



From the Annals of the World History

Since times immemorial, the world has been the birthplace to men of stature and character who contemplated on the ultimate reality and purpose of life. History also speaks of people who by mere hard work and discipline rose from being lay men to leaders of the nation. Philosophers, Kings, Warriors, Saints, Thinkers, Artists, Scholars, Poets, Reformers and the like, all have garnished the earth right from the inception of civilized story of mankind. Some of them are frequently remembered by the Creator himself our Beloved Bhagavan. We shall be presenting one such great person every month from the annals of world history. We begin with Max Muller.

Max Muller



History refers to him as a German scholar of comparative language, religion, and mythology. Müller's special areas of interest were Sanskrit philology and the religions of India.

The son of Wilhelm Müller, a noted poet, Max Müller was educated in Sanskrit, the classical language of India, and other languages in Leipzig, Berlin, and Paris. He moved to England in 1846 and settled in Oxford in 1848, where he became deputy professor of modern languages in 1850. He was appointed professor of comparative philology in 1868 and retired in 1875.

Müller was instrumental in editing and translating into English some of the most significant religious texts of Asia. Especially noteworthy are his edition of the great collection of Sanskrit hymns the Rigveda, Rig-Veda-samhitâ: The Sacred Hymns of the Brâhmanas (6 vol., 1849-74); his work as editor of the 51-volume series of translations The Sacred Books of the East; and his initial editorial efforts for the series Sacred Books of the Buddhists. In addition, Müller was an important early proponent of a study that he called the "science of religion"; indeed, some credit him with founding that study. His most important writings on the subject include Essays on the Science of Religion (1869), vol. 1 of Chips from a German Workshop; Introduction to the Science of Religion (1873); and Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion (1878).

In the words of Bhagavan Baba - "Max Muller spent his time in the study of Sanskrit and the Vedas. He maintained that Sanskrit is the mother of all languages. After completing the study of Rig Veda, he inscribed an introduction to his work in Sanskrit. He describes himself as a native of Germany who had received education in Oxford University. He coined the lines in Sanskrit thus: for Germany he wrote Sarmany, for Oxford university, Gothirthapura and his name **Moksha Mulla Bhat**. See how he cherished love for Sanskrit and the Vedas."

Max Muller said: "Sanskrit literature allows you an insight into the strata of thought deeper than any you have known before and rich in lessons that appeal to the deepest sympathies of human heart. I may perhaps be able to show how imperfect our knowledge of Universal history, our insight into the development of the human intellect must always remain, if we narrow our horizon to the history of the Greeks, Romans, Saxons and Celts with a dim background of Palestine, Egypt, Babylon, and leave out of sight our nearest relatives, the Aryans of India, the framers of the most wonderful language, the Sanskrit, the fellow workers in the construction of our fundamental concepts, the fathers of the most natural of natural religions, the makers of the most transparent of mythologies, the inventors of the most subtle philosophy, the givers of the most elaborate laws."

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention of those who have studied Plato and Kant - should point out to India. If I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks, Romans and on the Semitic race the Jewish may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life most perfect, more comprehensive, more universal more truly human, a life not for this life only but a transfigured and eternal life again. I should point out to India.

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