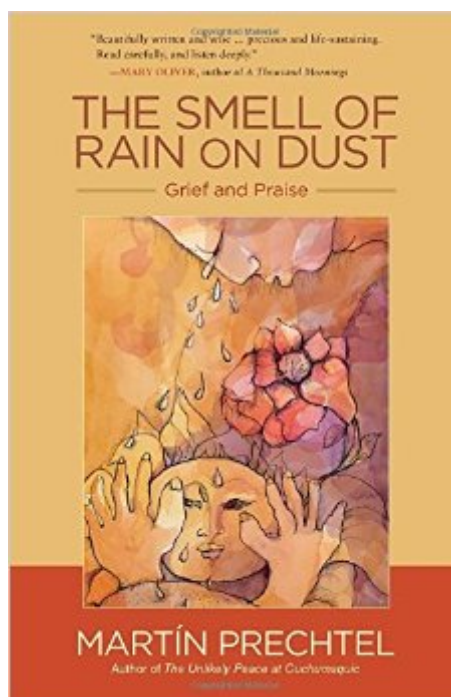


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The Smell Of Rain On Dust: Grief And Praise



Synopsis

Inspiring hope, solace, and courage in living through our losses, author MartÃ­n Prechtel, trained in the Tzutujil Maya shamanic tradition, shares profound insights on the relationship between grief and praise in our culture--how the inability that many of us have to grieve and weep properly for the dead is deeply linked with the inability to give praise for living. In modern society, grief is something that we usually experience in private, alone, and without the support of a community. Yet, as Prechtel says, "Grief expressed out loud for someone we have lost, or a country or home we have lost, is in itself the greatest praise we could ever give them. Grief is praise, because it is the natural way love honors what it misses." Prechtel explains that the unexpressed grief prevalent in our society today is the reason for many of the social, cultural, and individual maladies that we are currently experiencing. According to Prechtel, "When you have two centuries of people who have not properly grieved the things that they have lost, the grief shows up as ghosts that inhabit their grandchildren." These "ghosts," he says, can also manifest as disease in the form of tumors, which the Maya refer to as "solidified tears," or in the form of behavioral issues and depression. He goes on to show how this collective, unexpressed energy is the long-held grief of our ancestors manifesting itself, and the work that can be done to liberate this energy so we can heal from the trauma of loss, war, and suffering. At base, this "little book," as the author calls it, can be seen as a companion of encouragement, a little extra light for those deep and noble parts in all of us.

Book Information

Paperback: 184 pages

Publisher: North Atlantic Books (April 14, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1583949399

ISBN-13: 978-1583949399

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (24 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #37,961 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Â Books > Religion &

Spirituality > New Age & Spirituality > Shamanism #76 in Â Books > Self-Help > Death & Grief >

Grief & Bereavement #233 in Â Books > Religion & Spirituality > New Age & Spirituality > Mental & Spiritual Healing

Customer Reviews

Martin Prechtel's "The Smell of Rain on Dust" is beautiful from its title on through every page. Savor this: "The Sea speaks in a million ways, but the waves always lick the face of our hurt until our real face reappears from beneath." And I ask: Why isn't this book being reviewed in the NY Times? Why isn't Martin Prechtel being interviewed by Charlie Rose? This man is a mental, spiritual and artistic giant. But such is our world. We pretend to value honesty while hiding everything about ourselves. I've learned more about grief than I thought it was possible to know. Yes, one misjudges, perhaps, gets hurt, feels pain and if the betrayal is deep enough, grief ensues or is buried. We all know this. But Prechtel brings us into a kaleidoscopic world of pain we never knew existed, a world that holds the meaning of grief psychologically, politically, financially, historically, mythically and spiritually. He draws us a picture that sparkles of grief's relationship to praise and the saving grace of praise, showing how it spins our big world and our little worlds. He flat out states, ". . . without grief we can never grow ourselves into real people." He points out the relationship between suppressed grief and alcoholism. He homes in on returning vets, stating what I have always secretly believed: we humans are not cut out for such massacres and violence and ugly killings and we will pay for it with our souls. We are actually a gentle species, history notwithstanding. Additionally, Prechtel lays out for us the idea of one family member carrying "the old family grief" and the ramifications of that, a truly fascinating concept.

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