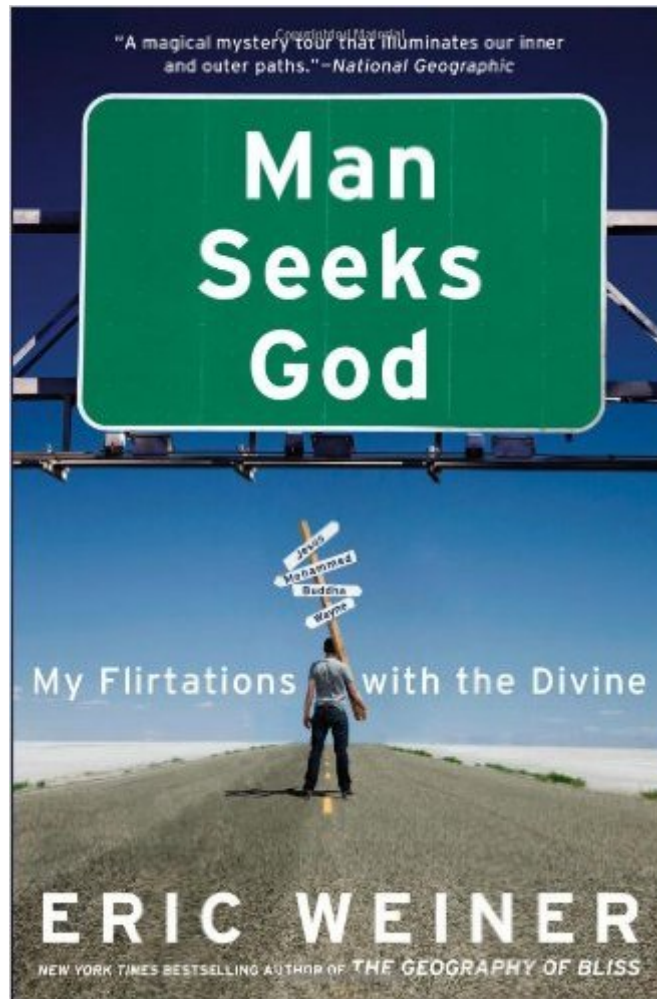


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Man Seeks God: My Flirtations With The Divine



Synopsis

When a health scare puts him in the hospital, Eric Weiner—an agnostic by default—finds himself tangling with an unexpected question, posed to him by a well-meaning nurse. "Have you found your God yet?" The thought of it nags him, and prods him—and ultimately launches him on a far-flung journey to do just that. Weiner, a longtime "spiritual voyeur" and inveterate traveler, realizes that while he has been privy to a wide range of religious practices, he's never seriously considered these concepts in his own life. Face to face with his own mortality, and spurred on by the question of what spiritual principles to impart to his young daughter, he decides to correct this omission, undertaking a worldwide exploration of religions and hoping to come, if he can, to a personal understanding of the divine. The journey that results is rich in insight, humor, and heart. Willing to do anything to better understand faith, and to find the god or gods that speak to him, he travels to Nepal, where he meditates with Tibetan lamas and a guy named Wayne. He sojourns to Turkey, where he whirls (not so well, as it turns out) with Sufi dervishes. He heads to China, where he attempts to unblock his chi; to Israel, where he studies Kabbalah, sans Madonna; and to Las Vegas, where he has a close encounter with Raelians (followers of the world's largest UFO-based religion). At each stop along the way, Weiner tackles our most pressing spiritual questions: Where do we come from? What happens when we die? How should we live our lives? Where do all the missing socks go? With his trademark wit and warmth, he leaves no stone unturned. At a time when more Americans than ever are choosing a new faith, and when spiritual questions loom large in the modern age, *MAN SEEKS GOD* presents a perspective on religion that is sure to delight, inspire, and entertain.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Twelve (November 6, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0446539481

ISBN-13: 978-0446539487

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (74 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #551,176 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #167 in [Books > Travel >](#)

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Customer Reviews

"Man Seeks God" is often a very superficial book on life's biggest, heaviest questions, and Eric Weiner, the book's author, is a relentlessly self-absorbed, elitist, dilettante, but that is exactly this book's charm. This is probably the only somewhat serious hardcover book that addresses Islam, Buddhism, Catholicism, Judaism, and Taoism that you could read straight through, and laugh at, during a long plane flight. This book is full of witty one-liners. A favorite: Taoism fills mankind's God-shaped hole with a hole-shaped God (220). Weiner, your host through four thousand years of religions belief and practice, is quite the whiner. At the Second Coming, he'd obsess on his hangnail. At first I was shocked at how unabashedly self-absorbed he was, but his single-minded frankness wore me down. By the time he actually did write something serious about a spiritual experience he'd had - all the way on page 316 - I was moved. Weiner is a very successful author and journalist who was hospitalized with a bad case of intestinal gas. (Really.) A nurse asked him if he had found his God yet. He realized he had not, and he set out looking. I would give this book five stars instead of four if Weiner revealed any awareness of one feature of the book: his search is extraordinarily dilettantish and superficial. Others going in search of the deep truths have devoted years of sacrifice, study, and immersion. They travel far, live poor, study hard, test beliefs under the most demanding of conditions, seek teachers who themselves have inherited beliefs from generations, and lived their lessons under the toughest circumstances. None of that for Weiner.

The spiritual journey, in fiction and nonfiction, is a tried-and-true theme because religious community and spiritual experience play a large role in the lives of so many, and have for millennia. The latest author to explore this realm is Eric Weiner, whose memoir MAN SEEKS GOD is about looking for the sacred. While in the hospital for mysterious severe abdominal pain, a nurse ominously asked him, "Have you found your God yet?" The answer was no. Rattled by the possibility of illness (it turns out he was just fine) and spooked by the question, Weiner sets out to discover a deity, or a religion in which he can find meaning and comfort. Raised a secular "gastronomical" Jew but with no emotional ties to Judaism, and wary of the term "agnostic," the world of religion was wide open to the self-proclaimed "Confusionist." A former NPR correspondent, Weiner was comfortable traveling the world to get information and perspective, and so that is what he did. Guided by the work and biography of philosopher and psychologist William James, author of the seminal THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, Weiner takes an experiential approach to finding God. But, ever the bibliophile, his search is informed by additional thinkers and theologians such as Ghandi, Aldous Huxley, Rumi, Lao Tzu, Rilke, Paul Tillich, Isaac Luria, and

many more. Weiner begins with Islamic mysticism, Sufism. From California to Istanbul to Konya, he ponders Sufi thought and tries to spin like the Whirling Dervishes. And while he finds beauty in the practice, Islam is not for him. He next goes to Kathmandu in search of the wisdom of Buddhist meditation, studying with a guy named Wayne and circumambulating a stupa.

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