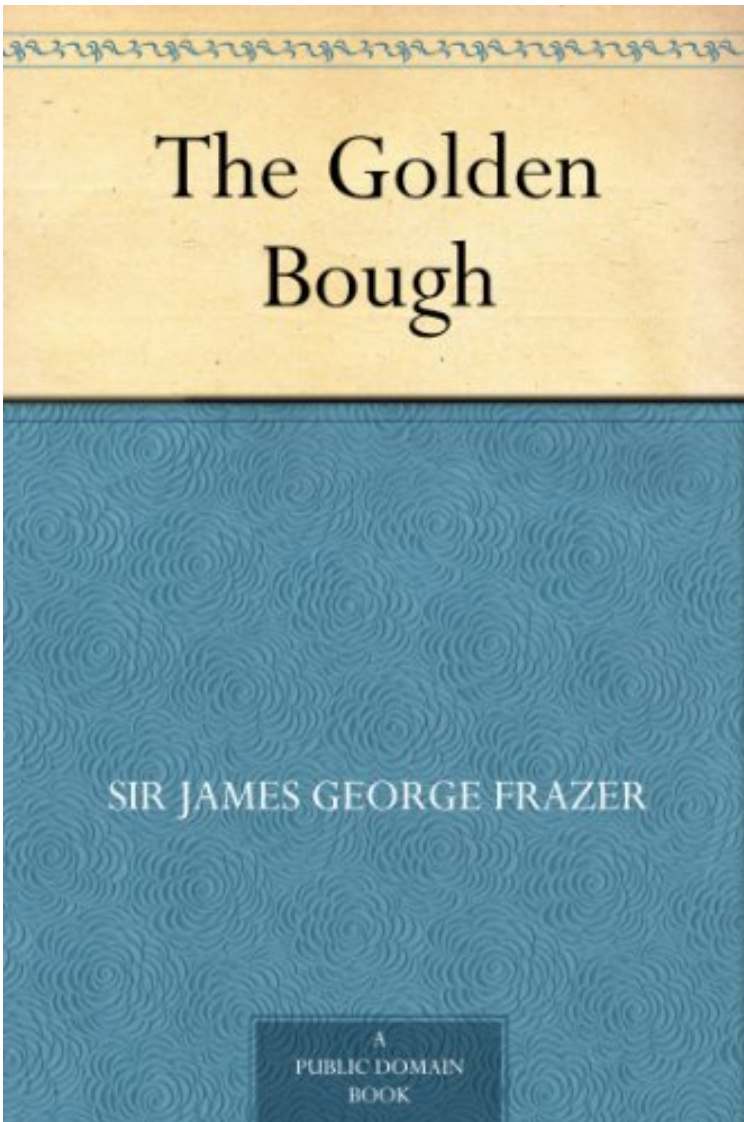


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# The Golden Bough (English Edition)



*Par Sir James George Frazer*  
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**Par Sir James George Frazer : The Golden Bough (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Golden Bough (English Edition):

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**Description :** Description du produitAn expert in myth and religion, Sir James George Frazer spent more than a quarter-century assembling this 1890 study of the cults, rites, and myths of antiquity. Frazer's definitions of such terms as "magic," "religion," and "science" proved highly useful to his successors in the field of social anthropology, and his explications of the ancient legends profoundly influenced generations of psycdhologists, writers, and poets. This abridgment of his twelve-volume work omits footnotes and occasionally condenses text; nevertheless, as the author himself observed, all of its main principles remain intact, along with ample illustrative examples. Portable and modestly priced, this edition is a convenient and economical choice.

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wireless delivery..com Before Joseph Campbell became the world's most famous practitioner of comparative mythology, there was Sir James George Frazer. The Golden Bough was originally published in two volumes in 1890, but Frazer became so enamored of his topic that over the next few decades he expanded the work sixfold, then in 1922 cut it all down to a single thick edition suitable for mass distribution. The thesis on the origins of magic and religion that it elaborates "will be long and laborious," Frazer warns readers, "but may possess something of the charm of a voyage of discovery, in which we shall visit many strange lands, with strange foreign peoples, and still stranger customs." Chief among those customs--at least as the book is remembered in the popular imagination--is the sacrificial killing of god-kings to ensure bountiful harvests, which Frazer traces through several cultures, including in his elaborations the myths of Adonis, Osiris, and Balder. While highly influential in its day, The Golden Bough has come under harsh critical scrutiny in subsequent decades, with many of its descriptions of regional folklore and legends deemed less than reliable.

Furthermore, much of its tone is rooted in a philosophy of social Darwinism--sheer cultural imperialism, really--that finds its most explicit form in Frazer's rhetorical question: "If in the most backward state of human society now known to us we find magic thus conspicuously present and religion conspicuously absent, may we not reasonably conjecture that the civilized races of the world have also at some period of their history passed through a similar intellectual phase?" (The truly civilized races, he goes on to say later, though not particularly loudly, are the ones whose minds evolve beyond religious belief to embrace the rational structures of scientific thought.) Frazer was much too genteel to state plainly that "primitive" races believe in magic because they are too stupid and backwards to know any better; instead he remarks that "a savage hardly conceives the distinction commonly drawn by more advanced peoples between the natural and the supernatural." And he certainly was not about to make explicit the logical extension of his theories--"that Christian legend, dogma, and ritual" (to quote Robert Graves's summation of Frazer in *The White Goddess*) "are the refinement of a great body of primitive and barbarous beliefs." Whatever modern readers have come to think of the book, however, its historical significance and the eloquence with which Frazer attempts to develop what one might call a unifying theory of anthropology cannot be denied. --Ron Hogan *Revue de presse* I'll skip reviewing the content and speak to book's edition. This is the one that was abridged by the author from a multi-volume, earlier edition. In later years, the tome was watered down and censored due to authorial speculation on the nature of Jesus. All the controversial ideas are present in this particular edition, so it is safe to purchase it and not feel cheated. --By A. D. Sian on July 4, 2007

In *The Golden Bough*, James George Frazer, an expert social anthropologist, explains the ancient origins of the world's myths, rituals, and religions. He shows the similarities between many cultures' strange superstitions, such as animal and human sacrifice, fertility ritual, community cleansing rituals, and others. He begins with the question of why, at Nemi in prehistoric Greek times, a warrior priest known as the King of the Wood kept his position by fighting for his life, which could be threatened at any time by his successor and murderer. By attempting to explain this ancient tradition, Frazer examines similarities between religious beliefs and shows how the belief in magic and the worship of nature was gradually transformed into the worship of religious kings and gods. Controversially, many elements of Christianity are included, such as Christ's crucifixion and the fact that many Christian holidays coincide with the dates of prehistoric pagan rituals. For the diligent skeptic of Frazer's ideas, I would advise reading the full, multi-volume edition, which includes the archeological evidence for the theories. --By translucenc on May 28, 2010