practices as well, as every act of a Muslim is seen as worshipping, such as dressing, manners, rules on marriage and divorce and one's relationship to his body. Thus, Islam is revealed as producing and reproducing daily practices and guiding daily life and stance to materiality for devout Muslims, where it organizes daily life temporally, spatially, bodily, mentally, and spiritually. Objects, tespih and zikirmatik with different use contexts and ways of using, enable this organization for devout Muslims, which is informed by Islamic precepts on how life should be lived.

The view of Islam on materiality is consequently a key point to understand the stance of participants regarding these objects. As explained in the theoretical framework, Islam advises close and harmonious relationships with materiality and Muslims use a variety of objects such as alarm clocks, prayer rugs, various types of counting tools to aid their ritual practices. As the fieldwork reveals, material objects are very well integrated into daily life of Muslims. By appropriating materiality, such as halal items, or applying additional tools such as safety pin from the profane domain or adapting new tools from profane practices, such as counting animals or customers, they organize their daily lives and accomplish their prayer practices in the way they believe it should be done. For counting extreme numbers, which is a requirement of practicing their belief, they develop methods such as calculating on a piece of paper, using safety pin to increase the amount of numbers that could be counted on a 100-beaded tespih or adapting tools from other domains such as counters. To continue the practice of counting prayers even in public, they again utilize some other

tools. For example, they use a counter which is devoid of religious connotations so that other people do not recognize that they are performing prayer practice. Also, to obey the social and moral codes and religious decency, and to negotiate their identity regarding the aspects of the current socio-cultural dynamics but to continue praying throughout the day they adopt and appropriate tools. To keep prayer within almost every moment of their lives and to practice and live as their religion requires to be practiced or lived like, devout Muslims *make use of* objects.

This adaption and appropriation process, however, does not replace the pre-existing objects and practices. Participants of this study do not abandon *tespih* and go on with new objects/tools and methods. Also as revealed by the interviews with shopkeepers, the sale rate of *tespih* has not changed since the introduction of *zikirmatik*s. Various sorts of *tespih* and *zikirmatik* co-exist in the market, i.e. the *zikirmatik*s has not replaced *tespih*. *Tespih* with its symbolic values and the meanings attached to it remains as a sacred, religious object which is used to accomplish meritorious prayer practices by feeling the prayer and by praying deservedly. The place of prayer is kept sacred by special *tespih*s devoted to this practice by individuals, while to place prayer into daily life the profane tool, *zikirmatik*, is employed. These *tools*, which only serve for the function of counting, are not objects specialized for prayer practices nor sacred objects to which more personal and special meanings are attributed. They are just used as practical *tools* to hide prayer and diffuse prayer into almost every moment of daily life. Participants of this study still are faithful users of *tespih* with their sacred, meditative worshipping practices but for the prayer which goes on throughout the day they prefer using other *tools* which are better integrated into physical activity and the conditions of socio-cultural context.

With this study, more in-depth and insightful understanding is provided on the use of objects by elaborating on and participating in the context that the objects are shaped. By unfolding these relationships, more comprehensive and holistic insight is provided for design research and discipline. However, there are limitations regarding the method applied and literature followed. The question on the liability of the part on the exact chronology of *tespih* is still remains. Furthermore, terminology was a complicated issue for this study. This thesis is enriched with perspectives from sociology, material culture and anthropology, so the terminology had to be handled carefully and also a little differently

than it had in design literature. However, although most of the time the terms imply for similar concepts, these disciplinary areas address the same concepts with different terms from that of design literature, e.g., materiality vs. tangible interaction. So, terminology, although it might appear as a limitation, should be handled as an opportunity for creating new directions for design literature. These issues which has been the topic of disciplines such anthropology, material culture for long periods of time should be seen as a diversity and challenge for design literature to broaden its area of interest.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Study

This study appears, by far, as the first academic inquiry conducted into the social and practical significance of tespih in Turkey, after the databases for thesis studies and academic researches are surveyed. Nor a recent history within the social context of prayer beads and the digital counters, which are called as zikirmatiks, has been encountered.

