



The Peace of the Present : An Unviolent Way of Life

John S. Dunne



This book by John S. Dunne, whom Kenneth Woodward has called, the most original religious thinker of our time, addresses the spirituality of nonviolence, which Dunne calls an unviolent way of life. Dunne shares Ghandhis vision of nonviolence as a spiritual discipline, a learning to love that leads to a seeing of truth. The book is the result of three trips Dunne took to Santiago, Chile, where he lectured on the spirituality of nonviolence. It is also based on conversations that the author had with religious scholar David Daube, philosopher and critic Rene Girard, and psychologist Erik Erilson. Dunne addresses three questions in The Peace of the Present: Where does violence come from? Where does nonviolence come from? and How can we live in the peace of the present?. Violence, says Dunne, is linked with a numbing of the heart, nonviolence with the hearts desire, and living in the peace of the present turns out to mean living in the centre of stillness we each have within us. It is, he says, like living in the peaceful eye of the storm, moving with the moving eye rather than being caught in the storm. It means living in the presence in the present. There is a spiritual numbness, states Dunne, a malady of death, that comes from violence and leads to violence. The way out of it, Dunne believes, is to follow the heart, to follow the ecstasy. One discovers on the way of the heart a greater love, the love of God, and finds oneself in a greater story, that of humanity, that starts in oneness of all things, goes through a time of seperation, and ends again in oneness. The key is the Christian sense of I, to pass from the I located in ones will to the deeper I located in ones centre of stillness.

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