



Healing the Soul after Religious Abuse: The Dark Heaven of Recovery (Religion, Health, and Healing)

Mikele Rauch

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Recent scandals of clergy sexual abuse have brought attention to the victims and their responses to and recovery from their abuse. But few have considered the effect of the abuse on a victim's soul and religious outlook and beliefs. *Healing the Soul after Religious Abuse*, offers a unique perspective of recovery and restoration of the soul after religious abuse. The author argues that religious abuse often stops not only psychological growth, but also inward development. The effect is not simply emotional, because the devastation reaches to the core of the spirit. Often there is no place for a God of love or a love of what once was divine. Through a series of personal interviews with persons from the five major religions, Rauch considers various ways that religion can do harm.

The stories told in this book include the road to restoration in the wake of institutional abuse and how inner experience is sometimes confused with religious training; the sacred task of spiritual leadership and how to restore trust when there has been a violation; an exploration of sacrifice and a clarification of the notion of shame; a look at the impact of religious bigotry in the areas of race, sexuality, and tolerance; an overview of sexuality and the place it holds in both celibate and family life; the pernicious issue of clergy sexual abuse and the signs of spiritual trauma in response to such violation; a roadmap for restoration and a challenge to religious institutions; and, lastly, ways to reclaim the sacred and rewire the spirit. Through interviews, research, and personal stories, the author tells a story of recovery of the most delicate kind, offering pathways through the dark night of religious violation to a restoration of the soul and its immense possibilities.

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