Moreover, the method employed in this study attempting to integrate socio-ethnographic approach to the design research provides insight for design discipline and research for unfolding the relationship between users and objects and how and why people use and transform objects they use and their practices. So, further study on the use of objects elaborating extensively on employing such methods could be conducted.

Social significance of objects and rendering objects especially as an expression of political and social identity, and appropriating objects for such purposes could also be further elaborated on. Although, a definite boundary or theories could not be set for studies of material culture, yet further study in this direction could reveal more ways in which objects are used, depending on the changing social context and technology.

Also the use of objects as regards to negotiating identities is an intriguing topic for design research, since objects are usually designed to be visible and to express certain values and affordances for specific target groups.

Counting and the cognitive relationship between counting, tactual stimuli, repetition and meditation can also be further elaborated on over the use of objects/tools. The digitalization of prayer practice can also be investigated within technology studies and within the perspective of domestication of technology, and could be developed further with studies including software applications or other similar applications.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH SHOPKEEPERS

The questions below are aimed to trace the introduction of zikirmatiks in the Turkish market, based on the case of Hacı Bayram. The questions aim to find out when different versions of zikirmatiks are introduced and to understand how and why these objects are introduced to Islamic market, to form a brief history of prayer beads.

Origin of the Products sold at Hacı Bayram

1-) Kaç yıldır bu işi yapıyorsunuz? Kaç yıldır Hacı Bayram'dasınız?

(How long have you been working at this job? Since when you are working at Hacı Bayram?)

2-) Kim tarafından üretiliyor/satılıyor/pazarlanıyor bu ürünler?

(By whom are these products produced/sold/marketed?)

3-) Bu ürünleri satmaya nasıl karar veriyorsunuz? İhtiyaç üzerine mi yoksa ihtiyaç oluşturularak mı bu ürünler satılıyor?

(How do you decide to sell these products? Is the selling of these products based on demand or is demand created?)

4-) Hacı Bayram'ın yenilenmesinden sonra veya hükümet değişikliklerine bağlı olarak satış grafiklerinde değişiklik oldu mu?

(Is there any change in the sales record depending on the renovation in the site or on parliament changes in Turkey?)

5-) Hacı Bayram'da kimler alışveriş yapıyor? Ne kadar harcıyor?

(Who comes to do shopping at Hacı Bayram? How much they spend?)

History of Prayer Beads and Zikirmatiks

1-) Tespih kaç yıldır kullanılıyor ve burada satılıyor?

(How long has the tespih been used and sold at Hacı Bayram?)

2-) Zikirmatikler Hacı Bayram'da ilk defa ne zaman satılmaya başlandı? Mekanik/Dijital?

(When was the first time that the zikirmatiks started to be sold at Hacı Bayram? Mechanical/Digital versions?)

- 3-) Böyle bir ürün olduğunun nasıl farkına vardı? Nasıl satmaya karar verdi?
(How did you know there was such a product? How did you decide to sell these products?)
- 4-) Zikirmatik ne kadar satıldı/satılıyor?
(How many zikirmatik has been sold/is being sold?)
- 5-) Daha çok zikirmatik mi tespih mi satılıyor?
(Does zikirmatik or tespih sell more?)
- 6-) En başta, satış grafiği ve zikirmatik- tespih oranı nasıldı?
Şimdi nasıl? Zikirmatik satışlarında ilk zamanlara göre artış/düşüş var mı?
(How was the sales record for tespih and zikirmatik? What does the sales record look like now?
Is there any change for the sales rate of zikirmatik?)

Use of Tespih and Zikirmatik

- 1-) Tespih veya zikirmatik ne için kullanılıyor?
(What is the use of tespih and zikirmatik? Why is tespih or zikirmatik used?)
- 2-) Neye göre zikirmatik veya tespih tercih ediliyor?
(How does the preference varies among tespih and different kinds of zikirmatiks?)
- 3-) 33lük, 99lük, 100lük, 500lük tesbihlerin farkları ne?
(What is the difference between tespihs with 33, 99, 100 or 500 beads?)
- 4-) Zikirmatikten önce virdler var mıydı? Çok sayıda dua nasıl sayılıyordu?
(Did the virds existed before zikirmatik? How people used to count extreme numbers of prayers?)

