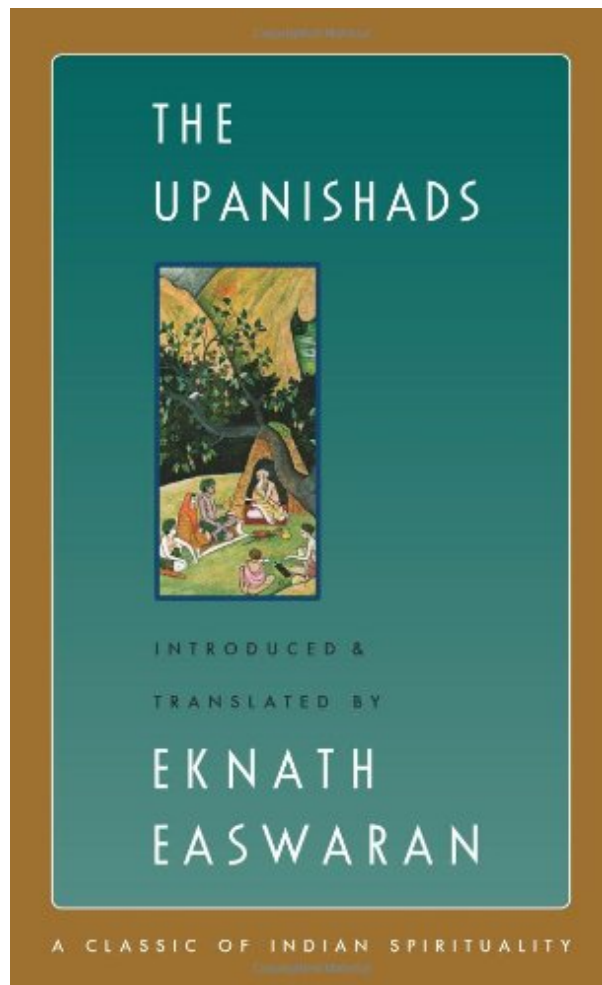


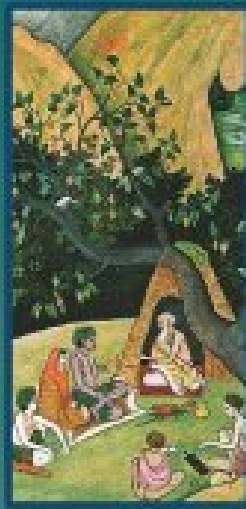
# THE UPANISHADS: A CLASSIC OF INDIAN SPIRITUALITY BY EKNATH EASWARAN



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# THE UPANISHADS



INTRODUCED &  
TRANSLATED BY

EKNATH  
EASWARAN

A CLASSIC OF INDIAN SPIRITUALITY

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## Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

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# **THE UPANISHADS: A CLASSIC OF INDIAN SPIRITUALITY**

## **BY EKNATH EASWARAN PDF**

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 best-selling, accessible, highly readable translation and lively foreword place the teachings in a contemporary context for students and general readers alike.

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- Dimensions: 8.00" h x 5.00" w x 1.00" l, .66 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 368 pages

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- Nilgiri Press

### Amazon.com Review

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### Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Most helpful customer reviews

154 of 156 people found the following review helpful.

Missing verses, words, ideas, and entire sections... otherwise excellent.

By LFTV

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. Also, it would be much better if he gave the original Sanskrit text (for the serious student). When I bought the book, I was under the impression that not only it was beautiful (and it is), but that this one had the complete text (almost everyone else has them incomplete).

The introduction before each of the Upanishads (the one some reviewers complain about) is written by Michael Nagler, not Eknath, and I do like it.

This book also includes 4 minor Upanishads: Tejobindu, Atma, Amritabindu, and Paramahansa.

I do like the way Eknath writes. His style is pleasant, appealing, and easy, it keeps you interested. I absolutely like his other book "Essence of the Upanishads".

Of all the translation I have read and own, the best one so far is "The Upanishads, Breath of The Eternal" by Swami Prabhavanada. This one is not as elegant/stylish looking on paper as Eknath's, but it is not missing important parts and the translation is soul touching... poetic... deep... for the most serious students.

By the way, "The Upanishads: Breath of The Eternal" also includes only selected portions of the Taittiriya, Chandogya, and Brihadaranyaka. However, they do state it as such on the table of content, and more importantly, the best parts were selected and there is no deluding of anything, they rather added (to convey better the idea) than remove.

Yes, another reviewer is right: there cannot be a literal translation of the Sanskrit text (see a Sanskrit sample

below). It would not make sense at all. It has to be interpreted. But a good interpretation would not omit an idea, and in a text so deep like this, not leaving words/ideas out or "not watering them down" is critical... if we are serious about realizing these truths.

At other places, Eknath's translation was literal, for example, most translate it as "All this is Brahma, all that is Brahma", but the original in Sanskrit actually says "All this is full, all that is full" and it is how Eknath has it.

