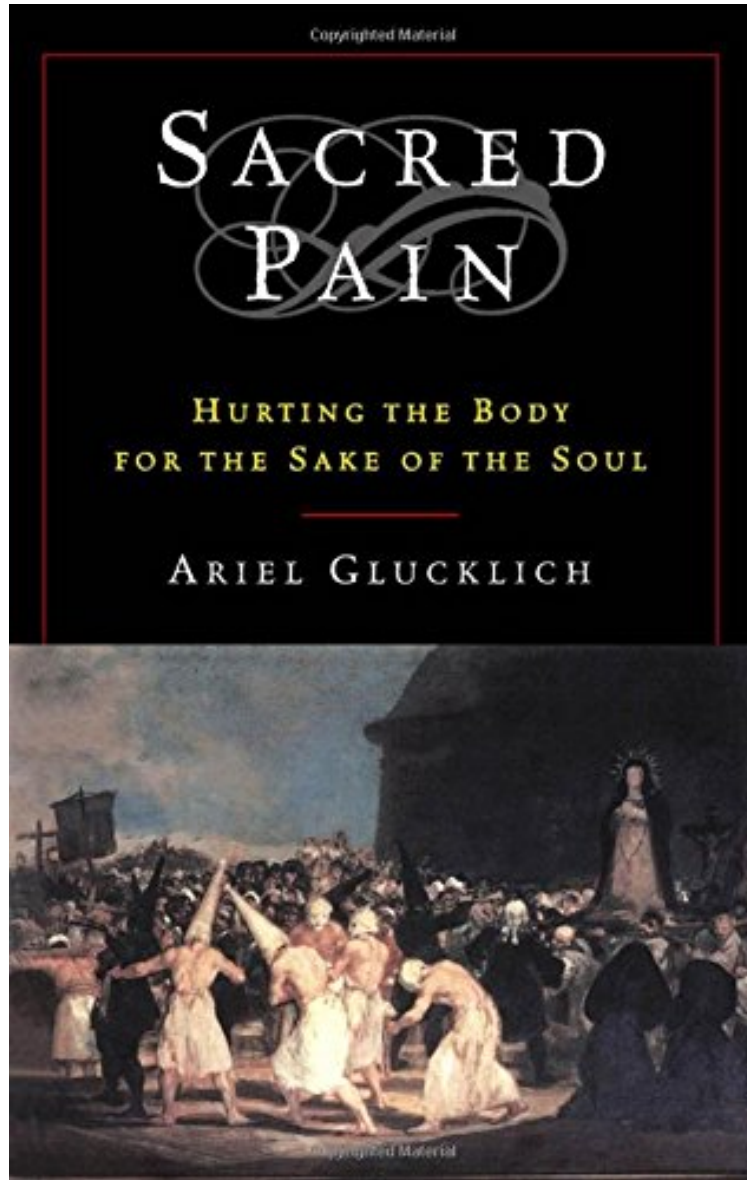


[E-BOOK] Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul

Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul

Ariel Glucklich

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Ariel Glucklich : Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul:

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Extremely Interesting and Insightful!By H
Ariel Glucklich's "Sacred Pain: Hurting the Body for the Sake of the Soul" is a fabulous look at religious pain. In an area with so few books already, a book like Glucklich's is a gem.The author takes many approaches to the topic, ranging from

anthropological, physiological, sociological and psychological to break down the use of pain (both self-inflicted and inflicted by others) into an insightful, understandable read. The book is filled with massive amounts of great content, as well as excellent citations from other good works and scholars, as well. The book is academic and scholarly, but hardly a dry read. I purchased this book because of my academic interest in body modification and pain ritual, but used it massively in a 'Religion and Psychology' course. I still find myself removing it from the shelf every now and again to look something up. Whether you ultimately agree with what the book presents, one will still find the book very interesting and thought-provoking. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This book will take you a while—even though 200 pages you won't do it in a night or even a week! By Douglas E. Libert I just ordered the End Of Magic his other book after reading this one—The author deals with the psychological, social aspects of what pain is in regard to the religious experience and I get the feeling that being in touch with the Creator might not be in the formula at least in the way we traditionally see it. He really has an analytical mind and carefully dissects everything to the point where at times I was just seeing some of this pain in regard to religious experiences as a "rite of passage" or a "quality control" type of initiation thing for societies. The book goes from self-inflicted type pain and offers interpretations for the phenomena and proceeds to anaesthesia where there is an attempt to completely block pain. The purpose being to gain approval or respectability of peers. So nonetheless the "pain" experience is as important as if there is maybe a god who sees and approves! I always thought of an old quote while reading this book, "A heightened religious experience may not necessarily put one in contact with the creator but it can raise the bar to where one definitely believes that he or she is in contact." I had to go back and completely reread paragraphs because I wasn't sure at times what I had read, but I think I sorta got the point! Anyways this book is worth the struggle and as I read it I found myself paging to the picture of the author thinking, "This looks like the kinda guy that could write a book like this, probably even was in a Sundance himself, analyzed it and now sandbagging it!" 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Topic is great however the writing style is plodding. By Richard F. Geist Fascinating book on the evolving way in which pain has been viewed as part of the social fabric over hundreds of years. Topic is great however the writing style is plodding.

