

Review by Karen Rempel

This fifth and final volume in the Diamond Heart series consists of 13 stand-alone talks about the purity and creative dynamism of reality given by Almaas to students of the Diamond Approach. Delivered with humour, love, and delight, the talks discuss issues and experiences that arise after years of sincere commitment to the inner journey. But even if you are new to spiritual work, the beauty of Almaas's teaching is that he impacts the reader's soul in whatever way is appropriate to that soul's needs in the moment. This loving intelligence in the unfolding of reality is one aspect that Almaas explores in the talks on creative dynamism.

At the 2011 summer retreat at Asilomar, I asked Hameed why he put "the blue eye of God" on the cover of the book. He said he wanted us to think about who is looking at who. Or maybe he said hu is looking at hu. Whether or not his answer was Sufic in nature, there's no question that the Christian Logos is a theme that threads through the book. In *Diamond Heart Book Five* more than any of his previous books, Almaas uses the Christian notion of God to explicate the soul's relationship to the divine and share his understanding of the soul's journey of transformation.

In the book's kick-off chapter, "Poor in Spirit," Almaas deconstructs the Sermon on the Mount to help illuminate the truth of spiritual poverty, which is a doorway to experiencing the purity of reality. Be prepared for a wild ride, for through Almaas's transmission, you might indeed experience the disorienting and paradoxical freedom of spiritual poverty—the emptiness of self—as you are impacted through reading this book.

I mentioned humour, and there are some passages in the book that really cracked me up:

- In the chapter "Suffering and Its Cessation," Almaas says "In fact, you begin to realize that you are not even going to enjoy the fruits of your work." This struck me as hilarious; a real laugh-out-loud moment. Because of course most of us are hoping to get some kind of positive enjoyment from doing this work. But true love of the truth doesn't care about positive or negative, pleasure or pain.
- In "Absolute Absence," a student asked, "If somebody were in that void forever, what would happen to the person sitting next to them?" Almaas replied, "It is very dangerous to sit next to somebody who is in the void forever. That person is like a black hole. They will swallow you if you stay there long enough." Can you imagine if this happened to you or your neighbor at one of your group's weekends? Pretty funny stuff.