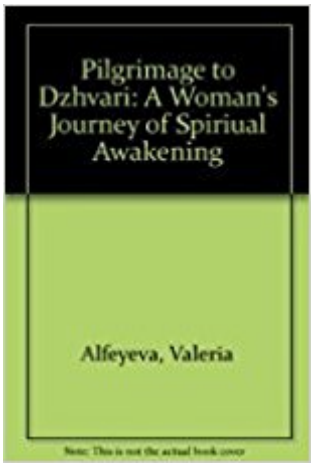
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Pilgrimage To Dzhvari: A Woman's Journey Of Spiritual Awakening



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Synopsis

Pilgrimage to Dzhvari is set in the last days of the Communist regime when people from all levels of Soviet society are searching for ways to reconnect with their memories of goodness and truth. A writer leaves her work in Moscow and with her teenage son sets out to visit the few remaining monasteries in the Georgian Caucasus in order to discover the mystical teachings of the Eastern Orthodox Church. In particular, they seek instruction in the Prayer of the Heart, the constant internal repetition of the words, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." For centuries this practice -- known in the West as the "Jesus Prayer" -- has been one of the principal disciplines of monks, priests, and elders of the Eastern rite.There is a purity and clarity about this simple tale of devotion that is reminiscent of that earlier spiritual classic The Way of a Pilgrim. But this journey is undertaken by a woman at the end of the twentieth century. The eloquence and power of Valeria Alfeyeva’s description of the eternal quest for the divine on earth will not easily be forgotten.Cover illustration by Tim BowerCover design by John FontanaFrom the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this loosely autobiographical novel translated from the Russian, Alfeyeva describes her search for spiritual serenity and a deeper understanding of her Eastern Orthodox faith through visits to two Georgian monasteries. Shortly after the death of her husband, the narrator, a journalist like Alfeyeva, and her teenage son Mitya, arrange an unusual visit to a well-known monastery--unusual because women are traditionally forbidden entry. There, the narrator is urged to abandon her "intellectual" appreciation of Christianity for a more visceral faith while Mitya is encouraged in his

desire to become a priest. Six years later, Mitya becomes a monk rather than the priest his mother had hoped and in a visit to another Georgian monastery, the narrator grapples both with her disappointment over his decision and with broader problems of Soviet mores and modern moral laxity. The strength of this impressive work comes not only from the depiction of the monks' human weaknesses and constant spiritual self-testing, but resides also in Alfeyeva's thoughtful explanation of the Orthodox faith and in her lyrical descriptions of the natural beauty of the Georgian countryside. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is a fictionalized account of a woman journalist and intellectual's spiritual journey into Orthodoxy during the final days of communism in the Republic of Georgia (USSR) when she, accompanied by her teenaged son, is allowed to spend several weeks in a monastery. Although she recounts blatant sexism (even harassment, though she never uses the term), she focuses much more on her own and her son's spiritual transformation, which she sustains as she journeys, six years later and accompanied by a hieromonk (not her son, though he has been ordained too), to another monastery, where she finds that the dream she had given up will be fulfilled. Recommended for academic collections focusing on Russian, Georgian, and women's studies and for most public libraries.Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Sometimes people have a hard time with spiritual reading, feeling like every Orthodox book they try to read is too removed from their life to really connect with. On that note I have a recommendation.I am just finishing "Pilgrimage to Dzhvari" by Valeria Alfeyeva. The author is the mother of Bp Hilarion (Alfeyev) of the Russian Orthodox Church. The book is a loosely autobiographical account of a Russian woman's coming to faith in the waning days of the Soviet Union and particularly of her pilgrimage to two Orthodox monasteries in Georgia. It contains a lot of wisdom from the Orthodox tradition but is written more like a memoir or a narrative than most books you might consider spiritual reading.

If you are looking for a book that reveals details about Russian Orthodoxy OR one which is spiritually inspiring, you can skip this particular work. The writer is of that brand of faith in which how she feels is the determining element, and hence the narrative is mostly boring. She doesn't feel much interesting.

I ran across this book way back in 1992. I was in my early 20's and had just finished graduating

from a local Bible College. I was hungry for substance. I was hungry for God. I glanced through this memoir and it looked like a very dense and hearty meal. I wasn't disappointed, but I was left wounded, like Jacob who wrestled the Angel of the Lord. As I travelled with her through her wandering pilgrimage, I felt God stripping away my intellectual confidence, my theological pretensions, leaving me battered, bruised and about naked upon the dusty ground of my 'western' arrogance and self confidence. I was drawn by the spareness of her prose, and was enriched by the grace with which she welcomed me on her journey and by the richness and mystery of the world of the contemporary Orthodox elders and fathers from whom she sought a living witness of the holiness of Jesus, the beauty of the holiness of God.This was the first book that introduced me to the ascetic world of Eastern Orthodoxy. What I now know (in part) I wish I would have understood then, though I did taste it through the truths shared in her narrative: Orthodoxy is a life, not a 'theology' as commonly understood. Orthodoxy is not an ideology, it is an orthopraxy - it is "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain". One will glimpse that truth while reading this beautiful, gritty and haunting memoir. Valeria's testimony is not for those accustomed to thinking that thinking can get them close to God. One must experience a stripping of ones confidence in ones self that one may look alone to Christ as one's confidence. One must take the pilgrimage from which one will not come home alive, during which one will surely die - yet drudging through the desert wastes, battered by want, by the heat of the sun, one is flayed of the flesh and its comforts and comes to know a comfort beyond the lure of the worlds siren call - a peace that passes understanding - a love beyond knowledge - a joy inexpressible and full of glory - which the world cannot take away; infinite, inexhaustible, a gift - a treasure for which one gladly gives up all.Pilgrimage to Dzhvari set me on a life altering course. This is not a book for the voyeur - it is for the hungry, for those who hunger for life, for God, for the living Bread. You can't 'think' bread into your stomach, you must lay down the book and eat - like your life depended on it - because it does. Valeria has left us a trail of her bread crumbs . . . perhaps they will lead us to the full loaf. "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

good product with high quality. Excellent for cutting home baked bread. value for this price. i love it , the best seller.

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