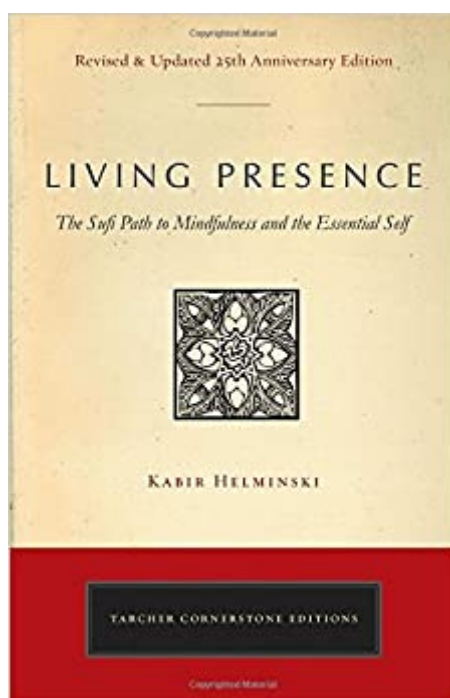


The book was found

Living Presence (Revised): The Sufi Path To Mindfulness And The Essential Self (Cornerstone Editions)



Synopsis

A revised 25th anniversary edition of the classic work on Sufism that Jack Kornfield called, "A heartfelt modern illumination of the Sufi path, filled with the fragrance of the ancients." In Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, presence is the quality that describes a heart-filled state of mindfulness, an experience of being conscious in the present moment. It is only in this present moment, Sufi teachings reveal, that we can connect with the Divine, and the Divine can live through us. Kabir Helminski is one of the world's most recognized teachers of Sufism. Named one of the "500 Most Influential Muslims" in the world by Georgetown University and the Royal Strategic Studies Center, Helminski and his teachings are touchstones for the growth in interest in Sufism, and his books have been translated around the world. In *Living Presence*, Helminski lays out the basic principles of Sufism, and how these ideas can lead to the experience of presence. In this inspiring work, readers will learn how to cultivate presence in their lives through:

- * Finding a balance between the outer stimuli of the world and our inner reactions to them
- * Harnessing faithfulness and gracefulness
- * Learning about the parallels between ancient spiritual wisdom and modern psychological knowledge
- * Meditation and contemplation to discover more meaning in daily life

With unique clarity, this book describes how presence can be developed to vastly improve our lives. Drawing on the work of the beloved Sufi poet, Rumi, as well as traditional material and personal experience, this book integrates the ancient wisdom of Sufism with the needs of contemporary life. Completely revised and updated for its 25th anniversary, this edition of *Living Presence* offers a wisdom that is both universal and practical.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kabir Helminski has been recognized as one of the most skilled and authentic translators of Rumi, and he is a spiritual teacher (shaikh) recognized by Rumi's tradition, the Mevlevi Order. While he has been named one of the "500 Most Influential Muslims in The World," he considers his most important contribution to be expressing the universal and practical aspects of spiritual development. Kabir is also a spiritual activist regularly writing for the Huffington Post, the Times of India, Patheos.com, and Tikkun. His books have been translated into at least nine languages.

This book is a revised and updated 25th anniversary edition of *Living Presence* by Kabir Helminski. The subject of the book is spelled out by the subtitle: *The Sufi Path to Mindfulness and the Essential Self*. The author shares with the readers some of the experiences, reflections, and knowledge that have been preserved within traditional Sufism, i.e., a spiritual training that was developed within the historical and cultural matrix of Islam. The aim of this particular training was to activate specific latent faculties of the mind, which remain dormant in ordinary man. Only through the activation and then uniting of these inner faculties, can a person fulfill his or her ultimate evolutionary purpose. Helminski describes a number of basic concepts, techniques, and approaches that have been extracted from the writings of Jalaluddin Rumi, a 13th century Persian mystic. Among these basic concepts are "ego," "self," "heart," and "spirit" (rather oddly defined by the author as "The electromagnetic milieu in which we all exist"). Consequently, "soul is the child of the union of self and spirit." Rumi allegorically presented such a union as a couple of lovers. Rumi's celebrated *Mathnawi* illustrates the whole gamut of challenges that a lover has to overcome before he can be united with his beloved. Helminski states that "through changing the energy level of the brain, we can activate a different kind of brain function." In other words, during the initial stage of the process, the mind undergoes a subtle but significant transmutation. The mind's inner structure is gradually unfolded, layer-by-layer. (This may be

compared to the splitting of atomic orbitals; in their natural form, the orbitals remain degenerate; but when exposed to a strong magnetic field, they may be split into several sub-levels.) The next phase of the process aims at uniting these newly activated layers. Therefore, the methodologies that were suitable for unfolding the inner layers of the mind become obsolete for the implementation of the following phases of the process. In the symbolic language of poets, this change was reflected by replacing a couple of lovers with the simultaneous union of several couples of lovers. Not many readers have recognized that such an updated spiritual methodology was quite precisely disclosed in Shakespeare's plays. Some readers will have noticed that Shakespeare's overall narrative illustrates the challenges that four couples of lovers must overcome before they may be united at the same time and place. It was at that time and place, i.e., in the late sixteenth century England, that a new phase of the spiritual teaching was initiated. It is important to notice that this new phase of the teaching was projected within the secular context of Western society. At the time of the initiation of this new phase, the previously disclosed techniques became sterile. In practical terms, the specific techniques introduced by Rumi ceased to be valid. It seems that Helminski is well aware that attempting to practice Sufism today is like dealing "with the aspects of those forms that were suited to another time and place". Yet, his presentation is clearly limited to a form that was projected within a select group of people in thirteenth century Minor Asia. Here is an example. Helminski explains that a whirling dervish becomes "a transformer of cosmic energies through conscious intention, love, and the electrodynamic effect of the human nervous system rotating in relation to the earth's magnetic field". However, he does not specify what sort of transformation a whirling dervish may experience today. Rumi is on the record saying that he applied the whirling dancing specifically for the thirteenth-century people of Minor Asia, because of certain characteristics of theirs. But these characteristics are not to be found quite to the same extent among the 21st century Westerners. In other words, instead of developing themselves in accordance with the currently operating cosmic matrix, the whirling Westerners may turn themselves into imitations of medieval Orientals. Despite these shortcomings, "Living Presence" is a welcomed book for it is a useful introduction for those who are looking for direction on how to enhance their lives and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. Helminski provides overall principles, which may serve as initial pointers: "Practically speaking, if we can shift our orientation from the exclusive concentration on satisfying our desires to a love of sharing in friendship -a cosmic Love that sees others as ourselves- then our identity or ego, is transformed by these forms of

love. There is probably no religion or spiritually oriented group who would not agree with this statement.

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