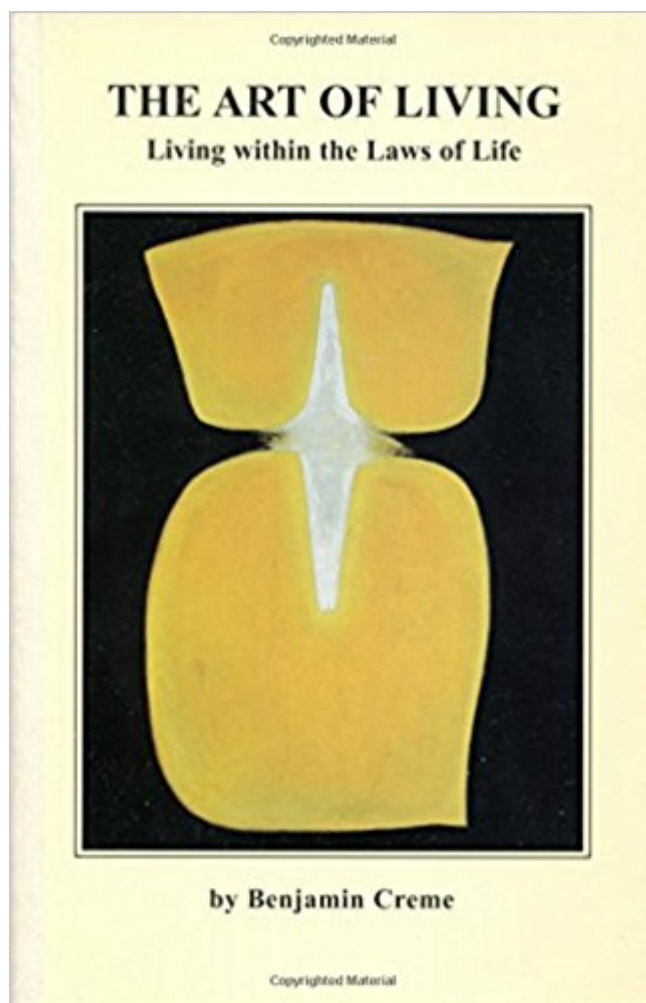


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The Art Of Living: Living Within The Laws Of Life



Synopsis

In *The Art of Living*, Benjamin Creme considers the experience of living as a form of art, like painting or music. To reach a high level of expression requires both knowledge of and adherence to certain fundamental principles. In the art of life, it is through the understanding of the great Law of Cause and Effect, and the related Law of Rebirth, that we achieve the poised harmlessness that leads to personal happiness, right human relations and the correct path for all humanity on its evolutionary journey. Parts Two and Three, *The Pairs of Opposites* and *Illusion*, propose that it is man's unique position in the evolutionary scheme- the meeting point of spirit and matter- that produces his seemingly endless struggle both within himself and in outer living. The means by which he emerges from the fog of illusion, and blends these two aspects of himself into one perfect Whole, is living life itself with growing detachment and objective self-awareness.

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Customer Reviews

Benjamin Creme points out that living correctly is indeed an art, and that life, like the arts, is subject to certain immutable laws. This volume is in three sections and offers a great wealth and depth of information presented in a lucid, highly readable manner. In section one, *The Art of Living*, the arts of painting and music are points of entry into a discussion of the spiritual meaning and purpose of life on Earth. An art, whether painting, music or some other art, has to obey certain laws and rules. If you want to be a painter or composer, you have to learn the laws by which the art is formed; the methods too, but more profoundly the laws governing the qualities of art, like proportion, like revelation. The magic of art is stored in the obedience to these laws. The beauty and harmony

