



Membership in Ṭarīqah ASMA™

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"The universe is made of stories, not of atoms." - Muriel Rukeyser

This page details the process of joining **Ṭarīqah ASMA™** (the path of names), *not* joining the Bahá'í Faith. The **ṭarīqah** (approximate pronunciation, tār-ē-kāh) itself is a *private*, *not* an **official**, Bahá'í-related activity. If, however, you wish to respond favorably to al-da'wa (the invitation), and join the Bahá'í Faith, please visit [this page](#).

Membership in **Ṭarīqah ASMA** is strictly *informal*. That is to say, there are no membership lists. Furthermore, since **Ṭarīqah ASMA** has no **shaykh** or **pīr** (elder), the ritual of bay'ah (*giving one's hand of allegiance*) - also called 'ahd (covenant), wird (*receiving life-giving water*), fayḍ (emanation or outpouring), and baraka (blessing) - is not practiced here.

Rather, in the Bahá'í Faith, one gives one's hand, as a Covenant, only to Bahá'u'lláh, and one receives the wellspring of life, the outpourings of the Spirit, and the heavenly blessings by His grace. Thus, Bahá'ís are murīdūn (devotees) or muḥibīn (lovers) of Bahá'u'lláh and sālikūn (wayfarers) in His path.

Now, for those persons who wish to become a part of the **ṭarīqah**, this page presents *suggested* meditation (muraqaba or ta'ammul) exercises, through the repetition of asmā' (names) or māntras (**dhikr** for remembrance, **tasbīḥ** for duties, or **wadhīfa** for office). The practitioner of a **dhikr** (pronounced *zīkr*) is known as a **dhākir** (pronounced *zā-kīr*). Specifically, however, the methods used here are called **Dhikr ASMA™**.

Through meditation the doors of deeper knowledge and inspiration may be opened. Naturally, if one meditates as a Bahá'í he is connected with the Source; if a man believing in God meditates he is tuning in to the power and mercy of God; but we cannot say that any inspiration which a person, not knowing Bahá'u'lláh, or not believing in God, receives is merely from his own ego. Meditation is very important, and the Guardian [Shoghi Effendi] sees no reason why the friends [Bahá'ís] should not be taught to meditate, but they should guard against superstitious or foolish ideas creeping into it.

From a [letter](#), dated November 19, 1945, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual Bahá'í

There are no set forms of meditation prescribed in the teachings, no plan, as such, for inner development. The friends are urged--nay enjoined--to pray, and they also should meditate, but the manner of doing the latter is left entirely to the individual. The

inspiration received through meditation is of a nature that one cannot measure or determine. God can inspire into our minds things that we had no previous knowledge of, if He desires to do so.

From a [letter](#), dated January 25, 1943, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual Bahá'í

- I. This practice, the one which is generally recommended, has been modified from various sources. Aspects of the first two items (a and b), in particular, are incorporated because of their symbolism (as narratives or stories), not to affirm (or to deny) their effectiveness:
 - a. the silent māntric repetition (Sanskrit, *jāpa*) and meditation (Sanskrit, *dhyāna*) on the *ājña* chakra (Sanskrit for the command chakra, i.e., the third eye) used by [Adhyatma Vigyan Satsang Kendra](#) (Guru Ram Lalji Siyag's *Siddhā Yogā*) and by various surat *shabd* *yogā* (Sanskrit for union of the soul with the word) communities (an outgrowth of the Indian Bhāktī-*Ṣūfī* movement), i.e., [Sant Mat](#), [Spiritual Freedom Satsang](#), and [Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra Satsang](#).
 - b. the discussion of, first, the symbolic aspects of two of the five [fingers](#) and, second, the [thumb](#) as a means to feel the pulse, both according to [Shaykh Muhammad Nāẓim's Naqshbandī Haqqanī Ṣūfī Order](#).
 - c. the attention to one's heartbeat found within Gohar Shahi's [Religion of God](#) (in Urdū, as well as in Fārsī/Persian, *Dīn-i Ilāhī*), an '*Uwaysī* branch of [Ḥadrat Sultān Bāhū's Sārwarī Qādirīyah Ṣūfī Order](#). The term, '*Uwaysī*, refers to a transmission of authority, in *al-ālam al-arwāḥ* (the world of spirits), from an outwardly unrelated, whether living or deceased, [shaykh](#). Transmissions of this sort are believed to be revealed, typically, through *manāmāt* (*inspired dreams*) and *ru'an* (visions).
 - d. one of the systems for breath control (*prāṇāyāma*, Sanskrit for "restraining the vital life force") presented in Mark Becker's [Serenity Yogā](#), a principally *hāṭha* (literally, sun-moon) *yogā* school.

