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Discovering the Rigveda

By G.N.S. Raghavan

2009. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. 200 This book does not present a statistically representative sample of the subjects addressed in the hymns of the Rigveda. Repetitive praise of divinities like Agni, Indra and the Soma drink occupy a large proportion of the work; only some examples are reproduced in this book. Attention is focused instead on the most precious features of the Rigveda, which even perceptive Western scholars have not noticed adequately: the ethical orientation which was to find resonance in post-Sangam Tamil poetry; insight into the working of the human mind and motivation, as in the poem on the losing gambler, which anticipates Vyasa's Yudhishtira and Dostoevsky's tragic hero; bold confronting of a subject as challenging as incest; existential introspection ('What thing I truly am, I know not'); and the speculation by the Rigvedic sages, who were the world's earliest free-thinkers, on the possible but not necessary existence of a Creator God. In addition to presenting the memorable features of the untampered Rigveda, this book surveys the ritual-ridden and casteist (not to say racist) Brahminism that supplanted the Rigvedic ethos. It also discusses the subsequent softening and humanising of Brahminism by reforming influences : the nobler Upanishads; the rationalist...



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