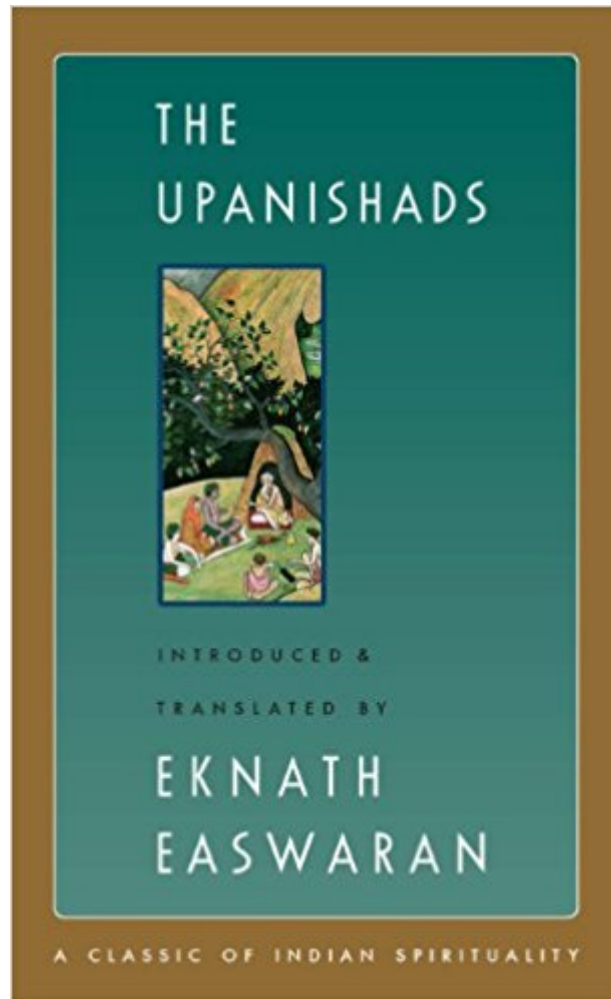


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The Upanishads (Classic Of Indian Spirituality)



Synopsis

Among the oldest of India's spiritual texts, the Upanishads are records of intensive question-and-answer sessions given by illumined sages to their students. Widely featured in philosophy courses, the Upanishads have puzzled and inspired wisdom seekers from Yeats to Schopenhauer. Eknath Easwaran makes this challenging text more accessible by selecting the passages most relevant to readers seeking timeless truths today. His accessible, highly readable translation and lively foreword place the teachings in a contemporary context for students and general readers alike.

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Customer Reviews

Eknath Easwaran's "The Upanishads" book is very elegant, beautiful, and easy to read. I like how he placed titles to every section and that he also wrote very small superscript numbers for every verse. From the front cover to the back one, it is a gorgeous book. It really invites/makes you read it all the time. For those who are very serious, however... The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is missing the entire chapter 1 (very important chapter), it starts on chapter 2. Then on chapter 3, verses 2 through 7 (very important too) are missing... this pattern keeps going with other Upanishads. Eknath

was condensing the Upanishads to make it less repetitive (in a way I like it - abridge version) and many verses had missing parts/words/ideas/watered down (this repeats throughout the book and it is my biggest complaint). I understand "selecting portions" of some of the Upanishads, but it should be stated, and more importantly, the best parts should've been selected (per Upanishad). Here (Brihadaranyaka), the best parts were left out (a main issue), perhaps because another Upanishad touches on the same topic, but this is not mentioned or shown where. It is obvious that he was making a very westernize translation, omitting things that would turn away any western mind, as for example: being reborn in another planet (see below verse 3 of the Isha Upanishad). Our "scientific" society would laugh at this. Yet, I rather have it in the original context than to delude it. And still, Eknath managed to do a very good translation (my second favorite "most readable"). It would have been better if he gave the entire text of all the Upanishads and he did not condense (missing words or ideas) them so much, just a bit.

It is amazing that with all the technology modern man has invented, he is unable to answer some deep questions every human being comes across - what is life, why should there be death, etc. He has to go back about four-five thousand years to find out the answers. The answers are in the Upanishads - ancient religion-independent literature, that are recordings of experiential knowledge those wise sages knew. Unlike the Vedas, which are about religious rites and practices, the Upanishads discuss only fundamental questions. Questions such as - 'What is that if one knows, that he/she knows everything'. Amazingly, man found out the answer and had the vision and generosity to share such findings in the Upanishads. Upanishads are such a fundamental required reading that in ancient India, children would dedicate a significant amount of their early life - 10-12 years - before they set up to establish themselves in the world. In essence, without knowing one's Self, you would be wading dark waters all the time as the Upanishads themselves say. Eknath Eswaran's translation makes the Upanishads simple to read. That alone is a great achievement given the voluminous nature of the texts and the language of expression - Sanskrit. We should remember that the text is thousands of years old and has a strong inclination towards flowery, verbose and at times redundant expressions. But if repetition gets the message across, so does reading such texts! Throughout the translation, Eknath Eswaran's experience with spiritualism, his dedication to such a life, his knowledge and wisdom about English literature and world religions come across making the reading valuable.

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