



# Spiritual Cinema

## Rumi Returning

Produced by Kell Kearns and Cynthia Lukas  
Heaven On Earth Creations [www.rumireturning.com](http://www.rumireturning.com)

**T**HIS FILM BIOGRAPHY of the beloved 13th century saint, Mevlâna Jalâluddîn Rumi, is a passionate rendering of his life and the spiritual intoxication that led him to the arms of the Beloved. Each year on December 17th, what Rumi called his "Wedding Day" is celebrated in Konya, Turkey, honoring his passage from this world and the consummation of his divine love. *Rumi Returning* traces his life from both a historical and theological perspective through dramatization, art and current day footage. Interviews with Akbar Ahmed, Chair of Islamic Studies at American University, Üzeyir Özyurt, a Sufi dervish born and living in Konya, Coleman Barks and Andrew Harvey help us understand Rumi's complex life and times.

Coleman Barks, the person most responsible for bringing Rumi's poetry to the west, reads his renderings of Rumi's quatrains. Andrew Harvey describes Rumi's spiritual journey and awakening as a Sufi, showing how Rumi's compassion and love for all beings is divinely relevant to our modern world. Rumi, whose path to God was divine love, is unquestionably Islam's greatest ambassador of peace today.

The remarkable aspect of this film is the heart and soul that went into its creation. The filmmakers gained permission from the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism to capture locales and landmarks that were familiar to Rumi in his daily life, as well as antiquities, artwork and footage from Afghanistan where Rumi was born. The scenes of the Sema Dance (Whirling Dervishes), performed in Konya are particularly exquisite. The music throughout captures the spirit and joy of Mevlâna, as he is affectionately called in the Middle East, among the world's most beloved poets.

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55 minutes. *Rumi Returning* will air on PBS beginning September 2, 2008. After 9/2/08 the DVD will be available for \$29.95, or pre-order at [www.heavenearth.net](http://www.heavenearth.net).



## Milarepa

Directed by Nyinmapa Tulku Sonam Rinpoche

**T**HE TIBETAN YOGI, MILAREPA (1052-1135), has been revered in the East for centuries, and with the introduction of Buddhism in the West, is renowned as one of the greatest spiritual warriors, who rose from sin to be a Bodhisattva in one lifetime. The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa, a collection of stories and poetry from his life, is a central text of Tibetan Buddhism. Stories from his life and his poetry are read with devotion by seekers to inspire determination in meditation and spiritual practices.

This 2006 film was written, produced, directed and edited by Nyinmapa Tulku Sonam Rinpoche, a Buddhist monk (not to be confused with Neten Chokling's film, *Milarepa: Magician, Murderer, Saint*, reviewed in *Light of Consciousness*, Spring 2007). *Milarepa* is far from a Hollywood production, but for seekers this film gives a raw yet accurate glimpse of Milarepa's quest for redemption and the world in which he lived. The film, entertaining and inspiring, portrays the earlier part of Milarepa's life and relies upon your familiarity with the story. The actors are amateurs, their acting sincere and genuine. Most significant is Milarepa's discipleship under the fierce master Marpa, which is both arduous and poignant. Filmed in Taiwan in Tibetan with Chinese and less-than-perfect English subtitles, *Milarepa* is a refreshing departure from the picture perfect film biographies we are used to in the West, and well worth seeing.

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96 minutes. Kun Sang Film and PBC Music, Taiwan. DVD available through Snow Lion for \$24.95, [www.snowlion.com](http://www.snowlion.com).