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God Within Reach: Nine Essays on How to Self-Awaken

Barry M Kibel

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These fabricated essays present the essential teaching of nine teachers whose insights helped shape my understanding of and relationship with the Divine Presence. Each essay reconstructs the approach taken by that teacher to reveal personal, first-hand understanding of the God-self relationship. Each makes clear how to see and break through myths about self and return to that point of consciousness where we are at-one with God. i drew these materials from core writing of each teacher, and reshaped them so they are transparent, provocative, and instructional. The text is presented largely in the second person as teaching directed from the teacher to you, the student. If I found some statement from the original text that was not immediately clear to me, I gently edited it so that I “got it.” I took care not to distort the teaching to the extent that it became more mine than theirs. A basic challenge that is repeated throughout this collection of essays: It is time for you to stop playing mental games and instead awaken to your Self! Each essay goes farther in offering clear instructions for how to make this happen right now by shifting the way you know yourself and see the world. The promise of this action is an intimate and authentic relation with God. The collection does not promote a single viewpoint or philosophy regarding who or what is God, and does not promote a “best” religion or discipline for closing the distance to God. None of these nine individuals make claims to have the monopoly on the truth. These five Eastern and four Western teachers approach spiritual inquiry through different disciplines and lenses, yet there is a sense of wholeness and integrity to what they offer collectively. They are each speaking from a root level where unity rather than divisiveness prevails. Each essay is an invitation to the reader to adopt that teacher for a brief while as a seasoned guide and discover what might be learned from travelling on a mental journey with that guide. They present what they have learned and what has worked for them. What they teach, if approached with an open mind and heart, can serve to strengthen and mature one’s own practices, faith, and connection with God. The five spiritual guides from the East were among the most popular and respected teachers and mystics of the past century. They played a major role in bringing Eastern spirituality to Europe and North America. The four Westerners echoed these teachings with their own unique spins on Self-consciousness. There is no clash here between East and West. Through the essays, each “side” offers parallel advice on what to stop and what to do (or not-do) so that welcomed results immediately follow. Each essay is fascinating in its own right. Each reflects the unbridled passion and complete sincerity of that teacher. The advice offered is plausible and compelling, even should you not buy into every single statement. These instructions have been endorsed, in the case of the five teachers from the East, by their multiple thousands of devoted followers. You can begin with any essay and then freely move across them to find a coherent thread of discourse, advice, and wisdom. My editing aimed at making this feasible. I also made use of several section headings for each essay to allow “essay hopping” around particular themes of interest. The table of contents includes these headings to encourage such cross-essay exploration. Akin to the I Ching, you can also open to any page and paragraph and find immediate wisdom to inform your day. It is hard to imagine any open-minded and open-hearted individual interested in deepening their spiritual understandings and practice who will not find inspiration and insight in this collection. The nine teachers—while clearly not representative of all faiths and spiritual disciplines—were among the 20th century’s best. The nine teachers would definitely be included in a Who’s Who of the field.

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