\*\*\*\*\*

Here is a quick comparison of Eknath's Isha Upanishad translation with other translators. Pay more attention to verse 3 on Eknath's translation where you can easily notice missing words/ideas, which leads to a different interpretation. Also, see how simple, yet beautiful, and direct is the translation by "The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal":

ORIGINAL - Sanskrit transliteration:

kurvann eveha karm?n?i jij?vis?ec chat?m? sam?h?  
evam? tvayi n?nyatheto'sti na karma lipyate nare

Eknath (no original in Sanskrit in his book):

Thus working may you live a hundred years. Thus alone will you work in real freedom. P. 57, verse 2

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Srila Prabhupada (in his book, he provides the original in Sanskrit):

One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that sort of work will not bind him to the law of karma. There is no alternative to this way for man.

Sri Aurobindo (in his book, he provides the original in Sanskrit):

Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee and not otherwise than this; action cleaves not to a man.

"The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal" by Swami Prabhavanada (no Sanskrit):

WELL MAY HE BE CONTENT TO LIVE A HUNDRED YEARS WHO ACTS WITHOUT ATTACHMENT - WHO WORKS HIS WORKS WITH EARNESTNESS, BUT WITHOUT DESIRES, NOT YEARNING FOR ITS FRUITS - HE, AND HE ALONE.

-----

ORIGINAL:

asurya nama te lok? andhena tamas?vr?t?h?  
t?m?s te prety?bhigacchanti ye ke c?tma-hano jan?h?

Eknath:

Those who denied the self are born again blind to the self, envelope in darkness, utterly devoid of love for the Lord. P. 57, verse 3

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Srila Prabhupada:

The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo":

Sunless are those worlds and enveloped in blind gloom where to all they in their passing hence resort who are slayers of their souls.

"The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal":

WORLDS THERE ARE WITHOUT SUNS, COVERED UP WITH DARKNESS. TO THESE AFTER DEATH GO THE IGNORANT, SLAYERS OF THE SELF.

-----  
ORIGINAL:

anejad ekam? manaso javiyo nainad dev? ?pnuvan p?rvam ars?at  
tad dh?vato'ny?n atyeti tis?t?hat tasminn apo m?tarisv? dadh?ti

Ekknath:

The Self is one. Ever still, the Self is swifter than thought, swifter than the senses. Though motionless, He outruns all pursuit. Without the Self, never could life exist. P. 57, verse 4

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Srila Prabhupada:

Although fixed in His abode, the Personality of Godhead is swifter than the mind and can overcome all others running. The powerful demigods cannot approach Him. Although in one place, He controls those who supply the air and rain. He surpasses all in excellence.

Sri Aurobindo:

One unmoving that is swifter than Mind, That the Gods reach not, for it progresses ever in front. That, standing, passes beyond others as they run. In That the Master of Life establishes the Waters.

"The Upanishads: Breath of the Eternal":

THE SELF IS ONE. UNMOVING, IT MOVES SWIFTER THAN THOUGHT. THE SENSES DO NOT OVERTAKE IT, FOR ALWAYS IT GOES BEFORE. REMAINING STILL, IT OUTSTRIPS ALL THAT RUN. WITHOUT THE SELF, THERE IS NO LIFE.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bottom line: 1. Missing important parts, 2. ideas are missing or have been diluted too much, or 3. changed.

I returned the book, unfortunately.

For a complete translation/interpretation (no Sanskrit or transliteration) of the main Upanishads get the F. Max Muller version & Swami Paramananda which can be freely obtained in PDF from "forgottenbooks" dot org. You might have to create a free account. I find their interpretations very accurate, and suited for advanced studies. Combine them with "Breath of the Eternal" and it is almost as reading the original in Sanskrit.

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UPDATE 2015-01-13: Forgotten Books has changed its membership. Now, most if not all books come with adds and missing a page after every eight page count (the free account), and if you want them with no adds and no missing pages then you must upgrade to the monthly fee membership.



5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Did not like this translation

By Doug D.

I don't usually feel right about reviewing sacred texts, so I don't do it. But, this is not to review the Upanishads themselves, but just this translation.

This translation left me flat. I was surprised since I really liked Easwaran's "The Mantram Handbook."

I took me a few tries before I found a translation of the Gita that I liked too. So, I guess the search for a good translation of the Upanishads continues.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Better than a formal course

By Bernie

Decades ago I plugged through a book called "The Thirteen Principle Upanishads", at the time I found it very useful. However I am the type of person that needs someone to tell me when my shoe is untied. Not so much a guru as an explication or guide to what I am about to read so I can slow down and look for those points besides the one I find on my own.

I perused through the Upanishads books available and found I had already purchased this as a series. I then decided to also re-purchase this in the kindle edition. I do not know if it is his classical background or just skillful presentation; however Eknath Easwaran is perfect at showing you what is about to be presented and tying it back to the concrete or classical world. I now realize it was not that I just wanted to reread the Upanishads but to understand and dwell on them. Thank you Eknath Easwaran.

You might want to do what you are not supposed to do with mysteries and go to the back of the book first to view the Glossary first for pronunciations and the descriptions of all the different players.

Be sure to read his other books.

The Bhagavad Gita (Classics of Indian Spirituality)

The Dhammapada (Classics of Indian Spirituality)

Classics of Indian Spirituality

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