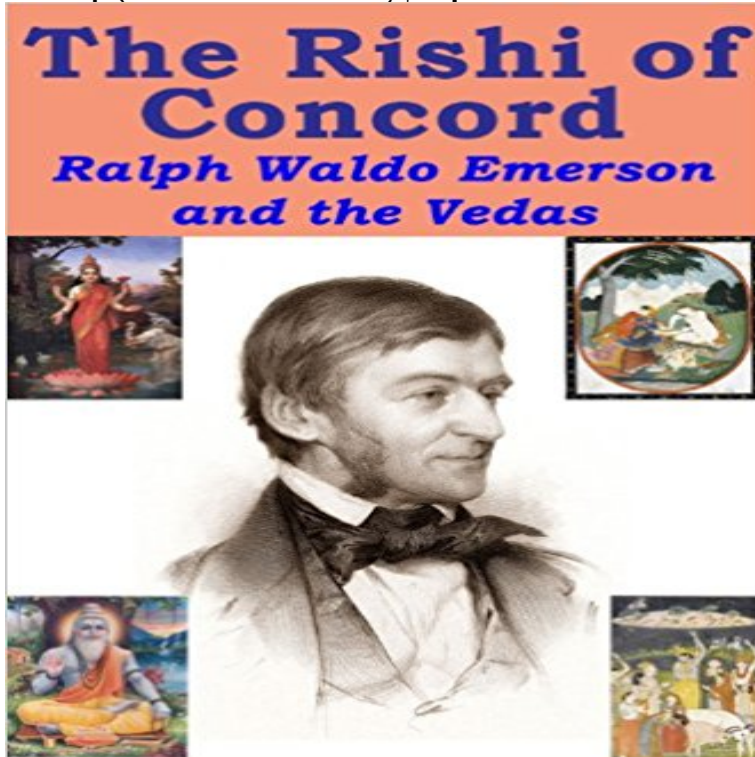


# The Rishi of Concord: Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Vedas [a selected edit] (River Drafting Spirt Series Book 2)



includes the following source material: The Over-soul; Illusions; Hamatreya; Nature; Divinity School Address; Brahma; Immortality; Fate and other selections illustrating Ralph Waldos interest in the Vedas of India. from Emersons Representative Men (1850) The mind is urged to ask for one cause of many effects; then for the cause of that; and again the cause, diving still into the profound; self-assured that it shall arrive at an absolute and sufficient one, a one that shall be all. In the midst of the sun is the light, in the midst of the light is truth, and in the midst of truth is the imperishable being, say the Vedas. All philosophy, of east and west, has the same centripetence. Urged by an opposite necessity, the mind returns from the one, to that which is not one, but other or many; from cause to effect; and affirms the necessary existence of variety, the self-existence of both, as each is involved in the other. These strictly-blended elements it is the problem of thought to separate, and to reconcile. Their existence is mutually contradictory and exclusive; and each so fast slides into the other, that we can never say what is one, and what it is not. The Proteus is as nimble in the highest as in the lowest grounds, when we contemplate the one, the true, the good, as in the surfaces and extremities of matter. In all nations, there are minds which incline to dwell in the conception of the fundamental Unity. The raptures of prayer and ecstasy of devotion lose all being in one Being. This tendency finds its highest expression in the religious writings of the East, and chiefly, in the Indian Scriptures, in the Vedas, the Bhagavat Geeta, and the Vishnu Purana. Those writings contain little else than this idea, and they rise to pure and sublime strains in celebrating it. The Same, the Same! friend and foe are of one stuff; the ploughman, the plough, and the furrow, are of one stuff; and the stuff is such, and so

much, that the variations of forms are unimportant. You are fit (says the supreme Krishna to a sage) to apprehend that you are not distinct from me. That which I am, thou art, and that also is this world, with its gods, and heroes, and mankind. Men contemplate distinctions, because they are stupefied with ignorance. The words I and mine constitute ignorance. What is the great end of all, you shall now learn from me. It is soul, one in all bodies, pervading, uniform, perfect, preeminent over nature, exempt from birth, growth, and decay, omnipresent, made up of true knowledge, independent, unconnected with unrealities, with name, species, and the rest, in time past, present, and to come. The knowledge that this spirit, which is essentially one, is in ones own, and in all other bodies, is the wisdom of one who knows the unity of things. As one diffusive air, passing through the perforations of a flute, is distinguished as the notes of a scale, so the nature of the Great Spirit is single, though its forms be manifold, arising from the consequences of acts. When the difference of the investing form, as that of god, or the rest, is destroyed, there is no distinction. The whole world is but a manifestation of Vishnu, who is identical with all things, and is to be regarded by the wise, as not differing from, but as the same as themselves. I neither am going nor coming; nor is my dwelling in any one place; nor art thou, thou; nor are others, others; nor am I, I. As if he had said, All is for the soul, and the soul is Vishnu; and animals and stars are transient painting; and light is whitewash; and durations are deceptive; and form is imprisonment; and heaven itself a decoy. That which the soul seeks is resolution into being, above form, out of Tartarus, and out of heaven, liberation from nature.

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