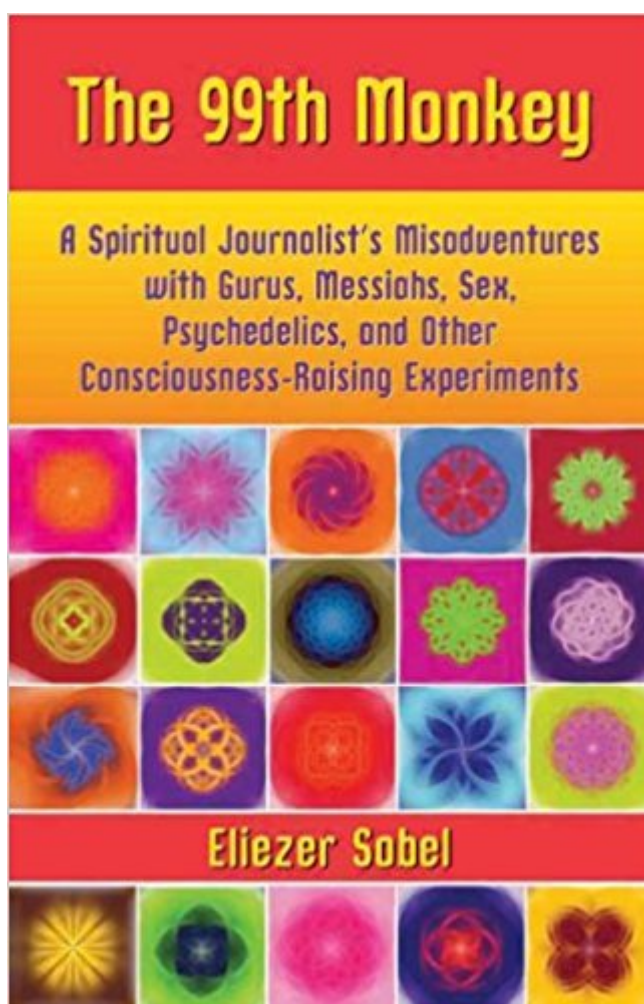


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The 99th Monkey: A Spiritual Journalist's Misadventures With Gurus, Messiahs, Sex, Psychedelics, And Other Consciousness-Raising Experiments





Synopsis

Suffused with a unique brand of irreverent humor, this account recalls the autobiographical explorations of the most significant alternative communities, ashrams, gurus, shamans, and consciousness-raising seminars of the past 40 years. Serving as a human guinea pig for many of the most popular cutting-edge New Age, human potential, and spiritual experiments, Eliezer Sobel recounts intercontinental adventures in India, Israel, Brazil, and Haiti. From Primal Therapy to the Dalai Lama, this perceptively witty analysis includes brushes with cults, wild experiments with sex and psychedelics, and encounters with visionary gurus and contemporary madmen.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While a romp through the New Age is not everyone's cup of tea, novelist, publisher and editor Sobel (Minyan) does a fine job making his 30-year quest for spiritual awakening widely identifiable with a funny, clear-eyed account that takes readers around the world and through a gauntlet of gurus, shamans, workshops and retreats, not to mention sex and drugs (legal and otherwise). Sobel's twin assets are his willingness and his sense of humor, both apparent from the start in his encounter with a guru named Ram Dass, whose first instruction to Sobel is to take off his pants ("So I did"). Other episodes include Primal Therapy training with a teacher who rents his office space for porn production, the "est" training that teaches people to accept reality as it is (and then rope everyone they know into the program), and tours through Jerusalem, India and Brazil. Sobel's spiritual journey doesn't provide any answers (these days, the title on his business card is "Human Being") but

provides lots of engaging, regular-guy perspective on modern man's confounding array of ancient and contemporary fulfillment schemes. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

• An extraordinary and challenging journey through the contemporary worlds of spiritual exploration and the human potential movement. • Rabbi David A. Cooper, author, *Ecstatic Kabbalah and God is a Verb* • A generous contribution to countercultural history. • Paul Krassner, author, *One Hand Jerking: Reports From an Investigative Satirist* • Funny, beautifully written, and often extremely moving and thought-provoking. • Colin Wilson, author, *A Criminal History of Mankind* "Sobel's utter failure to get enlightened is chronicled with laughter, irreverence, insight and raw truth." • Gabrielle Roth, dancer, director, and author, *Connections* "This book made me happier than most of the spiritual books I read these days. Enjoy." • Wes Scoop' Nisker, Buddhist meditation teacher, author, and performer "By all means follow The 99th Monkey down the road apiece that passeth understanding. It looks like big fun." • Wavy Gravy, author, *Something Good for a Change* "Sobel's humor and self-deprecating manner make this journey a fun one. . . . In the end, Sobel is really like anyone else on this earth, which is why the book is so endearing and encouraging." • Rain Taxi

Eliezer Sobel's third book is another important contribution to the literature of personal exploration. While following his adventures, I was often intrigued, amused, and moved, never knowing what to expect next, but always hopeful that his life would improve as a result of meeting yet another guru or guide. When he found himself unchanged, I sadly joined him, knowing that this is how it is. Nevertheless, I found myself profoundly moved in a mysterious way. During the reading, I made a life-changing decision motivated by the book's spiritual underpinnings. Sobel's genuinely noble intentions inform his generously shared life story and reach deeply into the reader.

This book is fantastic. I have rarely laughed so hard. It also truly brought tears to my eyes and gave me much profound insight, which is funny considering that it's a book about someone who fails to find enlightenment- though his journey was definitely worthwhile. At least I know what to avoid or to try on the spiritual path, although I'm sure it's different for everyone. I highly highly recommend this book!

As someone who has done much of the same scenes that are beautifully and colorfully described in

this book, I loved it. It was the funnest and at the same time sincere and interesting account of the era. It also raises many questions about what people are willing to do to get enlightenment, and what enlightenment actually means.

This book is hysterically funny. But I was also blown away by the poignancy, genuine self deprecation and insight in the book. Sobel describes his ridiculously varied and relentless exploration of different spiritual paths in an attempt to cure himself of depression and life uncertainty. Doesn't that sound familiar? He offers no answers. But the journey itself, and it sure is entertaining, is the message: the everyday world really is all we've got, with occasional highs that are fun and sometimes helpful but that cannot be the basis of day-to-day life. I'm glad I'm not alone in dealing with this difficult reality.

Lots of fun and lots of wisdom! Well researched and well written.

Having met Eliezer Sobel at a few Jewish meditation retreats, I was very curious about his book. I read it in two sittings, interrupted only by sleep and breakfast. While my own spiritual explorations have been rather staid compared to his, I could relate to his quest and the inner workings of his heart and mind, which he courageously shares. This book got me to recognize and laugh at myself, no mean feat!

Eliezer qualifies as a mensch; perhaps too attached to being the 99th monkey, but offering a self deprecating, inspired, desperate roller coaster ride in pursuit of the UNKNOWN. I was right alongside of him with my past history. He chronicles it well: just the right blend of gossip, earnestness, adventure, insight and exhaustion.

He really nails it! Very meaningful especially for those of us who lived through the same era. Unafraid to point out foibles as well as strengths of various teachers.

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