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CLARION REVIEW ★★☆☆☆ SELF-HELP

I Am the Change I Seek: A Primer in Self Realization

Kathleen Suneja
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In the late 1970s, Kathleen Suneja became a student activist against Soviet domination and oppression in her native India. During this dangerous and heady time, she learned a great deal about character development and spiritual principles, and endeavored to integrate them into both her inner and outer lives. *I Am the Change I Seek* is Suneja's attempt to share the insights and wisdom she has absorbed through activism and self-reflection. Unfortunately, her message gets lost in poorly structured sentences, countless redundancies, and confusing use of language. Nonetheless, it is clear that Suneja has a tremendous amount of wisdom to share; she has two masters degrees, a doctorate, a juris doctor, and an extensive background in advocating for social issues.

Suneja draws interesting parallels between the external oppression of a dictator and the internal oppression she and other activists feel as they struggle to find courage in the face of opposition from family, friends, and the authorities. Using the inner resources activists must develop to cope with the threat of torture and death as a catalyst for personal growth is an overriding theme in *I Am the Change I Seek.* Meditation and self-reflection come up time and again as methods to achieve this growth; Suneja is at her best when writing about the profound value of these two powerful tools.

When writing about the personal challenges she faced as a young activist, Suneja's voice randomly jumps between first, second, and third person, and the reader struggles to find the author's authentic voice hidden among the platitudes and indecipherable sentences. For example, she writes in chapter one: "Self-discipline and resolve helps to remain focused upon the effort. I realized that to stem the growth of oppression, one is required to make a commitment with every fiber of one's being to restore individual liberty." And, in chapter four, which is titled "Anger Leads to Renewal," Suneja writes, "We lose the opportunity to discover the self should we indulge in uncontrolled rage. We are better served should we dialogue with one another. Speaking with one another freely is the foremost way to solve any problems. We are able to achieve remarkable success by restoring lost freedom and human dignity."

I Am the Change I Seek could be helpful to would-be activists, if they have the patience to find and decipher the jewels in her writing. With the help of a good editor, her passionate and important words would be far more readable.

PATTY SUTHERLAND (March 26, 2012)

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