

[Book Reviews](#)

Category : [October 1995](#)

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Book Reviews

This month we feature an extraordinary book, The Ribhu Gita, the Upanishadic discourse of the guru, Sage Ribhu, to his disciple, Nidagha. Its publication is a landmark achievement in the domain of Hindu scripture, making a previously unaccessible and virtually unknown, yet priceless and pure, Hindu teaching available to the English-speaking world. Following the review is an interview with Master Nome, the spirit behind this profound edition.

THE RIBHU GITA,

First English Translation from the Original Sanskrit Indian Epic Sivarahasya. Translated by Dr. H. Ramamoorthy, assisted by Master Nome. First edition, 1995, hardbound, 335 pages, US\$25.00. Available from Treasures of the Heart, 1834 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California, 95060, USA. Phone: 1-800-465-0376 (US only), 408-458-9654, fax: 408-425-0407, e-mail: ramana@cruzio.com

How rare! How precious! How utterly lofty! How far beyond the everyday consciousness of humanity, yet how close to our most intimate yearnings! Thanks to the recent publication by the Society of Abidance in Truth, SAT, the Saivas now have their Gita, too--the Ribhu Gita, an apparently "ancient text" which, like the other Gita, is an extract from a much longer epic, in this case the Sivarahasya.

The interesting thing about this Gita is its unswerving focus upon one teaching only, that of the Self, or Self-God. "Tat Tvam Asi," "You are That." This lofty knowing permeates virtually all Hindu teaching, but we know of no other text where it is focused upon so exclusively or exposed at such length. In all, some

2,200 sutras are dedicated to this ultimate of truths.

The book consists of 44 chapters, each one of which considers the Self, or Brahman, from one point of view, or conversely, looks back upon consciousness from the point of view of the Self. The reader who is inclined to monism will be delighted. He may find some stanzas awakening new perception. For example, "You never had a witness," struck and forcefully impacted this

reader.

It is important to note that the book does not rest with absolute monism, which would not allow any validity to the dualistic view. This is what makes this text truly great. After exposing in each chapter the world and all its inhabitants and happenings as totally unreal from the perspective of the highest Absolute, it

concludes each chapter with practical advice in terms of duality, offering some of its most beautiful passages. The book systematically dismantles its own theology, one might say, after constructing it. In this it is consistent, showing that even theology and doctrine are relative, not absolutes.

It should be mentioned too that this book was the great Ramana Maharshi's "bible." He referred to it constantly, and taught and encouraged others to read it. It is a Moksha Mantra from beginning to end, with no intellectual diversions, no entertaining digressions. We must marvel at the

Great Ones who so long ago sustained such a contemplation, the likes of which cannot be found elsewhere. Let us hold our hands together in homage to those realized beings who held Truth in the palm of their hand, who knew the Unknowable, and who left us this legacy of their revelation that jiva

is, indeed, Siva.

Interview with Master
Nome

Hinduism Today: Why
did you choose to
publish this book?

Master Nome: The

book itself was highly recommended by my guru, Sri Ramana Maharshi. Reading the book and meditating upon its significance is of tremendous value for those who are

practicing the path of jnana, or self-inquiry. The book also represents that fusion point where Saiva Siddhanta and Vedanta meet as one. For many, many years I had wanted to read the

book myself, but it was not available in English. You know the old adage: "If you want the job done, do it yourself."

HT:How does it

show the meeting
of Vedanta and
Siddhanta?

MN:By the sheer
amount of deep
devotion to Siva
evident in the

text, and at the same time showing Siva beyond all differentiation, beyond every human mental concept. For those who feel

Brahman is some
austere vacancy,
the sheer spirit
of the text lifts
one beyond that.
For those
practicing the
path of Siva
knowledge, but

not having heard
of or not having
given adequate
meditation to
who Siva is in
the Supreme
sense, it
inculcates that
knowledge.

HT:What do we know about the Sivarahasya?

MN:It would have to be post-vedic. It

may be
counted as an
epic, or a
purana,
perhaps. It
covers
everything, as
much as I've

seen of it, a
vast array of
knowledge
about places of
pilgrimage,
some
history--things
one would find

in a Purana.
Then we find
teachings one
would
associate with
an Upanishad,
which Ribhu
figures in. I

would be
hesitant to
classify the
work, other
than to say it
is timeless and
ancient.

When looking
at the Tamil
Ribhu Gita,
we saw that it
derived from
a Sanskrit
original within

a voluminous
work--the
Sivarahasya.
With much
searching, we
procured from
India the

cantos of the
Sanskrit
Sivarahasya,
fifth and sixth
primarily, that
contained the
Ribhu Gita. We

decided to
translate both
books,
Sanskrit and
Tamil. This
represents
the first half

of the
publication.

