



The Mukhya Upanishads: Books of Hidden Wisdom

Charles Johnston

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"The Upanishads ... are among the noblest and most inspired books in the world; in them, the whole of the Indian wisdom is already contained; later teachers could but expand and comment on them, but in no way departed from this original treasure of wisdom." ... "The Upanishads teach the wisdom of Atma, the Supreme Self of all beings; the same divine Life which Philo of Alexandria later called the Logos, the Divine Mind, the collective spiritual consciousness of our universe. They tell us that, while each of us may seem to be a wanderer and exile, lonely, desolate in our world of shadow and of sorrow, we are in reality neither alone nor desolate, but undivided, unseparated rays of the Universal Self, the Logos. What is needed to secure our immortality—an immortality which is still conditional, until this victory is won—is the realization of our oneness with the Supreme Self. The Upanishads show how, step by step, we may mount the golden stairs; they tell us what we must leave behind; what we must gain, as we tread the small, old path; what we must achieve; with the promise that we shall in the fullness of time be initiated into the fullness of that eternal, universal Supreme Self of all beings. "The whole aim of their teachings is this: to point the path by which the personal self may win immortality and divinity, by becoming united with the Higher Self, which always possessed immortality and divinity."—Charles Johnston

The Upanishads are the ultimate classic of Indian Spirituality. In this volume the reader will find the heart and soul of India, the foundations of the Vedanta philosophy, the source-wisdom that was later embodied in the teachings of such exalted sages as Krishna, Badarayana, Gaudapada and Sankaracharya. Johnston has here translated and comments upon the complete text of the 10 principle (mukhya) Upanishads, the oldest and most profound of all Upanishadic texts. Originally printed in two theosophical magazines—The Oriental Department Papers & The Theosophical Quarterly—between the years 1892 and 1931, these translations and commentaries have finally been collected and organized into a single volume. In addition to these, several articles on the Indian wisdom Tradition are included, both to introduce the translations and to supplement them. The student will find Johnston's commentaries drawing comparisons and correspondences between the hidden wisdom of the Upanishads and the wisdom embodied by the world's religious traditions as well as the modern philosophies of Kant, Schopenhauer and others, and even to the modern sciences of physics and astronomy. These commentaries provide a bridge for students and researchers that will enhance their understanding of the deep and timeless wisdom of the sages of old. "Traces of the teachings which have become known to us as Theosophy are found in the records of all ancient religions in both hemispheres, but nowhere are these teachings so fully, lucidly and profoundly recorded as in the oldest Upanishads and this is true not only of large generalizations, like the doctrines of rebirth and liberation, but also of those more particular and recondite doctrines which come gradually to the knowledge of students who follow a special line of study and work. So that, in the Upanishads, we have an invaluable proof of the antiquity and authenticity of both general and particular doctrines, a guarantee at least three thousand years old, and, in all probability, very much older. And if the Upanishads lend this invaluable support to our modern teachings, it is, on the other hand, true, that without these modern teachings, much that is most profound and of greatest value in the Upanishads is hardly intelligible, so that one may read the ordinary translations without gaining any idea of the meaning, or even the presence, of those particular teachings which we have spoken of. It was, therefore, necessary to read and translate, the Upanishads, in the light of Theosophy."—Charles Johnston

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