Meaning of Tespih and Zikirmatik and the Social Context

- 1-) Tespih veya zikirmatikğin anlamı nedir?
(What is the meaning of tespih or zikirmatik?)
- 2-) Bu ürünleri satmanın anlamı/değeri nedir?
(What is the meaning/value of selling these objects?)
- 3-) Yeni ürünleri insanlar nasıl karşıladı/karşıyor? Tepki oldu mu bu ürünlere? Neden?
(What was/is the reaction of the public to these new products? Was there any rejection? Why?)
- 4-) Zikirmatikği ilk kimler kullandı? Neden?
(Who started to use zikirmatik first? Why?)
- 5-) Hangi tespihler ve zikirmatikler en çok satılıyor? Neden?
(Which tespih and zikirmatik sells the most? Why?)

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH DEVOUT MUSLIMS

This semi-structured interview format is formed to explore the use of objects. I focus on the worshipping practices and the objects used to accomplish these practices. Therefore I will ask questions about your daily life, daily worshipping practices and the objects you are using to aid in these practices. The aim is to understand the way you think, practice and use objects. Your identity and the raw data will not be revealed to anybody except for me and this data will not be used except for academic purposes.

Bu yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formatı ürün kullanımını araştırmak için oluşturulmuştur. İbadet pratikleri ve bu ibadetlerde kullanılan gereçler üzerine araştırma yapıyorum. Bu nedenle günlük yaşamınızı, günlük ibadet pratiklerinizi ve bu pratiklerde kullandığımız ürünler hakkında sorular soracağım. Amacım sizin düşüncünüz, pratik etme ve objeleri kullanma yollarınızı anlamak. Kimliğiniz ve işlenmemiş veriler tamamen gizli tutulacaktır ve benim haricimde kimseye açıklanmayacak ve akademik amaç dışında kullanılmayacaktır.

Demographic Information

- 1-) Doğum tarihiniz (*Date of birth*):
- 2-) Doğum yeriniz/kaç yıldır Ankara'da yaşıyorsunuz? (*Place of birth/ the duration of stay in Ankara*):
- 3-) Cinsiyetiniz (*Gender*):
- 4-) Medeni haliniz / İlk evliliğiniz mi? / Kaç yıldır evlisiniz? / Eşinizle akrabalık bağınız var mı? (*Marital status/Is this the first marriage/How long have you been married?/Is there full blood relationship with the partner?*)
- 5-) Çocuğunuz var mı? / Çocuklarınızın doğum tarihi, cinsiyeti, eğitim durumu, işi medeni hali nedir? (*Do you have children? What are the birth date, gender, educational level or employment status and marital status of your children?*)
- 6-) Eğitim durumunuz ve mesleğiniz nedir? (*Level of Education and your profession*):
- 7-) İş (Occupation):

- 8-) Varsa katıldığınız kurslar, aldığınız sertifikalar (*If applicable courses attended and certificates*):
- 9-) Oturduğunuz semt (*The district you live in*):
- 10-) Gelir düzeyinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız? (*How would you define your income level*)
- 11-) Ev sahibi misiniz? (*Are you the houseowner of the house you are living in?*)
- 12-) Oturduğunuz ev kaç metrekare? (*How many square meters does the house occupy?*)
- 13-) Evde kaç kişi yaşıyor? (*How many people live in the house?*)
- 14-) Evin kaç odası var? (*How many rooms does the house have?*)
- 15-) Hanenin gelir kaynakları neler? (*What is the source of income of the house?*)
- 16-) Arabanız var mı? (*Do you own a car?*)
- 17-) Arabayı kim kullanır? (*Who drives the car?*)
- 18-) Eve yardımcı kadın geliyor mu? (*Do you have a cleaning lady to help with household chores?*)