HT: How did
Ramana

**Maharshi use
this book?**

**MN:Sri
Ramana said**

this book
confirmed,
in scripture,
exactly what
he had
realized in
silence.

When
devotees
would come,
he would
frequently
give the
book to

them and
say, "Read
this." One
woman
devotee
said, "I can't
understand

a word of it."
He said,
"Just read it.
Keep
reading it.
Again and
again. It is a

sadhana
itself."

HT: How
should a

person use
it?

MN: For one

who steep
himself in
it, each
verse
becomes
blissful. |

recommen
d that a
person
read it
extremely
slowly,

verse by
verse, or
preferably
line by line,
even word
by word.

The text
should be
approache
d with
reverence.
It was

designed
for
someone
who has
deep
devotion,

humility,
who's not
attached to
things of
the world,
who has

that
burning
desire for
liberation
and wants
a treatise

that
reminds
him of the
guru's
instruction
about the

nature of
Ultimate
Truth.
That's the
function
the text

really
serves, in a
bombastic
way, again
and again
and again.

One has to
understand
it with the
right life
and right
meditation.

[Then,
speaking
softly] We
regard it
as a
great...!

don't think
"honor" is
the right
word--just
to have
participate

d in

preserving

something

like this. I

am very

happy that

I've been
able to do
this for the
sake of my
guru,
because of

his
emphasis
on this
scripture.

Book

Reviews

JNANESW
ARI,

Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, by

Sri
Jnanadev
a,
translate
d from

Marathi

by

Ramchan

dra

Keshav

Bhagwat,
fourth
edition,
1989. 689
pages,

hb.,

US\$25.95

, in India

rs180.

Lotus

Light
Publicatio
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Box 325,
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Road,

Madras

600 006,

India.

This is

one of
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Sri

Shankara
charya--b
y the
great
saint and

yogi Sri
Jnanadev
a, who
lived in
the

thirteenth

h

century.

It is also

one of

the
greatest
books of
Maharas
htra,

where
Jnanadev
a lived,
and one
of the

oldest
books in
the
Marathi
language



Jnanadev

a's
commen
tary is
thorough
and

detailed.

It

reflects

profound

yogic

knowled
ge and
tremend
ous
insight

into all
aspects
of life.
Though
Jnanandeva

only
lived to
the age
of
twenty,

he
achieved
the
supreme
goal of

Self
Realizati
on. He
was both
a natha

yogi and
a Krishna
bhakta.

He

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Jnanesw
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fifteen.

This

volume

includes

the

Sanskrit of the Gita. The English translati

on of the
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well
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helpful

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material.

Review

by David Frawley

VEDIC
ASTROLOGY:
Ashtaka
Varga,

Made Simple for the Western Astrolog

er, by

R.G.

Krishnan,

1994.

123

pages,

pb.,

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R. G.

Krishnan,

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Ashtaka

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The

Ashtaka

Varga
system
assesses
the
effects of

transiting
planets
from the
Moon
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from
seven
other
planets.
Those

who are
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Vedic astrologi cal concepts and

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deeper realm of Vedic astrology

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**AYURVE
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Verma,

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life-sciences
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vitality.
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and yoga
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and
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precious
help to
anyone
who
wants to

stay
healthy,
happy
and in
tune with

themselves
and
the
rhythm
of the

cosmos.

A

**SURVEY
OF
HINDUIS
M, by
Klaus K.**

Klosterm
aier,
second
edition,
1994.

715

pages,

pb.,

US\$ 19.9

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Univ^{er}sit
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York
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c/o CUP

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Cascadill
a Street,
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14851,
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sects of Hinduism , the Hindu social

system,
the
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more. It
contains
passages

from the
Vedas,
Gita and
other
scripture

S, addressi ng the Hinduism of South

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Review by David Frawley

AYURVE
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NEERS,
Familiar
Western
Food
Prepared

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Ayurvedic
Principles,
by

Amadea
Mornings
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1995.
395

pages,

pb.,

US\$ 19.9

5. Lotus

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ons, P.O.
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n 53181,
USA.

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8561,

fax:

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8591.

Ayurved
applied
to Indian
cooking
is

virtually
assumed
. But for
the
Western

chef,
applying
Ayurved
into daily
dishes

may
serve a
dilemma.
Who
knows

how the
standard
Western
dishes,
like

mashed
potatoes,
will
affect
the

doshas?

Now we

can all

know.

Step into

Amadea' s kitchen and learn how to

cook
fresh,
easy
recipes
for

healthy
folks, as
well as
for those
with

illnesses,
including
allergies
and
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FROM INDIA TO AMERICA , A Brief History

of

Immigrat

ion;

Problems

of

Discrimin ation, Admissio n and Assimilat

ion,
edited by
S.
Chandra
sekhar,

second
edition,
1986.
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pages,

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Review,

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o

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rry,
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