expressed in great works of art are demonstrations of qualities inherent in humanity... Benjamin Creme notes: We are not taught how to live, the art of living. There is no school where we can go to learn the art of living. It is a spiritual problem because the art of living is tied up with living itself. There is a Divine Plan for the progress and evolution of all life on Earth. Central to this Plan are Great Laws. Creme writes: Men will learn and understand the subtle laws which govern their lives ... the Law of Karma, of Cause and Effect, which controls the destiny of all; the related Law of Rebirth, which makes possible the journey of the Soul in matter; the Law of Harmlessness, which governs right relationship, and the great Law of Sacrifice, by which all evolution proceeds. ... Every single human being is conditioned by the past, by its parents, by the very nature of its vehicles [personality, mental, astral and physical], which have been created for it by its soul under the Law of Karma. The second section of the book addresses the conflict of: The Pairs of Opposites . It arises from the fact that man is an immortal soul immersed in matter, the meeting ground of spirit and matter and the tensions which their concurrence evokes ... Gradually spiritualising matter over the long course of our incarnational journey is the primary reason for man's life on Earth. Benjamin Creme's central theme is the reappearance in our time of the World Teacher, the Lord Maitreya, and a group of similarly perfected men, the Masters of Wisdom. As the Enlightened One expected by all major religions and a Teacher for all of humanity, His teachings show the way forward, a way in which men can begin to break the bonds of the conditioning which enthrall us. Three elements central to these teachings are honesty of mind, sincerity of spirit and detachment. Honesty of mind means that our thoughts, words and actions are consistent and do not conflict. Sincerity of spirit simply means being one's self... If one is truly detached, then one is not affected by conditioning... These ideas are simple in essence , as Creme states, but they nonetheless require effort and discipline to put into practice. They are the method of striking a creative balance between the impulses of the soul and the pull of matter. The persistent practice of these principles also helps clear the way for the intuition, a faculty of the soul, to function in a far more unobstructed manner. A world is described by Benjamin Creme in one of the book's most moving passages. We are all seeking balance, we are all seeking unity, equilibrium, however we define it. It is that which allows us to be creative and happy... We do not have words for the quality of that civilisation. Nor for the feeling, the experience, of that relationship when all people see and experience themselves as brothers and sisters of one home, one planet. Review by Marc Gregory from California, a musician and student of the Ageless Wisdom Teachings. --Share International

Benjamin Creme, a British artist and long-time student of the Ageless Wisdom Teachings, has

become a principal source of information about the emergence of Maitreya, the World Teacher for this age. In 1959, Creme received his first telepathic message from a Master of Wisdom. Not long after, he was informed that Maitreya would return within 20 years and that he (Creme) would be given the opportunity to play an active role in this event if he chose to do so. In 1972, under this Master's direction, Creme began a period of arduous and intensive training, as a result of which their telepathic contact became, and remains, continuous and immediate. This relationship has given him access to constant up-to-date information on the progress of Maitreya's emergence and the total conviction necessary to present that information to a skeptical world. Creme lectures by invitation throughout Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim, and is regularly interviewed on radio and television. He receives no remuneration for this work and makes no claims about his own spiritual status. His books have been translated and published in numerous languages by groups worldwide who have responded to his message. He is also editor of Share International, a monthly magazine read in over 70 countries. My task, Creme says, has been to make the initial approach to the public, to help create a climate of hope and expectancy into which Maitreya can emerge without infringing our freewill. Says Max Allen of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: The Maitreya story is important, and Creme is an admirable spokesman.

Fantastic book! Benjamin Creme brings to life an understanding of humanity that is unparalleled in contemporary literature. Written in an easy conversational style, with a "questions and answers" format, this book looks at the cosmic Laws of Living that confront us at every moment, and which we operate under as human beings. Whether it is a better understanding of the laws of Karma or Reincarnation you are seeking, or a deeper insight into the nature of the illusion and duality that leads us off of the spiritual path and into suffering, this work provides a lucid explanation that can open the way for enormous growth in one's life. If you are someone who has a desire to seriously understand the causes behind the outcomes and effects in your life, or who wishes to deepen their understanding of their purpose and role in life, then this is a "must have" book in your library.

The book was published in 2006 with the subtitle "Living in harmony with the Laws of Life" and it opens our eyes to the fact that beyond the Laws of Nature, which humanity has so passionately explored, also exist the Laws of Life. Mr. Creme describes these to be a functioning basis for a fulfilling and a felicitous coexistence. He describes life to be like a piece of art and in order to attain the highest beauty one needs a certain knowledge, which he here imparts. He conveys a knowledge that highly surpasses that which science offers: on the constitution of man, on man's special role

within our planet, on our Divinity and on how we can shape our lives with greater joy based on the knowledge that man is both a material as well as a spiritual being. It is immaterial as to whether you experience yourself to be more a spiritual or more an earthly being, you will be able to read interesting facets that concern your personal daily affairs, the perception of your life, of humanity and of the planet. It is an enrichment and an inspiration to approach life actively and with joy. The book conveys the spirit of a joyful life that stands before us all.

