



Holy Beggars: A Journey from Haight Street to Jerusalem

Aryae Coopersmith

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The 1960s San Francisco spiritual revolution – a view from inside.

Memoir about a spiritual teacher and a student in 1960s San Francisco, a colorful cast – including Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert, Allen Ginsburg, Murshid Samuel Lewis ("Sufi Sam"), Swami Satchidananda, Ajari Warwick, Rabbi Zalman Shalomi Schachter, and many more – and lives that were changed forever.

Aryae Coopersmith, a 22-year old college student in 1960s San Francisco, meets the charismatic rabbi and folk singer Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach and decides to start a community for him. He rents a house and moves in with his best friends. Before long they find themselves – and their house – at the center of the San Francisco spiritual revolution as thousands of young people – Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Sufis, and followers of countless gurus – flood in through their doors.

Giving concerts to packed halls all over the world, Shlomo is recognized as Judaism's most influential musician, and one of its greatest spiritual leaders, of the late 20th century. Their house – the House of Love and Prayer – becomes an historic part of the legend of 1960s San Francisco.

Aryae and his fellow students who are running *other* spiritual communities bring their teachers and gurus together to create a big San Francisco event – the Meeting of the Ways – to celebrate the oneness of the world's spiritual traditions and all the world's people.

Aryae's best friends Efraim and Leah leave San Francisco and head to Jerusalem, where they become ultra-Orthodox Hasidim. Many others from the "House" follow. Aryae stays behind and settles into a secular life as a Silicon Valley business owner. After Shlomo dies, Aryae feels compelled to tell the story. To try to understand the lives of his old friends and pull together the scattered fragments of his own, he travels to Jerusalem.

This profoundly moving memoir tells a story of grace, loss, redemption, and ultimately of acceptance. It invites us to reflect on how the 1960s spiritual revolution – with its vision of the oneness of us all – has impacted each of our lives.

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