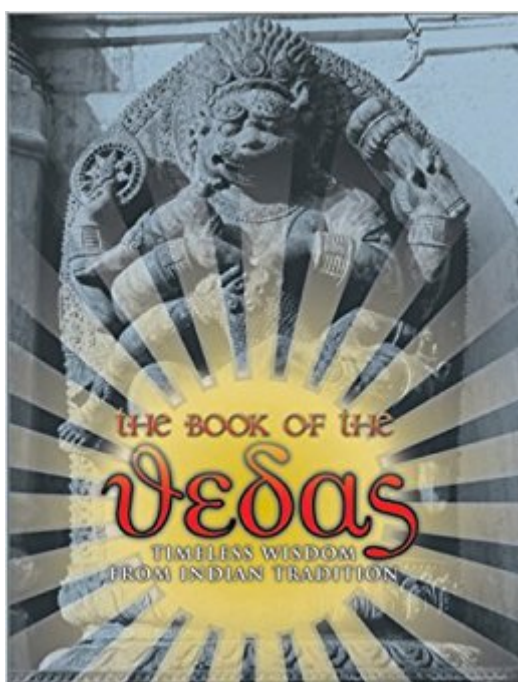


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# The Book Of The Vedas: Timeless Wisdom From Indian Tradition (Quarto Book)



## Synopsis

Readers seeking spiritual enlightenment, as well as those interested in comparative religion, will find a concise, clearly written introduction to one of the world's great and ancient faiths in this attractive volume. Placing special emphasis on the Vedas, the author describes the historical and geographical background of Hinduism and discusses the religion's various classic texts. The Vedas share their place along with the Upanishads and the two great Hindu epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana as being among the most important documents of Hindu literature. The Vedas are Hinduism's original holy texts and the basis of its faith, roughly comparable to the Judeo-Christian Bible. The author presents sample readings from the Vedas to give readers an illuminating glimpse into Hindu theology and its pantheon of gods and goddesses. He concludes with a survey of Hindu culture, including marriage and burial customs; the caste system; and Hindu festivals. Here are answers to fundamental questions that include: Who are Kali, Shiva, and Krishna? What is karma? How do ancient Hindu precepts retain their significance in the modern world? This beautiful volume contains more than 200 color illustrations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

[back cover] The Book of The Vedas TIMELESS WISDOM FROM INDIAN TRADITION Hinduism has a following of one billion people and yet many of its traditions are barely known outside India. Who are Kali, Shiva, and Krishna? What really is karma? This in-depth study of the holy writings of the Vedas and the Upanishads explains the reasons for Hinduism's enduring appeal. Discover the enthralling adventure of the gods and goddesses, and their human manifestations, the avatars.

Lose yourself in the hypnotic texts of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Sutras, and the Puranas. Unearth the true principles of yoga and its uses in channeling life-giving energy through the chakras and nadis of the body. Use ancient wisdom to find peace today. [front cover flap copy]

A concise, clearly written introduction to the world's most complex religion, *The Book of the Vedas* provides an inspirational and easily followed guide to the mysteries of the Hindu faith. Exploring the Hindu pantheon, it introduces the fascinating gods and goddess who are worshipped in homes and temples all over India—from Shiva, the ascetic with matted hair, to Devi, the mother goddess who holds the whole universe within her womb. *The Book of the Vedas* identifies the philosophy at the heart of Hinduism, explaining concepts such as rebirth, karma or "path of action," dharma or "right living," and the principles underpinning the true practice of yoga. It discusses the classic texts of Hinduism—the Vedas and the Upanishads—and its great poetic epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (which contains the famous Bhagavad Gita). Looking at the historical development of Hinduism from ancient times, the book culminates by placing the faith in its modern context. It examines the cultural backdrop to Hinduism—marriage and burial customs, the caste system, pilgrimage, festivals, and much more. With colorful illustrations on every page, this enthralling volume provides explanation and inspiration for everyone who wants to find out more about one of the world's greatest religions. [back jacket flap copy]

Virender Kumar Arya is a young scholar whose field of study is ancient Indian literature and philosophy. Born in New Delhi, he is a graduate of Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of Language, Literature and Culture. He currently lives in London, where he is doing research for his Ph.D. thesis on Myth and Truth in the Vedic Tradition. *The Book of the Vedas* is his first book.

