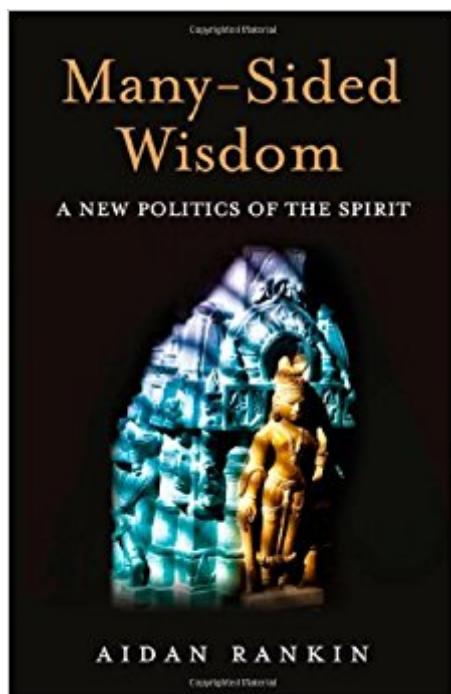


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Many-Sided Wisdom: A New Politics Of The Spirit



Synopsis

Anekant is a new political philosophy with ancient spiritual roots. It derives from the teachings of the Jains in India, but is relevant to all cultures and all times. Anekant literally means 'Many-Sidedness'. It recognises that there are an infinite variety of paths towards the same truth and so the search for truth must be undertaken with humility. Practising Many-Sidedness is about realising that society means more than just humans, because it embraces all forms of life. We should learn to co-operate instead of competing with each other, and work with nature rather than pointlessly attempting to conquer it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is based on the ancient Jain idea of Anekant, or Many-Sided Wisdom, otherwise known as Multiple Viewpoints or Non-Absolutism. In the so- called "developed" West we tend to see all things as right or wrong, black or white. We are switched into this binary thinking, which we equate with progress, which in turn requires increasing consumption, the need for expansion, and dominion over the natural world. And we are attached to too many possessions. Rankin tells us that this attachment, rather than religion per se, is the cause of many wars that are blamed on religion. We see our power over others as a strength; we lack humility, which is seen as weakness. Nowhere is there a greater need for the practice of this many-sided wisdom than in our divisive politics, and polarized religions. Our problem is that we all think we hold the only path to truth; and we are in a mess because of this. The Shinto masters say that "my truth does not need to be the same as your truth." And this is also the Jain way. We can all be right, in different ways. We can respect the other

point of view totally, and find common factors, connecting strands, between otherwise conflicting arguments. This is Anekant, or non-violence of the mind. It requires us to recondition our minds; to change the way we look at ideas. And it could transform individuals and society, and the world in which we live, offering the path to a safer better world for all humanity. The author explains in some depth the three main principles of Jain understanding, which lead to Anekant. Firstly, Jains have a fundamental respect and sympathy with all creatures. All life is interconnected, and our intelligence confers responsibility, not entitlement. Then he writes of cosmic law, Karma and reincarnation.

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