My personal advice is to begin with only one or two of the following steps. As you become comfortable, gradually expand your activity. Additionally, when driving or distracted by other concerns, my suggestion is to avoid this meditation and to choose the one labeled with a Roman numeral II (further down the page).

1. Sit or lay in a comfortable position. Close your eyes.
2. *Ṣūfism* (Taṣawwuf) has a system of *laṭāif as-sitta* (six subtle centers) which is similar, though not identical, to the *chakras* (literally, "wheels") in Hinduism. According to the [Naqshbandī Haqqanī Ṣūfī Order](#), the *minimus* (little finger or pinkie) represents *al-laṭīfat al-qalbī* or the subtlety of the heart (on the left side of the chest), while the thumb represents *al-laṭīfat al-khafī* or the concealed subtlety (the highest *laṭīfat* in the center of the crown of the head). Join together the thumb and *minimus* of each hand. Lightly cup your hands facing upwards. (In Sanskrit, a comparable position is called *buddhī mudrā* or seal of awakening. It is associated with the *Buddhā*, the Awakened One.) Feel your heartbeat from the pulse in your

thumb.



3. Breathe slowly and deeply through your nose.
4. Māntras and other spiritual applications of language are employed across a wide spectrum of religious contexts. Examples are:
 - the **dhikr** of *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (performed by Mesut Kurtis?). It is the first part of the **Shahāda**, or Islāmic testimony of faith, and is used by a variety of **Şūfī** organizations, including the **M.T.O. Shahmaghsoudi School of Islamic Sufism**.
 - the **Mahā Māntra** (Sanskrit for great mantra, i.e., *Hare Krṣṇa, Hare Krṣṇa, Krṣṇa Krṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*) in the **International Society for Krishna Consciousness** and elsewhere.
 - the Daimoku (Japanese for sacred title). It is *Nam Myōhō Renge Kyō*, in the **Nichiren-shō-shū** and **Sōka-gokkai** Buddhist organizations, and *Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō*, in **Nichiren-shū** Buddhism.
 - the **Rosary** (from the Latin for rose garden), with its multiple decades of *Hail Marys*, in **Roman Catholicism**.
 - The kabbalistic (from the Hebrew for receiving) Song of Redemption, *Na Nach Nachma Nachman Mayuman*, in the **Na Nach** branch of the Breslov **Hasidic (Khasidic)** dynasty.
 - the simran (a Punjabī term which, like **dhikr**, translates as remembrance) of *rādhāsoāmī* (Sanskrit for lord of the soul) in the **Rādhāsoāmī Faith** (Dr. Agam Saran Sahab). Many other branches of this movement (surat **shabd yogā**) instead use five initiatory names.
 - Hēsychasm (Greek for stillness, i.e., the *Jesus prayer, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner*) in the **Eastern Orthodox Church**.
 - the glōssolalia (Greek for **speaking in tongues**) of the **pentecostals**, the **charismatics**, the **New Apostolic Church International**, **The Way International**, and others.
 - The meditations on **kōans** (from the Chinese for public announcement) found in various **Zen Buddhist** movements.

