

Challenge of Finding One's Ego

Daniel Ladinsky (Poet, translator of Hafiz et al)

Quote from

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Something Missing In My Heart –

Daniel Ladinsky on the God-Intoxicated Poetry of Hafiz

Lawler: How do you reconcile your commercial success with your spiritual pursuits?

Ladinsky: I have to be balanced. I sometimes have a couple of books in the top ten in Germany or Australia or the United States. It is amazing how Coleman [Barks, renderer of Rumi] has changed things. For fifty years *The Prophet*, by Khalil Gibran, was the king on the throne of spiritual classics, but recently Hafiz and Rumi – especially Rumi – are often at the top of the inspirational-and-religious category. And it's a tough category.

Lawler: So how is your ego doing?

Ladinsky: I don't think I have too much of a problem with it. My house is falling apart, my body is starting to fall apart, I have a broken heart, and I'm overwhelmed – though it's a fortunate problem to have – with opportunities I can't really manage. The books get rushed, and there are poems that aren't perfect. I have an ego. I can get nuts sometimes, and other times I can find equilibrium. Just today I went to get milk and lay there in the Land Rover and looked up at the sky and said, "I don't give a damn about this poetry reading tonight. I just want to lie here and look up at the sky. I don't want to be Danny. I'm glad the books are there, but it doesn't matter that my name is on them."

The six years I spent at Meherabad in India have been a fantastic aid. I had a remarkable intimate contact with Eruch Jessawala [one of Meher Baba's disciples, who died in 2001]. I considered him a living saint, and he still affects my every hour. He was a genuine teacher. He was so profoundly, naturally humble. He's part of me. He used to quote an ancient poet, saying that a person's pride and ego can be so hidden that it is like trying to see the black foot of an ant on a mountain a mile away. That is how careful one should be about saying one has no ego and pride, because they are so deeply concealed.