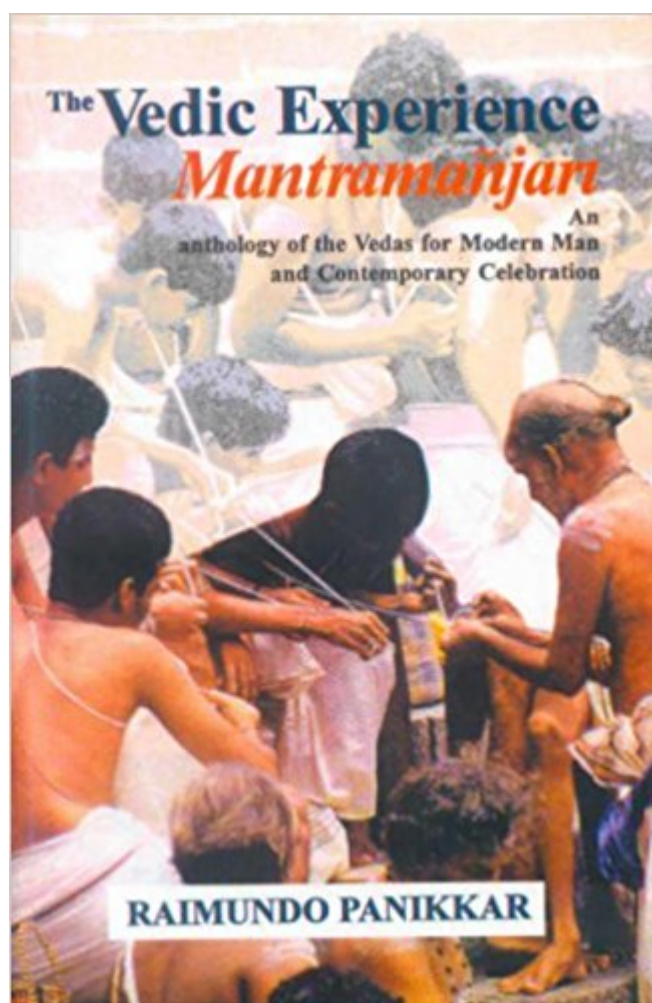


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The Vedic Experience Mantramanjari: Anthology Of The Vedas For Modern Man And Contemporary Celebration



Synopsis

One of the most stupendous manifestations of the Spirit is undoubtedly that which has been handed down to us under the generic name of the Vedas. The Vedas are still too much neglected not only in the world at large but also in their country of origin. This Vedic anthology will make direct and fruitful knowledge of the Vedas available to a wider range of people than the small elite of pandits and Indologists. This anthology collects the most crucial texts of the Indian Sacred Scriptures--in all more than 500--newly translated into contemporary English.

Book Information

Hardcover: 937 pages

Publisher: Motilal Banarsidass; New edition edition (February 8, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 8120812808

ISBN-13: 978-8120812802

Package Dimensions: 8.7 x 5.8 x 1.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,339,515 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #32 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Hinduism > Sacred Writings > Vedas

Customer Reviews

"The book is a piece of art and knowledge which one should have in personal collection." --Mystic India, August, 1995
"The collection is addressed to the modern man." --Prabuddha Bharata, September, 1996
"This is a welcome addition to the anthologies of Vedic hymns." --Bhavan's Journal Vol. 44, No. 17, April 15, 1998

Raimundo Panikkar is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His books include The Unknown Christ of Hinduism, Worship and Secular man, The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man. The Intrareligious Dialogue and Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics.

I have bought this book for reference and would use it when I have to look for the translation and meaning of the original Sanskrit verses selected in this book from Vedas and other Indian scriptures.

