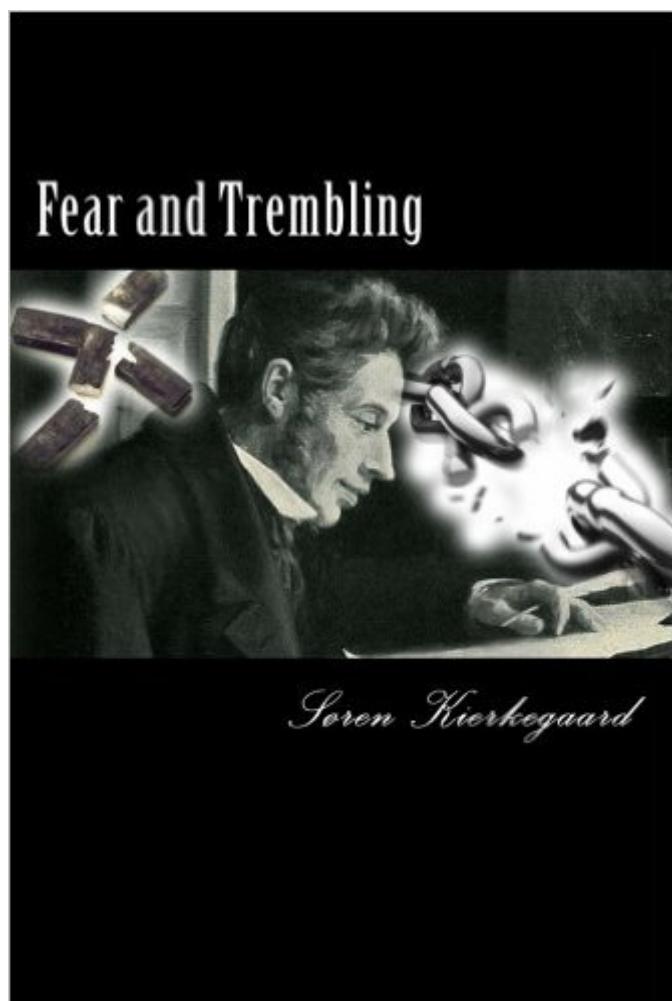


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Fear And Trembling



Synopsis

FEAR AND TREMBLING stands as one of Soren Kierkegaard's most widely read works. Its brevity is appealing to those with only a marginal interest in philosophy and theology. Its subject matter is what attracts those persons who want to find a nexus between ethics and theology. In the work, Kierkegaard engages the famous passage in the Old Testament of the bible where Abraham is ordered by God (Yahweh) to sacrifice his son, Isaac. It stands today as the most salient episode in the bible where Plato's EUTHYPHRO dilemma is confronted. Now, what is the EUTHYPHRO dilemma, you may ask? The dilemma is set out by Socrates in Plato's dialogue of the same name. Basically, it comes down to this: are good and evil intrinsic to the universe itself? Or are the qualities of good and evil decided upon by God (or gods)? If the former is true, then God (or the head of a pantheon of gods) cannot be truly omnipotent, for there is at least one power that even he / she / it must follow. If, on the other hand, good and evil are decided by God(s), then might makes right. Enter Kierkegaard, who spends the pages of this work acting more-or-less as a defense attorney for Abraham for his even contemplating the murder of his son. For Kierkegaard, the divine-command-theorist, the latter horn of the conundrum (i.e.: might makes right) is the only plausible alternative open for the religious believer. The first horn denies God's sovereign omnipotence over the universe and all of its affairs, which is utterly unacceptable. So, the Dane offers to us the defense of what he calls the "teleological suspension of ethics." That is to say, while Abraham was acting out of direction from God, he was not subject to the ethical laws of the "everyday" universe that the rest of us live in every day.

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Customer Reviews

Kierkegaard does an excellent job explaining the various aspects of faith, largely on a framework of the story of Abraham and Isaac. This book may be more relevant today than it was at the time of its writing due to the popular practice of classifying faith as some lesser aspiration than that of reason. He explains that due to its inherent rejection of reason, and yet being substantive, faith is a discipline perhaps more worth of effort than that of reason. I found this book very enlightening and have enjoyed the expanded view of my own faith that it has provided. However, I feel that this book even holds value to the atheist due to its incredibly clear explanation of what faith truly is and how it functions. If you are up for some research into understanding the context of Kierkegaard's metaphorical world, this book is highly rewarding.

A great philosophical piece that delves deep into the realm of faith.

Yummy

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