

## POLISHING THE MIRROR

How to Live from Your Spiritual Heart

By Ram Dass with Rameshwar Das

192 pp. Sounds True. Reprint ed. 2014.

In *Polishing the Mirror* (2014), [Ram Dass](#) (1931–2019) has evolved from trippy spiritual seeker, author of the counterculture sensation *Be Here Now* (1970), to avuncular sage. With [Rameshwar Das](#), he distills forty-plus years of teaching and lecturing, and evocations of his guru [Maharaj-ji](#) to "love everyone, serve everyone, and remember God" (95). This time, without illustrations and recipes, Ram Dass codifies the spiritual path to oneness with the Beloved, with practices such as meditation, kirtan (chanting the names of God), pilgrimage, and retreat. The concepts are now familiar: bhakti (devotion), witness consciousness, change, and suffering. In 1997, while writing on aging, Ram Dass has a massive stroke and experiences "aphasia, paralysis, and dependence on others" (100). Still, he remains lucid, defining our innate compassion as "bearing the unbearable" (109). He is clear about the challenge. Can you be with the change while "cultivat[ing] equanimity, clarity, loving awareness, compassion, and joy" (70)? Can you go from a role—seeker or sage—to the soul? Ram Dass said it took him four decades to understand that only from the soul plane of consciousness, not the ego plane, will he love everyone (119). The soul had been there all along. Keep polishing. —Lisa Thaler (author, *Look Up: The Life and Art of Sacha Kolin*), 12 December 2021