Wonderful

We have all heard of the Vedas. We know that the Vedic Canon comprises a huge body of literature handed down orally in India since ancient times. Many of us have heard that it is made up of four collections - the Rigveda, Atharva Veda, Yajurveda, and Samaveda - along with adjacent treatises such as the Brahmanas and Aranyakas. These books undoubtedly exist, written in an inaccessible language, published in large and expensive scholarly editions, and tucked away in obscure libraries. Although we may have run into a translated excerpt or two, for many of us the whole subject has a musty and forbidding air, and we probably concluded long ago that it's something best left to scholars as quite irrelevant to to we moderns. But a few minutes spent with Dr Panikkar's superb anthology will show us how wrong we are. Dr Panikkar is a remarkable man, not only for his incredible scholarship - he is a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, with many significant publications to his credit - but remarkable also for his honesty. He points out that modern man is a diminished man. Despite the superficial excitements of our high-tech world, life for most has become a flat, stale, and joyless thing. It is joyless because we have forgotten what life is supposed to be, and Dr Panikkar hopes by means of this book to shift our perception of things to a different register, to put us back in touch with realities by reawakening in us something of the joy and wonder in life which was felt by those early and vigorous peoples who sang the Vedas. The Vedic songs represent the most amazing celebration of life that has ever been created. And although Dr Panikkar's book is certainly scholarly, it was not written primarily for scholars, or even for persons with a special interest in things Indian. It was written for all of us. Its only requirement is that you be human. The book wasn't even written to be read, for each of the beautifully translated texts Dr Panikkar has given us is a Mantra or meditation. We are supposed to soak in them, assimilate them, and preferably even recite them aloud along with others in a group. They are a means whereby all of us, no matter of what race or persuasion, can come together and join again in a joyous celebration of life and our shared humanity, and of the glorious universe we live in. And I think you will find that they do work. Here is an example of their fine quality as captured in the translator's wonderfully lucid English: "Now Dawn with her earliest light shines forth, beloved of the Sky, Fresh from her toilet, conscious of her beauty, she emerges visible for all to see. Dawn, Daughter of Heaven, lends us her lustre, dispersing all shadows of malignity, Arousing from deep slumber all that lives, stirring to motion man and beast and bird, This maiden infringes not the Eternal Law, day after day coming to the place appointed" (pages 164-65). The book represents an enormous labor of love. Dr Panikkar tells us that he spent over ten years combing through the vast

Vedic corpus in order to select, translate, and arrange the very best texts it had to offer, texts that we moderns are very much in need of, whether we realize it or not. Each of the more than five hundred texts he has selected is preceded by very full introductory comment and is also usefully annotated. The texts have been organized into seven parts: Part I - Dawn and Birth (Waters, Earth, Wind, Dawn, Human Birth, etc.). Part II - Germination and Growth (Divine Gifts, Food, Knowing the Earth, Human Work, The Happy Life, etc.). Part III - Blossoming and Fullness (Radiance and Cosmic Refulgence, Sacrifice, Breaking the Boundaries, etc.). Part IV - Fall and Decay (Sorrow and Suffering, Sin and Mercy, etc.). Part V - Death and Dissolution (The Mystery of the Beyond, The Blessings for the Journey, Liturgy for the Dead, Cosmic Disintegration, Hell, Heaven). Part VI - New Life and Freedom (Transcendental Consciousness, The Discovery of the Ground, The Fulfillment of the Person, etc.). Part VII - Twilight (At Sunrise, Spring Summer, Rainy Season, Autumn, Winter, Frosty Season, etc.). The texts, most of them quite short, are contained in a book of almost 1000 pages which is cloth-bound, stitched, and well-printed on good paper. Even the most jaded could open it up at any page and immediately become enthralled. There is a freshness and purity to these texts that is irresistible. It is like coming across a blossom-filled meadow in spring. These vigorous and life-affirmative songs give us what men and women once were, and what we may yet become once again, for it is what deep down we still are though we have forgotten. Life, despite its many hardships, is supposed to be joyous, something to be celebrated. And one is intensely grateful to Dr Panikkar for having rescued these songs from scholarly oblivion and provided us with the means of again entering into that celebration. Readers may care to know that an abridged edition of the present book recently appeared as: INITIATION TO THE VEDAS : AN ABRIDGED EDITION OF THE VEDIC EXPERIENCE - MANTRAMANJARI by Raimon Pannikar. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006. 102 pp. Color Plates. ISBN: 8120829549. Binding: Soft Cover.

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