

= Upanishads =

The Upanishads (Sanskrit : Upaniṣad ; IPA : [ʊpəʃnə ʋɪʃd̪ə]) are a collection of texts that contain some of the central philosophical concepts of Hinduism , some of which are shared with Buddhism and Jainism . The Upanishads are considered by Hindus to contain utterances (ṛuti) concerning the nature of ultimate reality (brahman) and describing the character of and path to human salvation (mokṣa or mukti) .

The Upanishads are commonly referred to as Vedānta , variously interpreted to mean either the " last chapters , parts of the Veda " or " the object , the highest purpose of the Veda " . The concepts of Brahman (Ultimate Reality) and ātman (Soul , Self) are central ideas in all the Upanishads , and " Know your ātman " their thematic focus . The Upanishads are the foundation of Hindu philosophical thought and its diverse traditions . Of the Vedic corpus , they alone are widely known , and the central ideas of the Upanishads are at the spiritual core of Hindus .

More than 200 Upanishads are known , of which the first dozen or so are the oldest and most important and are referred to as the principal or main (mukhya) Upanishads . The mukhya Upanishads are found mostly in the concluding part of the Brahmanas and Aranyakas and were , for centuries , memorized by each generation and passed down orally . The early Upanishads all predate the Common Era , some in all likelihood pre 6th century BCE (6th century BCE) , down to the Maurya period . Of the remainder , some 95 Upanishads are part of the Muktika canon , composed from about the last centuries of 1st millennium BCE through about 15th century CE . New Upanishads , beyond the 108 in the Muktika canon , continued to be composed through the early modern and modern era , though often dealing with subjects which are unconnected to the Vedas .

Along with the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutra , the mukhya Upanishads (known collectively as the Prasthanatrayi) provide a foundation for the several later schools of Vedānta , among them , two influential monistic schools of Hinduism .

With the translation of the Upanishads in the early 19th century they also started to attract attention from a western audience . Arthur Schopenhauer was deeply impressed by the Upanishads and called it " the production of the highest human wisdom " . The 19th century transcendentalists noted the influence of the Upanishads in western philosophy .

= = Etymology = =