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Pathways to the Soul: 101 Ways to Open Your Heart

Carlos Warter
Hay House (March 2000)
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For those who have a gnawing sense that they should be engaged in a spiritual discovery practice, but are overwhelmed by the dizzying array of books, teachers, techniques and methods available, Warter offers a good place to start. The author of “Recovery of the Sacred” (1995), Warter performs a useful service for the beginning spiritual seeker by providing a simple and concise overview of the “many, many techniques of the sacred.” Included are brief descriptions of many of the popular practices such as yoga, meditation, prayer, tai chi and journal writing.

Yet this book, Warter’s fourth in English, cannot be characterized as an anthology. Warter, a trained physician known internationally for his work in transpersonal psychotherapy, invites the reader to explore the question “Who Am I?” by seeking the “light within” through various mental exercises, which make up the majority of his 101 ways to the soul. For example, in one exercise, called “The Gift,” Warter suggests visualizing opening a beautifully wrapped gift that contains a golden orb of light. The light has “everything you need to live on planet Earth, including wisdom, goodness and the skill to handle whatever happens to you. You are self-contained in this luminous vehicle.” Warter directs the reader to let the golden light dissolve into the top of his head and carry it with him throughout the day to remember his inner wealth.

Certainly a reader can find a lifetime of spiritual challenges in this book, particularly if the reader elects to take an “expressway to the light” by practicing one or all of the virtues: honesty and courage, discipline, kindness, gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, patience, generosity and simplicity. (These comprise nine of the 101 ways, and if practiced according to Warter’s guidelines, could trip up all but the saints.) It’s likely, however, that many readers will find a practice or two that intrigues them enough to delve beyond Warter’s brief introduction.

While this is a very useful book for the novice seeker, the experienced practitioner could also benefit from Warter’s gentle, yet deep, probing of the psyche, either by enhancing a current program or finding a new dimension to explore. Warter is a helpful guide along the path.
SHARON FLESHER (February 14, 2000)

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