The title of this book from Benjamin Creme reminds me of a book written by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi more than forty years earlier titled *The Science of Being and the Art of Living*. Indeed the subject of these two works is the same: how to perform the art of living in order to align our lives with the laws that govern existence and thereby overcome suffering and fulfill the meaning of human life. Where Maharishi concentrates on the role of meditation, Benjamin Creme also mentions the role of service to the world as a means to realize this alignment. Creme starts from the esoteric tradition (H.P. Blavatski, Alice Bailey) to explain the various laws that govern our lives: the Law of Cause and Effect, the Law of Rebirth, the Law of Harmlessness and the Law of Sacrifice. By giving many examples he tries to show how these laws work and how we can try to live in accordance with them. What I find particularly interesting in this book is the picture of man as part of a bigger whole. That our lives have meaning and that we are playing a role in the developing world we live in.

Benjamin Creme is an unsung hero of our times. The (unpaid) editor of the pioneering "Share International" magazine, he has, for the past twenty-five years, been educating Western publics on the causal links between spiritual growth and social justice. To be sure, his focal idea that the Christ has returned to the world to lead us into an era of peace and harmony, has earned him more enemies than a certain Jewish carpenter could have imagined two millennia ago. But then, Creme has never asked to be believed; only to be received with an open mind. This seems sufficiently humble and democratic for me to bypass occult terminology and focus on the practical consequences of his message: we are all sons of God and, therefore, capable of acting as His representatives on this planet, through correct relation with ourselves and our environment. Love, honesty, trust, and service are the shortest paths to the Kingdom of God. Creme's literature, distilled from numerous talks and lectures, expounds various aspects of this message. In *The Art of Living*, the author concentrates on three ideas. First, living as human beings is the most exceptional of arts and thus requires the utmost dedication and the best of training. No educator would dispute this; actually, many would tout the superiority of their own moral and educational system over others. But

this is exactly the problem. All theories and systems produce conditioning, eventually pitting us against other people. The returned Christ's mission, Creme affirms, is primarily an educational one. He is here to demonstrate (not simply preach) the perennial laws of Life so that we all can fulfill our potential without recourse to competition and dominance. Chief among these are the ones of Cause and Effect (known as Karma in Eastern traditions), of Rebirth (allows the application of the former across successive incarnations), of Harmlessness (relating to the world from a position of equilibrium, away from the extremes of destruction and imitation), and of Sacrifice (evolution proceeds through giving up a lower aspect of oneself to attain a higher one). To make living an art form, however, we need to address the fundamental problems of (psychological) conflict and illusion. Creme explores each one in the remaining parts of the book. I find his discourse both pragmatic and optimistic. Instead of condemning these types of conditioning, he accepts them as inevitable stages in human evolution. Conflict emerges as our consciousness begins to register the competing demands of our divine and material natures. However painful this experience may be, it shows that we are awakening souls. Without moral dilemmas we would have been condemned to the mechanical living of animals. Therefore, we should not be afraid of conflict, but rather address and resolve it. We can do that, Creme proposes, through detachment. Abstaining from strong emotional reactions and wisely navigating between aspiration and inertia allows us to gradually establish control over our life. Far more challenging is the problem of illusion, which affects people discovering the power of the mind. These often believe that intellectuality and sophistication will release them from emotionalism and bring them closer to reality. Creme asserts that the mind, too, obscures reality and has to be overcome through intuition. This last, unfortunately, cannot be developed, only invoked through better alignment with one's soul. Detachment and personal thought control are essential for this to happen. Diligent readers will find much to ponder on in this volume. Creme is a wonderful narrator who can capture the essence of things in a few sentences, and discuss complicated issues in a way that is direct and often humorous. I would especially recommend his views on the importance of leisure (freedom from the need to survive) for the unfolding of one's spiritual potential; the replacement of memory and mechanical activity with intuition, which guarantees true creativity; and finally, the role of detachment in achieving harmony and peace. At the same time, I should caution that people of a fundamentalist mindset would find little value in the book. Creme's literature requires a degree of intellectual autonomy and spiritual poise that is incompatible with exclusive claims to truth. An open-mind is to be expected if the reader wishes to engage with this body of writings.

This book, like all of Ben Creme's Books, explains in easily understood concepts, how our choices and actions effect our daily lives. We do reap what we sow, but in even more descriptive terms, it lays out ways we can overcome bad choices and directions of the past through service to humanity. The law of rebirth is spelled out clearly, and I found this very interesting. I also thoroughly enjoyed reading about the Masters of Wisdom (called by some the Spiritual Hierarchy), those humans who have gone ahead of us on the evolutionary path, and who help to point us in the right direction. Maitreya, the Head of the Master's of Wisdom, the teacher of Jesus, and the current World Teacher, is described. Maitreya teaches that each must walk the path, in our own unique way (through different faiths and/or via service), towards enlightenment. Support is always there from the Masters of Wisdom for those who seek it.

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