

## ***What is Vedanta***

The word ***Sruti*** in Sanskrit means “that which is heard in sound form.” Sruti means direct experience through Parabrahma or Parameshwara by direct revelation. By contemplation on the Higher which resulted into deep meditation the ancient Rishis sitting on the mountains and peaks of the Himalayas were able to listen through the ***“Voice of silence.”*** It was not through perception, nor through the mind or intellect that the transmission took place.

The Rishis were able to listen, experience deep knowledge that became the authoritative Hindu text comprising the central theme of Hinduism. ***Sruti was heard and Vedas are scriptures of Sruti.*** Vedas are not created by man and even our sages are not authors or writers of Vedas. There are 4 Vedas. Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. The Vedas are the eternal truths revealed by God to the ancient Rishis. The Vedas teach the origin of and the reason for existence.

***Upanishads*** are the concluding portions of the Vedas. Upanishad means connection. The Upanishads portray the vision of an interconnected universe with a single unifying principle behind all the diversity in the world. This principle is called Brahman. The Upanishads teach that the Brahman resides in the atman, the eternal core of an individual. Around 108 Upanishads are known. A few of them are: Isha, Kena and Katha, Mundaka, Mandukya, Tattiriya, Aitareya, Chaandogya, and Brihadaranyaka. The teaching based on Upanishads are called ***Vedanta***.

***Vedanta*** says that every individual is potentially Divine. It teaches us that attaining Liberation and freeing oneself from the shackles of samsara should be the goal of life. The most important teachings are that the soul is eternal and would pass from body to body until the jiva or individual burns the dross and realizes that he is Brahman and the person would be released from the cycle of births and deaths.

***Vedanta*** teaches that the Consciousness is One and it manifests as different lives in earth. Plants have life, so do animals and we all have life. Oneness in life Some people get connected spiritually when they are with animals/nature/human beings. This is the basis of Spirituality. All lives are from the same Source. Oneness is our very nature.

***Bhagavad Gita*** is the song of the Lord and posits the existence of an individual self (an Atman) and a supreme self - Brahman (Consciousness) in each being. The Gita is interpreted as a dialogue between a human self and God. That is Arjuna and Lord Krishna.

***The Upanishads along with Brahmasutra and Bhagavad Gita are referred to as Vedanta.***