For our purposes, silently repeat a **dhikr** (called either al-**dhikr** al-**khafī**, the concealed remembrance, or al-**dhikr** al-**qalbī**, the remembrance of the heart) of your own choosing. Do not move your lips or your tongue. (The technique of silent repetition is especially common in the Naqshbandīyah **Şūfī** orders.) Additional possibilities include:

- Recite *Yā Bahā'u'l-Abhā - Yā `Aliyyu'l-'Ala* to a number of your own choosing. The first one, an invocation to Bahā'u'llāh, translates as "O Glory of the All-Glorious." The second, an invocation to the Bāb, translates as "O Exalted of the Most Exalted One."

- Recite [Allāhu Abhā](#) (God is the Most Glorious) 95 times.
- Recite the Báb's [Remover of Difficulties](#) prayer 500 or 1,000 times, i.e., over and over again. (Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!)
- Recite each of the following invocations 19 times: [Allāhu Akbar \(God is the Great\)](#), [Allāhu A'zam \(God is the Most Great\)](#), [Allāhu Ajmal \(God is the Most Beautiful\)](#), [Allāhu Abhā \(God is the Most Glorious\)](#), and [Allāhu Aṭṭhar \(God is the Most Pure\)](#).
- Recite [Yā Musakin al-Aryāh](#) (O Subduer of the Winds) to a number of your own choosing.
- Recite [Yā Shafī](#) (O *Thou* the Healer, Intercessor, or Mediator) to a number of your own choosing.
- Recite [Praise be to Thee, O Revealer of the Signs of God!](#) to a number of your own choosing.

He [Shoghi Effendi] thinks it would be wiser for the Bahá'ís to use the Meditations given by Bahá'u'lláh, and not any set form of meditation recommended by someone else; but the believers must be left free in these details and allowed to have personal latitude in finding their own level of communion with God.

From a [letter](#), dated January 27, 1952, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual Bahá'í

5. Engage in visualization and concentration (taṣawwur, i.e., conception or conceptualizing), centered in the space between your eyebrows (al-laṭīfat al-khāfī or the hidden subtlety), on: becoming susceptible to, drawing near to, feeling attracted to, or acquiring the divine Names and Attributes (the virtues) contained within the dhikr (particularly as exemplified by 'Abdu'l-Bahá).

In contemplating the Master's ['Abdu'l-Bahá's] divine example we may well reflect that His life and deeds were not acted to a pattern of expediency, but were the inevitable and spontaneous expression of His inner self. We, likewise, shall act according to His example only as our inward spirits, growing and maturing through the disciplines of prayer and practice of the Teachings, become the wellsprings of all our attitudes and actions.

The Universal House of Justice, [Riḍván Message](#), 1969 (126 Bahá'í Era)

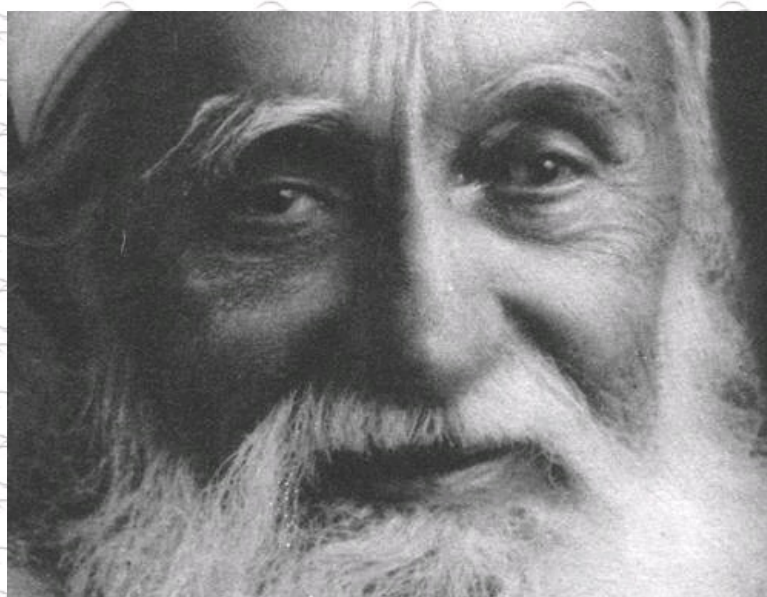
Let them call to mind, fearlessly and determinedly, the example and conduct of 'Abdu'l-Bahá while in their midst. Let them remember His courage, His genuine love, His informal and indiscriminating fellowship, His contempt for and impatience of criticism, tempered by His tact and wisdom. Let them revive and perpetuate the memory of those unforgettable and historic episodes and occasions on which He so strikingly demonstrated His keen sense of justice, His spontaneous sympathy for the downtrodden, His ever-abiding sense of the oneness of the human race, His overflowing love for its members, and His displeasure with those who dared to flout His wishes, to deride His methods, to challenge His principles, or to nullify His acts.