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I learned a few things reading this book. Lots of information in so few pages.

*THE BOOKS OF THE VEDAS* is a modern summary of hymns from ancient India, with short chapters that trace the history of practices that still affect our world. I am hardly a practitioner of any of the forms of meditation mentioned in this book, but it is quite convincing that many aspects of the Hindu religious experience have found an important place in the modern world. The index is small

but useful. It can be found after the picture of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi with Paul, George, and John of the Beatles on page 125. Designed by an educational publisher in London, it was printed in China and manufactured in Singapore with colorful pictures on slick paper, with pages that are smaller than a typical magazine. The print often appears on portions of a picture that is in a single color, as on page 45, which has a caption: "BACKGROUND Shiva is an ascetic, the only one of the godhead who is forever in deep meditation." The head, with a jewel in the position of the third eye, is above the printed text for that page, but only an arm and naval can be discerned clearly in the area where his body is obscured by the text. On page 15, by fading out where his leg runs into the text, the knee of a Brahmin at a lakeside in Pushkar seems to disappear. Though the Introduction starts on page 6 with a tiny Chapter 1 designation, there seems to be a new title each time the page is turned. The Quest for Inner Peace (p. 8), The Indus Valley Civilization (p. 10), etc. Holy Writings are described in Chapter 2 with some emphasis on how ancient the sacred hymns were. The Upanishads are called a "slim collection of Sanskrit verses . . . called the Vedanta, meaning 'End of the Vedas.'" (p. 25). This page introduces maya, Brahman, atman, karma, and samsara, with simple explanations. Continued interest in The Mahabharata Epic is indicated by a picture of an Indian television costume drama on page 32. "Like Shakespeare, the Mahabharata is a linguistic storehouse that has been raided by writers and poets. Its plotlines were retold for centuries by traveling storytellers and puppeteers, and now feature in countless television dramas and Bollywood epics." (p. 33). On the next page, the Bhagavad Gita explains the form of enlightenment offered by Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu. Later Krishna is shown as a baby on page 50. In Avatars on page 56, Buddha is mentioned as the ninth appearance of Vishnu, before "Kalki, the avatar yet to come." In the first appearance, "As the Fish, Vishnu warned Manu (the equivalent of Noah in Judeo-Christian tradition) that a universal flood was coming, and pulled the boat he built to safety." (pp. 56-57). The transition from philosophy to practice begins with Subtle Energy on page 70, locating seven chakras "at the points in the astral body where the nadis meet." Basic information is provided about Yoga in the classical form of practicing meditation, and the variations: Hatha Yoga (p. 76), Laya Yoga (p. 78), Mantra Yoga (p. 80), Tantric Yoga (p. 82), Jnana Yoga (p. 84), Karma Yoga (p. 86), Bhakti Yoga (p. 88), and Kundalini Yoga (p. 90). Those who are familiar with a few positions might wish to study the other possibilities and the dangers that this book says are involved in advanced forms before going further. Chapter 5, on Hindu Society, provides a picture of religious life in India today. Chapter 6, Hinduism in the World, tries to account for the spread of the Hare Krishna movement, founded in the United States in 1966 (p. 120), and the related religions, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. TM and Sai Baba bring the book to an end.

5 star. Kelly needs it , have a good experience. For a home product, for the price, this is quite good. I prefer a heavier product altogether, but I was surprised with the quality considering how inexpensive this product is. Coming from a professional background, I'd say this is a great piece to start with. fast and in time.

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