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The Upanishads, Part 1



Synopsis

This two-volume set contains the famous Max Müller translation of the classical upanishads that first appeared as Volumes I and XV of the "Sacred Books of the East." It contains the full text, translated into English and annotated, of the following upanishads: Chandogya, Kena, Aitareya, Kaushitaki, Isa, Katha, Mundaka, Taittiriya, Brhadaranyaka, Svetasvatara, Prasna, and Maitriyana. These are the most important upanishads, the classical basic documents that have been accepted as authoritative by practically all Indian religious and philosophic traditions. These remarkable mystical and philosophical treatises have not only created the later wisdom of India, they have also played an important part in Western thought. While one may be doubtful of their claimed influence upon the Neoplatonists and the medieval Christian mystics, they still have greatly influenced later developments in Western philosophy, from the time of Schlegel, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Schelling. Probably written by various authors over several centuries before 500 B.C., they exhibit a remarkable uniformity of purpose: they strive to arrive at truth through parable, proverb, simile, and metaphor, and through a method similar to Socratic dialogue to arrive at truth without erecting a formal system. Although there have been other translations of the upanishads, this edition of Max Müller has long enjoyed the reputation of being the most scholarly. Not only does the translation contain the mature reflections of the greatest Indologist and Sanskritologist of the nineteenth century (who was also a profound philosopher in his own right), it also contains his long introductions of more than 250 pages, discussing the position of the upanishads and their value for the modern world. These profound writings are necessary reading for all Indologists, philosophers, and historians of religion. They are also most valuable experiences for the modern reader who is interested in learning about a great field of thought with deep mystical and existential implications.

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Customer Reviews

Either if you are doing research on the area or are just looking for spiritual development, this is the book you should buy. Beautiful Upanisads from India, Himalayas of the soul as they have been called, are full of enchantment and inspiration for the one who reads them. Oneness of the soul with god, oneness of the people within them and with the earth, the creative power of sound, eternity of the soul and reencarnation are some of the themes touched by the Upanisads. I am a Hindu Philosophy student and among all of the translations made of the Upanisads, I have found these to be the best. Max Muller writes in a very comprehensive way things that regularly are rather complicated, without losing a bit of the poetic and mystical content of the Upanisads.

To preface, I have a casual interest in Indian philosophy and religion. This book, as old of a translation that it is, would be a good find for someone more interested in the scholarship of the text. Footnotes of commentary and alternative translation add more than the mere text. As far as the content goes I was pleased and found many grains of insight that I haven't found in my perusal of Western Philosophy. The text size of this edition makes it a nice, casual read.

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