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The Golden Quest, Volume Two: Skanda, by Hilda Charlton, pb, 118 pages, US\$7.95, Golden Quest Publishing, P.O. Box 190, Lake Hill, N.Y., 12448-0190, USA.

Skanda is a short collection of 42 channeled writings, or "lessons" that Hilda received in the five years just prior to her passing in 1988, nearly all from Lord Skanda, or Kartikkeya. They focus on the unique time of transition of the Sat Siva Yuga we are now in, with inspired and detailed instructions for its maturation. Here is a sample: "I [Skanda] stand here today to dispel your fears and awaken in you the courage of Soldiers of Light. When you cry out to Me for help, there am I, instantly! I give you the gift today of courage, a courage of the God within."

Intwined in Hilda's translation of this divine message is an interpretation of Skanda's Vel as "Goddess Jyothi," with which some may take exception as non traditional. Like any collection of channeled messages, these may not bear the grey-steel light of a doubting intellect.

Hilda Charlton spent 18 years in India. Her visits to the famed Kathirgama temple to Skanda in Sri Lanka are engagingly recounted at the beginning of her book. She describes a firewalker there, "All she could see was a bright red carpet. She fearlessly danced down the bed of coals, and even though her sari was trailing in the fire, it did not burn."

After her return from India, Hilda taught the importance of unconditional love, giving and forgiving, constant remembrance of God and the fundamental unity of the world's religions.

Reviewed by Deva Rajan