

SHAIKH KABIR HELMINSKI is a Shaikh of the Mevlevi Order of Sufis, which traces its inspiration to Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi. He began his Mevlevi training as a student of Shaikh Suleyman Hayati Loras (1904-1985), a great Mevlevi Shaikh of Konya who travelled to America and planted the seed of Sufism in many Western hearts. In 1990, he was appointed a Shaikh of the Mevlevi Order, by the late Dr. Celaledin Celebi (1926-1996) of Istanbul, Turkey, head of this Order who was a twenty-first generation descendant of Mevlâna Rumi. He was the first “Westerner” to be officially recognized as such at a time when there were only four other shaikhs in Turkey. Between 1994 and 2000 he toured with the Whirling Dervishes of Turkey, bringing the spiritual culture of the Mevlevis to a large number of people in the U.S.

In 1983, Shaikh Kabir (along with his wife Shaikha Camille) co-founded Threshold Society, a non-profit organization offering educational programs and retreats in spiritual psychology and practice, as well as books and audio recordings listed on their website: www.sufism.org. Though centered in the U. S., Threshold Society which is one of the foremost publishers of Sufi literature especially the writings of Mevlana Rumi, is recognized as an authentic source of Mevlevi teaching with close links to the International Mevlana Foundation in Turkey. The Threshold Society draws on the Mevlevi tradition as taught in contemporary Turkey as well as on Western sources, and is thus also eclectic. Its founders have studied with Samuel Lewis, Ram Das, Reshad Feild, Tosun Bayrak, and Murat Yagan, among other spiritual teachers. Threshold Books stopped its publishing program in 1999, and a number of its books were subsequently taken up by Shambhala. However, in 2017, Threshold Books became active once more.

BOOKS ON SUFISM: Shaikh Kabir has been working within the Mevlevi tradition for about thirty years and has developed programs that provide a structure for practice and study within Sufism and spiritual psychology. Under his direction the Mevlevi Order is working to apply traditional Sufi principles to the conditions of contemporary life. His books on Sufism have been translated into a number of languages, including French, Dutch, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Russian, and Indonesian. They are particularly concerned with Sufi psychology and with expressing the subtle relationships the author sees between the ego (the lower levels of the *nafs*), the soul (the higher levels of the *nafs*), the heart (*qalb*), and Spirit (*Ruh*). Their major concern is to provide a metaphysical context for human consciousness, and the practical means for refining and expanding it. Shaikh Kabir presents Islam as a training system that allows us to become more “present,” capable of love, and able to express Spirit. His books on Sufism include:

(Translated with Camille Helminski) *Rumi: The Path of Love*, Element Books Ltd (Ashland, Oregon), 1999.

(Editor) *The Rumi Collection: An Anthology of Translations of Mevlâna Jalâluddin Rumi*, Shambhala Publications (Boulder, Colorado), 2000.

The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation, Shambhala Publications (Boulder, Colorado), 2000.

Living Presence: A Sufi Way to Mindfulness and the Essential Self (Revised), Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigee Books (New York), 2017.

Holistic Islam: Sufism, Transformation and the Needs of our Time (Islamic Encounter Series), White Cloud Press (Ashland, Oregon), 2017.

TRANSLATIONS OF SUFI POETRY: Shaikh Kabir's translations of Sufi poetry, especially Rumi's poetry, include the following:

The Ruins of the Heart: Selected Lyric Poetry of Jalâluddin Rumi, Threshold Books (Putney, Vermont), 1981.

(Translated with Refik Algan) *The Drop That Became the Sea: Lyric Poems of Yunus Emre*, Threshold Books (Putney, Vermont), 1989.

(Selected and Translated with Camille Helminski) *Rumi - Daylight: A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance*, Threshold Books (Putney, Vermont), 1990.

(Translated with Camille Helminski and Ibrahim Yahya Shihabi) *Happiness Without Death: Desert Hymns* by Assad Ali, Threshold Books (Putney, Vermont) 1991.

Love is a Stranger: Selected Lyric Poetry of Jalâluddin Rumi, Threshold Books (Putney, Vermont), 1993.

(Selected and Translated with Camille Helminski) *Jewels of Remembrance: A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance: Containing 365 Selections from the Wisdom of Rumi*, Threshold Books (Putney, Vermont), 1996.

(Translated with Camille Helminski) *Rumi: The Path of Love*, Element Books Ltd (Ashland, Oregon), 1999.

(Editor) *The Rumi Collection: An Anthology of Translations of Mevlâna Jalâluddin Rumi*, Shambhala Publications (Boulder, Colorado), 2000.

(Selected and Translated with Camille Helminski) *The Pocket Rumi Reader* (Shambhala Pocket Classics) Shambhala Publications Boulder Colorado), 2001.

(Translated with Ahmad Rezwani) *Love's Ripening: Rumi on the Heart's Journey*, Shambhala Publications (Boulder, Colorado), 2010.

