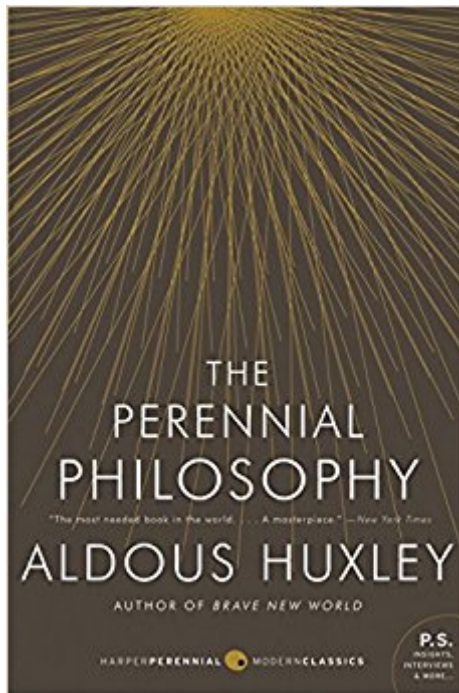


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# The Perennial Philosophy



## Synopsis

An inspired gathering of religious writings that reveals the "divine reality" common to all faiths, collected by Aldous Huxley "The Perennial Philosophy," Aldous Huxley writes, "may be found among the traditional lore of peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions." With great wit and stunning intellect—drawing on a diverse array of faiths, including Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Christian mysticism, and Islam—Huxley examines the spiritual beliefs of various religious traditions and explains how they are united by a common human yearning to experience the divine. The Perennial Philosophy includes selections from Meister Eckhart, Rumi, and Lao Tzu, as well as the Bhagavad Gita, Tibetan Book of the Dead, Diamond Sutra, and Upanishads, among many others.

## Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial Modern Classics; 6/28/09 edition (2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061724947

ISBN-13: 978-0061724947

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 144 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #48,894 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Mysticism #65 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Philosophy #89 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Religious

## Customer Reviews

Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) is the author of the classic novels *Brave New World*, *Island*, *Eyeless in Gaza*, and *The Genius and the Goddess*, as well as such critically acclaimed nonfiction works as *The Perennial Philosophy* and *The Doors of Perception*. Born in Surrey, England, and educated at Oxford, he died in Los Angeles, California.

Staple book for any Aldous Huxley fan. Very interesting read. As I was brought up Catholic, I was sent away to boarding school for 11th and 12th grade. In 12th grade we were to study world religions. That study is what broke me loose of all the things my Family had struggled so hard to

instill in me, and helped me reach a deeper connection and understanding of many religions. Aldous Huxley touched on a few points I was not able to nail down, and it was refreshing.

This review (and rating) is specifically for the Kindle version of this book. The book itself is great--if not a bit tedious, but that's just the nature of the content and Aldous Huxley's scholarly (and slightly disorganized) approach. It's an insightful read for any spiritual seeker or open-minded religious devout. However, the Kindle version I purchased had frequent transcription errors--typos, formatting errors, etc. There was one later chapter in particular (which one specifically now escapes me) that had at least 5-10 noticeable mistakes, to the point of being distracting and discouraging. It wouldn't be as noteworthy if this was one of 's free or less-than-\$3.99 offerings, but at over \$10, you'd expect a little bit more of a cleaned up transcription. It doesn't affect the overall readability/comprehension of the book much, it's just content flaws you'd rather not have to notice or decipher while enjoying a book.

Very unpleasant to read, firstly the print is fuzzy and also rather small. Secondly, this is just a 'wild' compilation of different concepts and excerpts from different religions and sayings by sages and mystics, and in his comments between these, Huxley fails to pull it all together, to get across any meaningful points, deductions or anything that HE gleaned from studying all these fields.

Huxley's book is well researched and covered more than I learned in college. This is a must read for anyone researching the human condition.

This is the most eloquent and beautifully plumbed exploration of the mystical traditions in world religions. No one has ever done it better than Mr. Huxley, and I wish he were still alive so I could send him a heart-felt fan letter.

