

THE GURU PAPERS

Masks of Authoritarian Power

by Joel Kramer & Diana Alstad

The Guru Papers has become ever more timely since it was published. It demonstrates with uncompromising clarity that authoritarian control, which once held societies together, is now at the core of personal, social and planetary problems, and thus a key factor in social disintegration. It illustrates how authoritarianism is embedded in the way people think, hiding in culture, values, daily life, and in the very morality people try to live by. Compelling arguments present authoritarianism as an age-old “social virus” at the core of civilization, transmitted to maintain power through generating fear and self-mistrust. People must then look to others for answers, meaning, and even salvation.

The Guru Papers predicted escalating global “morality wars,” which are nothing less than a worldwide battle for people’s minds. This struggle over basic values is about who has the right to decide what’s right and what gives anyone the right to do so? At its core, it’s about “truth”—which worldviews and viewpoints are more in touch with the reality of these times? The outcome of these morality wars will either free or block the intelligence necessary to resolve the global crises that technology has wrought.

The Guru Papers unmasks authoritarianism in such areas as relationships, cults, 12-step groups, religion, and contemporary morality. Chapters on addiction and love show the insidious nature of authoritarian values and ideologies in the most intimate corners of life, offering new frameworks for understanding and dealing with addiction and conflicts within intimacy. By exposing an “inner authoritarian” that people use to control themselves and others, the authors show why people give up their power, and how others acquire and maintain it.

New perspectives are introduced on how and why following unchallengeable authorities or ideologies, including what is often considered sacred, has generated our current dysfunctional morality. Thus our basic problems are not the inevitable outcome of “human nature,” but rather are shown to stem from deep authoritarian implants. This offers new grounds for hope. *The Guru Papers* powerfully attests that unmasking and decoding hidden authoritarianism can disempower it, increasing the range of human freedom and possibility. The book also elegantly argues that this process is essential for human viability.