



The Sacred Ego: Making Peace with Ourselves and Our World

Jalaja Bonheim

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This outstanding guide to fostering peace in communities opens hearts up to facilitating justice in an often violent world.

The Sacred Ego speaks from and to the heart as author Jalaja Bonheim implores humans, as individuals and as a species, to move toward peace. Well known for her work as a facilitator of circle gatherings bringing together Jewish and Palestinian women, Bonheim shares powerful stories and practical guidance in a must-read volume that teaches how a continued shift in human consciousness can indeed bring healing to the planet.

Rather than the enemy we have been conditioned to believe it is, the ego, Bonheim asserts, is an integral part of ourselves we should befriend rather than reject. With language that is straightforward but that speaks to the complex emotional riches within our collective psyche, Bonheim discusses the entwined influence of the tribal and modern egos on our hearts and minds. It is tribal-era, us-versus-them thinking, she claims, along with modern-day addictions to control and individual beliefs that have left us disconnected from the salve that accompanies heart-thinking, a mode of thought that “fuses head and heart into a single organ of compassionate wisdom.”

Bonheim lovingly explores this conscious shift toward “placing our mind in service of the heart.” What is perhaps most striking is the way she brings the present state of our world into such clear focus; greed, exploitation, and violence are real problems we must see honestly, but it is through this honesty that the heart opens.

Stories of transformation within individuals and between members of historically warring groups offer concrete evidence that the inner and outer work Bonheim promotes does indeed bring about change. The volume also includes important discussions about the power of circle gatherings and the healing potential of feminine qualities in a world dominated by patriarchal values. Study questions and exercises for individuals and groups provided at the book’s end are invaluable.

The Sacred Ego is a practical and compelling guide for conscious living. Through her truth telling, Bonheim leaves us with nothing but hope that peace is achievable—because it is already present within our hearts.

MARGARET FEDDER (Fall 2015)

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