



The Artful Universe: An Introduction to the Vedic Religious Imagination (S U N Y Series in Hindu Studies) (Sunny Series, Hindu Studies)

William K. Mahony

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Provides an accessible introduction to the Vedic religious world by focusing on the role of divine and human imagination in sacred texts.

"*The Artful Universe* provides a gentle tour through formative passages from the *Rgveda* and *Upanisads* that explicate the creative ritual/philosophical process. I particularly enjoyed the passages selected by the author, and his competent translation of them. He has captured and summarized the philosophical intent of the Vedic hymns, and thematized key concepts." -- Christopher Key Chapple, Loyola Marymount University

"This is a very important contribution to our understanding of early Indian religious imagination and to the field of religious studies broadly construed. Basically, the book develops an angle of interpretation that tracks on what the Vedic poets were constructing in the way of a universe in which imagination, language, and nature intersected one another. Using philological and literary-critical approaches to Vedic texts, Mahony sorts through a great many of the one thousand and eight hymns of the *Rgveda* in an effort to reconstruct and present the unfolding of a world view which sees the cosmos as an elaborate, interconnected, and paradoxical artistic reality." -- Paul B. Courtright, Emory University

The Artful Universe introduces the Vedic religion, a rich and densely textured tradition that has influenced the religious sensibilities of India for 3500 years or more. Engagingly written and based on traditional as well as modern Vedic scholarship, the book introduces Vedic ideas regarding the nature of divinity, the structure of the sacred universe, the process of revelation, the function of ritual as hallowed activity, and the realizations lying behind the practice of meditation. As a way to link these diverse aspects of Vedic religion, Mahony identifies and highlights the important role of the divine and human *imagination* in the formation, revelation, and reformation of a meaningful world.

"I found Mahony's translations of the Vedas to be stunning. He has treated the text carefully, even reverentially. After reading these texts anew, some of which I had read many times before in mechanical translations, I was able to viscerally understand how and why the Vedas are revelatory, shining, holy." -- Joanne Punzo Waghorne, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

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