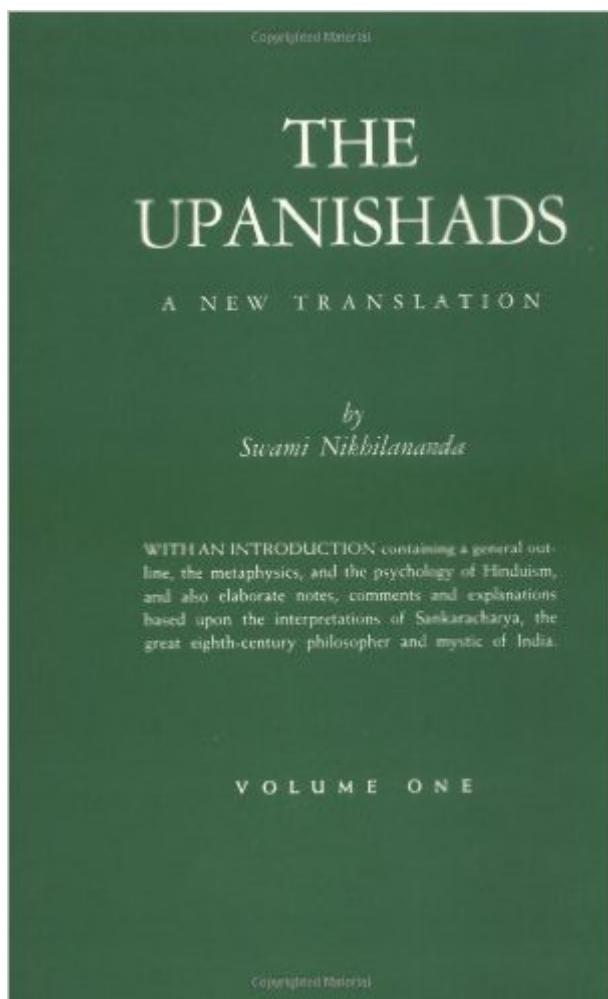


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Upanishads, Volume 1



Synopsis

Swami Nikhilananda's English translation of four of the major Upanishads - Katha, Isa, Kena, and Mundaka - offers a scholarly, yet readable version of the sacred texts of ancient India. The Upanishads form the foundation of the Hindu religion and describe the ultimate objective of life - the liberation of the soul from the bondage of the phenomenal world. Swami Nikhilananda's clear and insightful writing combined with notes and explanation based on the commentary of Sankaracharya, the great eighth-century philosopher and mystic of India, will help the spiritual seeker delve into the meaning of these spiritual treasures. This first of four volumes also contains an introduction with a general outline of the metaphysics and philosophy of Hinduism.

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Customer Reviews

There are numerous translations of the Upanishads extant, and each that I have had the privilege to inspect has much to offer. My favorite, however, for overall presentation and scholarship is Nikhilananda's four volume masterpiece published by the Ramakrishna-Vedanta Center of New York beginning in 1949. The first volume contains the Katha, Kena, and Mundaka Upanishads, along with the majestic eighty-one page introductory essay, "Discussion of Brahman in the Upanishads", and a General Introduction to the entire work. The second volume contains the Svetasvatara, Prasna, and Mandukya Upanishads, and another searching and informative introduction embodying a study of Vedic ethics. The third volume contains the Aitareya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads with another awesome introductory essay discussing the value of rituals and symbols for the contemplation of Brahman. The fourth volume contains the Taittiriya and

Chandogya Upanishads and an essay discussing ritual and contemplative worship as steps leading to the knowledge of Brahman. The translation has been described by leading authorities in the field over the years as clear, literal, and vigorous - to these observations, I would add radiant and inspiring. Nikhilananda's own commentaries are succinct and incisive. Nikhilananda's translations of Sankara's commentaries are considered definitive. In the words of one academic reviewer, "The special value of the translation lies in the infusion of the author's dual quality - that of a practiced mystic and religious scholar. The use of Sankara's commentaries makes as it were for another dimension - as of a vastly competent Thomas Aquinas winnowing the scriptural chaff from the kernel of reality.

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