



The Beaten Path: Field Notes on Getting Wise in a Wisdom-Crazy World

Ptolemy Tompkins

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In an America obsessed with quickie enlightenment and wisdom-acquisition, Ptolemy Tompkins is a seeker who has been there and done that. From Black Elk to the Dalai Lama -- from *Hun Tun* and mescaline to motorcycle Zen and mind at large -- the acclaimed author of *Paradise Fever* has followed many roads in pursuit of a universal truth. And he has survived to tell the tale.

The Beaten Path

Ptolemy Tompkins came of age in the '70s -- before Americans began spending uplifting Tuesdays with Morrie or perusing Little Instruction Books. In the wake of a quintessentially New Age childhood as the son of the radical freethinker Peter Tompkins, author of the bestselling *The Secret Life of Plants*, Ptolemy began a personal quest for enlightenment decades before it became trendy to do so. He gained much valuable insight as he careened from Buddha to the Bhagavad-Gita, from Krishna to Carlos Castaneda. But how much actual "wisdom" he accrued is a matter the author himself admits is up for debate.

The Beaten Path is a work of great intelligence that is profound, moving, and hilariously entertaining. In his funny and touching account of a spiritual journey that went wildly off course, the author bares his soul even as he knocks down the gaudy signposts that guide eager pilgrims through today's pop-wisdom landscape. Yet he never loses sight of what is valuable and true in the literature of the spirit.

Part gripping personal memoir, part merciless-yet-affectionate critique, and part genuine prescription for the good life, *The Beaten Path* is a provocative gift from a man who left no page unturned, no odyssey uncompleted, in his determination to find direction and meaning in the cosmos. In exploring what it is that makes so many of his contemporaries actively seek the light of peace and transformation in its most convenient and palatable form, he offers readers a unique, idiosyncratic insight into our modern world. And he has great fun while doing so.

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