Excellent content. Engaging and accessible for academic and non-academic readers. Huxley is a masterful compiler and thinker. The Perennial Philosophy highlights the golden thread that weaves through major spiritual traditions of east and west. First published in 1990, this continues to be an important work for those engaged by matters of the spirit and heart that tie humanity together through wisdom traditions from around the world. Huxley has offered a lasting and superb work through the Perennial Philosophy.

In "The Perennial Philosophy," Aldous Huxley, the celebrated novelist, turns his attention to spiritual philosophy and attempts to explicate and elaborate the Perennial Philosophy, which he considers the "Highest Common Denominator" found in the "higher religions"--Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Taoism, Judaism, and Islam. He argues that at the mystical core of these religions is "the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all Being." And because this book is an anthology, he provides excerpt after excerpt from the "Great Traditions" to buttress his argument. I have the utmost respect for Huxley, a brilliant thinker, writer, and humanitarian; and I applaud him for his noble effort in this book, which, in my opinion, generally, but not completely, succeeds in explicating and elaborating the Perennial Philosophy. Positively, Huxley continually points to the divine Ground, the Godhead--the God of Being rather than becoming--as the alpha and omega of true, or mystical, spirituality. Negatively, his thesis is "flattened" by his "Vedanta-ized" approach, which places the essence of the higher religions under a single, staid umbrella. At the time Huxley wrote this book, 1944, he and fellow great writer Christopher Isherwood were deeply into the Hindu Vedanta teachings of Swami Prabhavananda. While I like Prabhavananda's writings--I've read books by him on the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, Patanjali, and the Sermon on the Mount--there is a certain exoteric flatness to them, which makes them more suitable for beginners and intermediate students of Truth than for esoteric mystics; thus Huxley's book is brought down a notch by this conventional "Vedanta-ized effect." This "Vedanta-ized effect" manifests itself in the topics and extracts Huxley chose for this anthology. In short, these topics and extracts emphasize the themes of moral purity (of heart) and self-emptying (poverty) as the keys to the Kingdom of God. One who reads this book will, mistakenly, think he has to become a self-nullified saint in order to become Self-realized, and few will find this demand enticing or possible. Huxley misses the boat relative to God-realization because he didn't "crack the cosmic code." Hence the "astrolabe" he emphasizes for "locating" the Divine is essentially apophatic; and he essentially ignores the positive, or cataphatic, means to the Godhead, which is the practice of (Plugged-in) Presence, or Divine Communion. The integral spiritual astrolabe is a dialectic, with Plugged-in Presence representing the thesis, self-emptying the antithesis, and reception of Divine Power the synthesis. Because Huxley didn't crack the cosmic code, he reveals his spiritual-philosophical limitations in a number of places throughout this text. For example, he doesn't understand the Buddhist Trikaya (or "Triple Body"), which is analogous to the Christian Holy Trinity; and some of his philosophizing falls flat. For example he writes: "Love is a mode of knowledge, and when the love is sufficiently disinterested and sufficiently intense, the knowledge becomes unitive knowledge and so takes on the quality of infallibility." I don't concur with his analysis

of love, which is a mode of feeling, and not of knowing. Without Higher Knowledge (Gnosis), love is hardly infallible. In summary, "The Perennial Philosophy" is a classic spiritual text that I wholeheartedly recommend for novice and intermediate students of esoteric spirituality. But if you're an advanced student of mysticism, you probably won't find many, if any, nuggets in it.

When I first read this book many years ago I was one of those young men eagerly seeking Truth. I had been raised in a very primitive fundamentalist sect and did not have any concept of the vastness and immense age and depth of mankind's search for God, spirit, truth. Here Huxley brought together in one book the extraordinary beauty and universality of many different traditions-- I was amazed. It became quite obvious to me, and now still is, that there is a natural universal hunger in people to know the truth, the way to live in accord with the highest Good. The book is loaded with many quotes from many different spiritual traditions and one can very easily see the source of them all is the pure seeking heart of human beings. For seekers of every level of expertise or development this book could be an important key to further spiritual breakthroughs...there is no end, the experience of the enlightened heart expands forever in all directions. This book may make the journey easier and more pleasant, at least, that has certainly been my experience.

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