



The Essential Writings

Meister Eckhart , Raymond Bernard Blakney (Translator)

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The Father of German Mysticism

Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) was a German theologian, philosopher, professor, and mystic. In his distinguished career, he became a professor of theology at the University of Paris and took a leading pastoral and organizational role in the Dominican Order.

Later in his life he was brought before the local Franciscan-led Inquisition and was tried as a heretic. In response Eckhart produced "The Defense" in which he famously defended his writings and refuted their heretical intent. This book collects his most important writings, including his many sermons, as well as his historic response to accusations of heresy.

The Essential Writings Details

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Kate says

Professor Amy Hollywood taught this book in her course entitled Mysticism and Christianity.

Matt says

Rather more tedious than I'd expected. I think I just don't much care for mysticism; St John of the Cross affected me pretty much the same way.

Angela Joyce says

The Meister is every bit as cryptic, compelling, and controversial as I'd been warned. I do see certain parallels with what I know about Buddhism, or at least the Western variety of it. How strange.

Brandon says

I refer back to this book often it's filled with little gems.

Monika Barger says

A really good collection and introduction to this theologian. His teachings are incredibly challenging yet somehow very simple, as well as respectful to the ordinary person. I was continually having to stop and exclaim at the power of a sentence that forced me to think and ponder at an angle I never had before. (I was also often squinting at things that just seemed bizarre. No mistaking, Eckhart is someone easily described as "out there", for both good and ill. :P) In addition to general weirdness here and there, his theology is definitely still weakened with some patriarchy, as well as the downsides of Medieval Great-Chain-of-Being theology and the worship of hierarchy therein. Yet there is nothing quite like his insights and what he was doing at the time.

I came away with a new awareness of how limited my human mind is, and how I will never conceptualize the Divine. Yet I felt the nearer to it/him/her/them, for all that, perhaps because of it. Somehow the not-knowing-much-at-all primes the human spirit to commune with what it cannot consciously know, yet comes from. I get the feeling this repeated insight is one reason Eckhard was accused of heresy, as well as for expressing it in a way very close to that of some Eastern religions. As the forward points out, his work was very similar to that of some Zen and Buddhist teachers in its search for openness and spiritual nakedness/nothingness. It can be disconcerting to feel something seemingly alien in your religion - and if his peers had known at the time of these other religions, they would have been even more dismayed, no doubt. I think it's reassuring and encouraging, to feel something similar beckoning us along, no matter what tradition

we use to traverse our existence.

Lefruitbat says

this man was radical for his time. amazingly bold

Scot says

Older translations. The translations by M-C Walshe and by Colledge and McGinn (and Tobin and Borgstadt) are much better.

IAO131 says

Meister Eckhart is one of the clearest thinkers of the Christian mystics, and makes many points that are directly paralleled in Thelemic mysticism. I found this collection a bit less stimulating than Penguin Books' 'Selected Writings: Meister Eckhart', but reading a different translator is always interesting. Recommended for anyone interested in Christian mysticism or mysticism in general.

Joseph says

Half a page was enough.

Steve Gambino says

It's a collection so parts of it are excellent, parts of it so-so. It depends what you're looking for. I'm reading it mostly for research and so for that reason it is a very good source as it has first sources along with criticism.

Sister Pam says

This is my second read through the book and have a much greater appreciation for the Dominican German Mystic. His defense is brilliant and a must read for those who misunderstand his mystical revelations of God and man's relationship with Him.

Guida Allès says

Què s'ha fet de la meua llibertat? Com puc tornar a mi mateix? On trobar una alegria que no acaba? Eckhart,

mestre de místics, contemporani de Dante, Ramon Llull, Tomàs d'Aquino, Gertrudis la Gran i Matilde de Magdeburg, no escriu un tractat teòric sinó que comparteix l'experiència pròpia i la dels savis grecs, llatins i els filòsofs medievals. Un llibre per a iniciats en l'art de la contemplació. Un savi que va ser condemnat per heretge però que ha marcat i segueix marcant avui el nord de qui vol anar més enllà del desig de poder, prestigi o doblers.

Ojo Oim says

I'm in the process of wading or nibbling through this book. I haven't seen the other translations, but in this one, the language flows and the notes are simple but good, referencing Boethius and Pseudo-Dionysius and other "ancient authorities" which Meister Eckhart mentions.

Having grown up Christian but with a strong attraction to philosophies of the eastern peoples, I find in these teachings an appealing wisdom. It feels clear and reliable. He was in the church but his message is universal, dealing with Being. As far as I can see, his teaching isn't so much based on salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus, but about knowing God, Truth, Being. It's devotional, idealistic, philosophical, insightful. And I get the impression that Meister Eckhart knew that of which he spoke. How else would someone have the courage to talk like this?

Jeff says

Johannes Eckhart was a giant intellect of the late Middle Ages. Like many great souls who dare to question God and the generally accepted orthodoxy surrounding all things spiritual - he was punished. He was a Dominican Friar who was tried for heresy by the local inquisition (Nobody Expects the Spanish Inquisition!!! Sorry Monty Python Slip there) led by the Franciscan order.

The book is a wonderful multi-layered work of deep significance that can stimulate the mind and spirit. It is a touchstone for many philosophers and spiritual seekers and you will often hear it mentioned.