Everyday Life and Practices

- 1-) Bir gününüz nasıl geçer? Neler yaparsınız? Günlük aktiviteleriniz nelerdir?
(*How do you spend the day? What do you do? What are your daily activities?*)
- 2-) Günlük aktiviteleriniz içinde ibadetin yeri nedir?
(*What is the place of worshipping among the daily activities?*)
- 3-) Boş zamanlarınızı nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?
(*How do you spend your leisure times?*)
- 4-) Televizyon izler misiniz? Ne amaçla?
(*Do you watch television? Why?*)
- 5-) Gazete okur musunuz?
(*Do you read the daily newspapers?*)
- 6-) İnternet kullanıyor musunuz? Ne amaçla?
(*Do you use Internet? Why?*)
- 7-) Dergi okur musunuz? Ne amaçla? Hangi dergileri okursunuz? Neden?
(*Do you read any magazines? Why? Which magazines do you read? Why?*)
- 8-) Kitap okur musunuz?
(*Do you read books?*)

Worshipping Practices and the Place of Praying (counting prayers) Within

Everyday

1-) Günlük ibadet pratikleriniz nelerdir?

(What are your worshipping practices?)

2-) Herkes bu pratikleri bu şekilde mi yapar?

(Does everybody do the same practices, in the same way?)

3-) Ne zamandan beri bu ibadetleri uyguluyorsunuz?

(How long have you been performing these worshipping practices?)

4-) Günlük olarak hangi aktiviteleri yapmak gerekir? Hep aynı sayıda, aynı şekilde mi yapmak gerekir?

(What should be done daily? Should it be the same amount and same way all the time?)

5-) Din, ibadetler ve yapılması gerekenlerle ilgili bilgilere nereden ve nasıl ulaşıyorsunuz?

(How do you provide knowledge on religion, worshipping practices and what should be done?)

Practice of Counting Prayers and the Using of Tespih and Zikirmatik

1-) Neden zikrediyorsunuz veya dua ediyorsunuz? Nasıl? Kaç kere? Ne zamandan beri?

(Why do you dicker or pray? How? How many times? Since when?)

2-) Bu sayıların önemi ve değeri nedir?

(What is the importance and value of these numbers?)

3-) Bu ibadetlere yardımcı hangi nesnelere kullanıyorsunuz? Nasıl? Ne zamandan beri?

(Which object do you use to aid in these worshipping practices? How? Since when?)

4-) Herkes bu eşyaları mı kullanır? Herkes böyle mi yapar? Siz neden böyle yapmayı tercih ediyorsunuz? Kendinize özel kullanımlarınız var mı?

(Does everybody use these objects? Does everybody do the same? Why do you prefer doing like this? Is there any usages specific to you?)

5-) Neden zikirmatik veya tespih kullanıyorsunuz? Tespihi zikirmatiğe/zikirmatiği tespihe tercih ettiğiniz durumlar nedir?

(Why do you use tespih or zikirmatik? On which occasions do you prefer using tespih rather than zikirmatik or vice versa?)

6-) Zikirmatikten önce nasıl gerçekleştiriyordunuz bu pratikleri?

(How did you accomplish these practices before the introduction of zikirmatik?)

7-) Zikirmatik tesbihatınızı nasıl etkiledi??

(What was the influence of zikirmatik on praying the tespih?)

Materiality and Meaning of Tespih and Zikirmatik

1-) Zikirmatik gibi yenilikler hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

(What do you think of innovations such as zikirmatik?)

2-) Tespihle neler yapıyorsunuz?

(What do you do with tespih?)

3-) Zikirmatikle neler yapıyorsunuz?

(What do you do with zikirmatik?)

4-) Neden kullandığınız spesifik tesbihi veya zikirmatiği seçtiniz?

(What do you do with tespih?)

5-) Kullandığınız nesnenin sizin için anlamı ne? Ne ifade ediyor?

(What is the meaning of the object you are using? What does it imply for?)

6-) Tespih veya zikirmatiği nerede saklıyorsunuz? İbadetiniz bitince nereye koyuyorsunuz tespihi? Evde tesbih/zikirmatik nerede durur?

(Where do you store your tespih and zikirmatik? Where do you put these after your practice?

Where do you keep these at home?)

7-) Tespih veya zikirmatiğin biçimi, rengi, yapıldığı malzeme nasıl olmalı?

(How should the form, colour, material of the tespih or zikirmatik be?)