Why would anyone seek out the very experience the rest of us most wish to avoid? Why would religious worshipers flog or crucify themselves, sleep on spikes, hang suspended by their flesh, or walk for miles through scorching deserts with bare and bloodied feet? In this insightful new book, Ariel Glucklich argues that the experience of ritual pain, far from being a form of a madness or superstition, contains a hidden rationality and can bring about a profound transformation of the consciousness and identity of the spiritual seeker. Steering a course between purely cultural and purely biological explanations, Glucklich approaches sacred pain from the perspective of the practitioner to fully examine the psychological and spiritual effects of self-hurting. He discusses the scientific understanding of pain, drawing on research in fields such as neuropsychology and neurology. He also ranges over a broad spectrum of historical and cultural contexts, showing the many ways mystics, saints, pilgrims, mourners, shamans, Taoists, Muslims, Hindus, Native Americans, and indeed members of virtually every religion have used pain to achieve a greater identification with God. He examines how pain has served as a punishment for sin, a cure for disease, a weapon against the body and its desires, or a means by which the ego may be transcended and spiritual sickness healed. "When pain transgresses the limits," the Muslim mystic Mizra Asadullah Ghalib is quoted as saying, "it becomes medicine." Based on extensive research and written with both empathy and critical insight, *Sacred Pain* explores the uncharted inner terrain of self-hurting and reveals how meaningful suffering has been used to heal the human spirit.

From Publishers Weekly Why do mystics and devout laypeople in many different religious traditions glorify physical pain, some going so far as to ritually mutilate themselves in the name of the divine? In this erudite and wide-ranging study, Glucklich, a professor of theology at Georgetown University, offers a compelling explanation. Drawing on the fields of psychology, neurophysiology and religious studies, he observes that pain "the most familiar and universal aspect of all human experiences" affects both the body and the mind. Pain triggers an altered state of consciousness in which one's sense of self is diminished, creating an absence that can make way for a new and affirming presence. "The task of sacred pain," Glucklich writes, "is to transform destructive or disintegrative suffering into a positive religious-psychological mechanism for reintegration within a more deeply valued level of reality than individual existence." Although this state of transcendence exists across cultures, the way in which the experience is interpreted is culturally specific. To demonstrate this, Glucklich draws upon a wide range of examples, from the tortures of the Inquisition to Native American trials of endurance. He concludes by exploring what we may have lost with the development of medical anesthetics. This fascinating, closely argued study suggests that, in religion as in sports, there is no gain without pain. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Why do people seek out or endure intense physical pain in the name of religion? This question was posed to Glucklich (theology, Georgetown Univ.) by a friend, and this book is his answer. Steering clear of easy or reductive answers such as lunacy and superstition, Glucklich delves deeply into the various fields (psychology, physiology, philosophy, history, theology) that one must investigate to respond. He focuses on the effect of pain on the self and sense of identity and examines

the various meanings pain can have for the individual, in contrast to the modern view of pain as an enemy and unquestionably undesirable. As he states, "Only religious language can describe how 'bad' pain becomes 'good' pain, though it is not only religion that brings about this transformation." This demanding book does justice to the complexity of its subject as Glucklich masterfully leads the reader through all the diverse paths that connect with the central topic. He is a skilled writer who presents complicated material well without sacrificing meaning or nuance. Highly recommended for academic libraries. Stephen Joseph, Butler Cty. Community Coll., PA Halpern, Baruch.

David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Succeeds not only because of the immense and careful scholarship it displays, but also because it establishes a creative dialogue between science and religion on a question of enduring, and today largely forgotten, importance. Most of all, the book invites its readers to appreciate that pain need not be meaningless."--Stephen G. Post, First Things "Erudite and wide-ranging...compelling.... This fascinating, closely argued study suggests that in religion as in sports, there is no gain without pain."--Publishers Weekly (starred review) "This demanding book does justice to the complexity of its subject as Glucklich masterfully leads the reader through all the diverse paths that connect with the central topic. He is a skilled writer who presents complicated material well without sacrificing meaning or nuance."--Library Journal "A brilliantly written, thought-provoking volume on the transformative potential of physical pain experienced within a religious context."--Harold G. Koenig, M.D., co-author, Handbook of Religion and Health "Ariel Glucklich is that rare being, a genuine comparativist, of cosmopolitan learning and wide sympathies. Drawing upon such diverse approaches as neurobiology, social psychology, ritual studies, cultural theory, phenomenology, and history of religion, he succeeds in shedding light on the darkest reaches of the seemingly chaotic realm of pain. Glucklich reminds us of all-but-forgotten insights into the transformative power of sacred pain, brings these insights into dialogue with the best thinking that is being done in the behavioral and biological sciences, and in so doing forges new instruments for the study of religious consciousness."--Carol Zaleski, Professor and Chair, Department of Religion, Smith College