(Selected and Translated with Camille Helminski) *The Rumi Daybook: 365 Poems and Teachings from the Beloved Sufi Master*, Shambhala Publications (Boulder, Colorado), 2011.

Civilization of Paradise: Revelation Poems by Asad Ali, Fons Vitae (Louisville, Kentucky), 2014.

BOOKS ON ISLAMIC EDUCATION: Beginning in 2000, Shaikh Kabir co-directed a publishing program representing an original approach to Islamic education, for The Book Foundation (www.TheBook.org). The books which he edited in this program include the following:

The Vision of the Qur'an, The Book Foundation (Watsonville, California), 2004.

(Selector and Editor) *The Book of Revelations: Selections from the Holy Qur'an with Interpretations by Muhammad Asad, Yusuf Ali, and Others*, The Book Foundation (Watsonville, California), 2005.

(Selector and Editor), *The Book of Revelations: A Sourcebook of Themes from the Holy Qur'an* (Education Project), The Book Foundation (Watsonville, California), 2005.

The Book of Language: Exploring the Spiritual Vocabulary of Islam (with an essay by Ghazi Bin Muhammad), The Book Foundation (Watsonville, California), 2006.

Book of Language: A Deep Glossary of Islamic and English Spiritual Terms (The Education Project Series), The Book Foundation (Watsonville, California), 2006

Another book on Islam co-authored by Shaikh Kabir with Hesham A. Hassaballa is

The Beliefnet Guide to Islam, Three Leaves Press/Doubleday (New York), 2006.

He is a contributor to *The Huffington Post*, *Patheos.com*, *Tikkun Magazine*, and *The Times of India*.

RECORDINGS OF SUFI POETRY AND MUSIC: Shaikh Kabir has produced a number of albums of Sufi music in collaboration with other musical friends. These include *Ocean of Remembrance* and *Rivers of One*. In 1997, he formed the Dost Quartet ("Four Friends") and released *Garden Within the Flames* (Interworld Music), an album of Sufi songs

(*ilahis*) with lyrics inspired by Yunus Emre, Pir Sultan Abdal, Ibn ‘Arabi, and Rumi. In *You are Joy* (Threshold Productions, 2004) selections from Rumi were translated and read by Shaikh Kabir and Shaikha Camille, and accompanied by original, traditional Sufi music.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT WORK: In 2002, Shaikh Kabir co-founded the Spiritual Paths Foundation (Aspen, Colorado) with Father Thomas Keating who explains the value of contemplation for leading an active life and creating positive change in the world. He (along with Shaikha Camille) has worked closely with this Foundation which consists of a group of respected contemplative teachers from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Native American, and Hindu traditions, and offers programs in applied inter-spirituality. In 2005, Shaikh Kabir co-founded Baraka Institute (www.barakainstitute.org) as an organization based on universal spiritual values, particularly aimed at younger adult Muslims in America and Europe who “have had little exposure to the spiritual legacy of their own tradition.”

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION: Shaikh Kabir has been named as one of the “500 Most Influential Muslims in the World” by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center, Amman, Jordan. In 2001, he was the first Muslim to deliver the inaugural Harold M. Wit Lecture on spirituality in Contemporary Life at Harvard Divinity School. In 2007, he was one of the original signatories of “A Common Word Between Us and You,” an open letter by Islamic scholars to Christian leaders, calling for peace and understanding. He has also been an advisor to Ansor, the World's largest Muslim youth organization based in Indonesia as it formulated a detailed roadmap for the reform of Islamic Orthodoxy.

CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO ISLAM: For more than three decades, Shaikh Kabir’s focus has been on developing and sharing a contemporary approach to Islamic concepts and practice, both within the Islamic community and outside of it. He lives in Louisville, Kentucky, and focuses on Sufi music, writing, teaching, and developing a program of spiritual education with an international team of scholars. He leads workshops and retreats for Sufis and the broader multi-faith community.

The Salaam Network (TSN) is proud of its association with Shaikh Kabir and Shaikha Camille who presented one of its earliest programs entitled “*Sufism: The Inner Heart of Islam*” at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church (Louisville, November 2016) in which they offered an introduction to the principles and practices of the Sufi tradition, as well as an opportunity to experience some Sufi practices, either as a participant or as an observer.

Shaikh Kabir had attended the May 1, 2016 brainstorming meeting of interfaith leaders at the Gomang Drepung Center for Engaging Compassion, to deliberate on escalating Islamophobia and other forms of bigotry and racism prevalent in Louisville. This meeting

had led to further discussions by consultative groups in the summer and led to the setting up of *The Salaam Network* which comprises educators, writers, artists, and peace-and-justice activists committed to bringing unity and wholeness to our Beloved Community. The presence of Shaikh Kabir and Shaikha Camille in our community is a special gift to all spiritual seekers, and is greatly valued by *The Salaam Network*.