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| Zikr, by Amina Bragg |
| Zikr is the central ceremony of the Sufis.  This practice of remembrance is celebrated in different ways around the world by different lineages.  The Remembrance of the Divine allows participants to clear their minds of thoughts and distractions. Using repetition of sacred phrases, the participants let go of individual identity and give way to the spirit that unites. Around the world the most repeated zikr phrases are "Subhan allah, Alhamduli'llah, Allaho Akhbar" and "La illaha il allah."  Any of the Arabic '99 beautiful names of God' can be used in Remembrance, and so can any other phrase or tone, in any language, that invokes reverence, humility, sensitivity or gratitude.  Zikr phrases may be spoken, sung or silent.  They may be very subtle, or very loud and jarring.  Participants can be seated, standing or moving in unison. Zikr can also be a personal practice without a group and leader. Some zikrs are accompanied by instruments, melodic or percussive, but these are not necessary. Hazrat Inayat Khan was an accomplished musician, and his powerful zikrs began the tradition in Inayati orders of vocal zikrs accompanied by music. However, the beauty of zikr derives not from musical or leadership prowess, but from the surrendered hearts of the participants. |