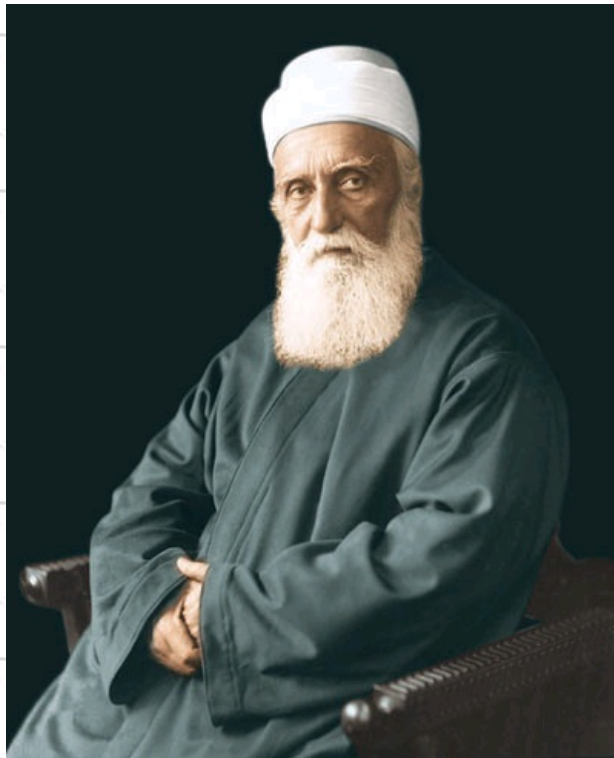
Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pages 34-35.

If you find you need to visualize someone when you pray, think of the

Master [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. Through Him you can address Bahá’u’lláh. Gradually try to think of the qualities of the Manifestation [the Prophet], and in that way a mental form will fade out, for after all the body is not the thing, His Spirit is there and is the essential, everlasting element.

From a letter, dated January 31, 1949, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual Bahá’í (*Lights of Guidance*, number 1493)





6. Recite these words to the rhythm of your heart. If your heart beats more or less strongly, adjust the invocations accordingly. Eventually, the words, like your heartbeat, may be with you throughout the day.

II. The second technique is more flexible:

1. Stand, sit, or recline (according to your own preferences or requirements).
2. Vocally, or silently, chant *or* recite (and, if possible, consciously reflect upon) invocations of your own choosing. (Examples are provided with the previous meditation.) As explained before, the silent **dhikr** is called either al-**dhikr** al-qalbī or al-**dhikr** al-khafī. (In some systems, this **dhikr** can be whispered.) Spoken **dhikr**, on the other hand, is al-**dhikr** al-lisānā (the remembrance with the tongue) or al-**dhikr** al-jalī (the clear remembrance).
3. When feasible, either focus on al-laṭīfat al-qalbī (the heart center), or visualize, imagine, and *feel* the **dhikr** being written on that center. The latter method has been inspired by a practice in Gohar Shahi's **Religion of God**, which, in turn, is based on Ḥaḍrat Sulṭān Bāhū's **taṢawwur al-ism al-dhāt** (in Urdū, as well as in Fārsī, taṢawwur-i ism-i zāt), i.e., conceptualizing the personal name of *Allāh*.

