

[The Science of Upanishads - Part 14: Mandukya Upanishad](#) [- The Number 1 of the 11 Principal Upanishads](#)

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It is the shortest of all the Upanishads, consisting of only 12 verses, and is assigned to Atharvaveda. It is listed as number 6 in the Muktiḱā canon of 108 Upanishads, and as **number 1 among the list of 11 Principal Upanishads**. It is in prose and is associated with a Rig Vedic school of scholars. It discusses the syllable *Om*, presents the theory of four states of consciousness, asserts the existence and nature of Atman. The Mandukya Upanishad is notable as the one Upanishad that alone is sufficient for knowledge to gain moksha. The text is also notable for inspiring Gaudapada's *Karika*, a classic for the Vedanta school of Hinduism. Mandukya Upanishad is among the oft cited texts on chronology and philosophical relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism. **If one understands the true meaning of this single Upanishad, there may not be a necessity to study any other Upanishad, not even the Chhandogya or the Brihadaranyaka, because the theme of the Mandukya Upanishad is a direct approach to the depths of human nature. It does not give analogies, tell stories or make comparisons. It states bare facts in respect of man in general and Reality in its essential character.** It is a very comprehensive Upanishad, containing only twelve statements called Mantras, in which the whole wisdom or knowledge of the Upanishads is packed into a nutshell.

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