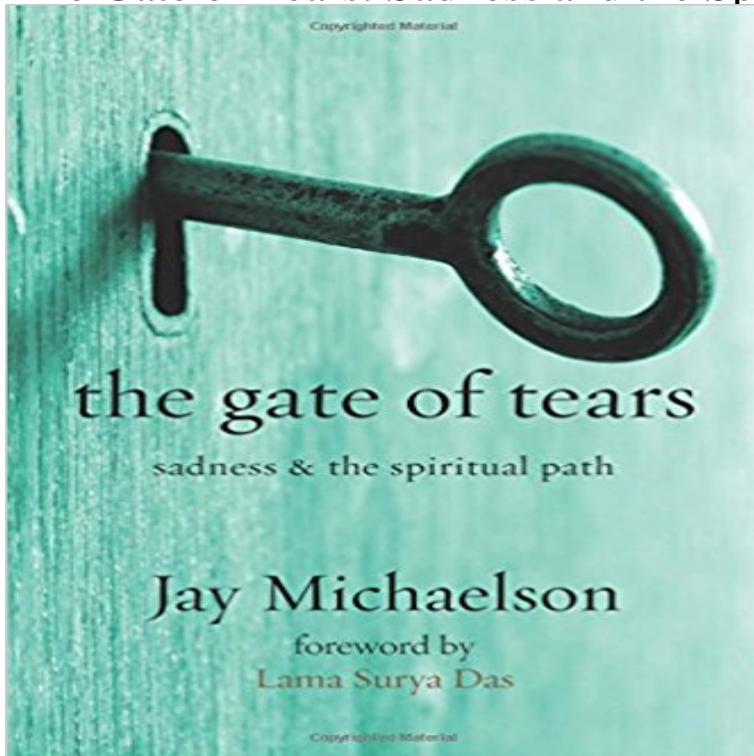


The Gate of Tears: Sadness and the Spiritual Path



The Gate of Tears: Sadness and the Spiritual Path explores the counter-intuitive insight that sadness and joy are not opposites - and that human capacities often suppressed or rejected can, instead, be gateways to deep joy, creativity, and liberation. Its eighty-two short, poetic, sometimes epigrammatic chapters draw on contemplative traditions, art, even pop songs. They are reflections on the path of surrender, alchemy, and the sacred. Written over a ten year period, and completed in the mourning period after the death of the author's mother, The Gate of Tears is not a self-help book. If anything, it is a self-helpless book, discovering a happiness deeper than transitory joys that emerges precisely when the resistance to sadness is released. As the contemporary Buddhist teacher Lama Surya Das says in his foreword to the book, the only thing that prevents happiness is searching for it. The Gate of Tears draws on Jay Michaelson's fifteen years as a student, and now a teacher, of Buddhist and Jewish contemplative paths. Michaelson is a rabbi, and holds a Ph.D. in Jewish Thought, and has taught Jewish mysticism in and outside the academic world. Yet he is also a longtime teacher of insight meditation in Western Buddhist and secular mindfulness contexts, who has sat many months-long silent meditation retreats. With his usual blend of erudition and accessibility, Michaelson weaves together Hasidic tales and Dharma teachings, Leonard Cohen and Langston Hughes. The Gate of Tears is not a New Age book with easy answers; it is infused with a contemporary sensibility, skepticism, and humor. Keywords: sadness and spirituality, sadness and meditation, mindfulness, Buddhism and Judaism, depression and meditation. Advance Praise: Jay Michaelson's incisive and exquisitely profound insights into our human condition come in full force in The

Gate of Tears. Here we have an antidote to mindless feel-good ideology, and gentle instructions in attending to the fullness of our experience so we see the value in the downs, not just the ups. Our inner world will never seem the same.- Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence
The Gate of Tears is a beautifully written, transformative book. Jay Michaelson guides us, instead of denying, avoiding, explaining away or resisting sadness, to go right into the heart of it. There we find open space, true love of life, and, perhaps most redeeming, one another.- Sharon Salzberg, author of Lovingkindness
Jay Michaelson's writing is always bracing and brave, but The Gate of Tears has particular power. He guides us to explore - and accept - the truth of what he calls ordinary sadness, and stop looking for happiness so that we might actually find it. Every chapter made me feel as if he was seeing me personally. This book will change your perspective and ease your load.- Abigail Pogrebin, author of Stars of David
About the Author
Dr. Jay Michaelson is the author of six books, including Evolving Dharma: Meditation, Buddhism and the Next Generation of Enlightenment (North Atlantic, 2013) and the bestselling God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality (Beacon, 2011), as well as over 300 articles in The Daily Beast, Atlantic, Tricycle, the Forward, and other publications.

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