

**KEY TERMS**

**मीमाँसा**

mīmāṃsā

*Mimamsa*

*profound thought or reflection, investigation  
the philosophical system focusing on the investigation of  
Dharma; emphasizes authority of the Vedas*

**वेदान्त**

vedānta

*Vedanta*

*literally “end of the Vedas”  
philosophical system based on the Upanishads*

**अद्वैत**

Advaita

*Advaita*

*“not two” or non-dualism  
Advaita Vedanta is the non-dualist Vedanta system*

**विशिष्टाद्वैत**

viśiṣṭādvaita

*Vishishtadvaita*

*“vishishta” means “distinguished,” “peculiar”  
Vishistadvaita Vedanta is “qualified non-dualism”*

**सगुण ब्रह्मन्**

saguṇa Brahman

*Saguna Brahman*

*Brahman with the gunas  
Brahman manifested within Prakriti*

**निर्गुण ब्रह्मन्**

nirguṇa brahman

*Nirguna Brahman*

*Brahman without the gunas  
The Absolute, Brahman without qualities*

**सत्चितानन्द**

satcitānanda

*Sat-Cit-Ananda*

*sat=being; cit=awareness; ananda=bliss  
the absolute being, awareness and bliss of Brahman*

## जीवन्मुक्त

jīvanmukta

*an enlightened being*

*Jīvan-mukta*

*one who has achieved moksha while still alive*

### KEY TEXTS

#### **Pūrova Mīmāṃsā**

*Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* (by Jaimini, c. 200 B.C.E)

*Śabarabhāṣya* (commentary on the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, by Śabara, c. first century B.C.E)

*Bṛhātīkā* on the *Śabarabhāṣya* (by Prabhākara, eighth century C.E)

*Prakaraṇapañcikā* (by Śālikanātha, eighth century C.E)

*Ślokaṅkārttika* (by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, eighth century C.E)

#### **Vedānta**

*Brahma Sūtra* [also known as the *Vedānta Sūtra*] (by Bādarāyaṇa, c. 500-200 B.C.E)

#### **Advaita Vedānta**

Śaṅkarācārya [*Shankara*] (788-820 C.E)

*Ātmabodha* (“*The Self-Cognition*”)

*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* (“*Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita*”)

*Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (“*Commentary on the Brahma Sutra*”)

*Upaniṣadbhāṣyas* (“*Commentary on the Upanishads*”)

*Upadeśasāhāsr* (“*The Thousand Teachings*”)

*Nirvāṇaśatka*

*Nirvāṇamañjarī*

#### **Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta**

Rāmānuja (eleventh century C.E)

*Śrībhāṣya*

*Gītābhāṣya*

*Vedārthasaṅgraha*

#### **Dvaita Vedānta**

Madhva (1197-1296 C.E)

*Sarvadarśanaṅgraha*

*Vedāntasāra* (an introduction to Vedānta, by Sadānanda, c. 1500 C.E)

*Pañcadaśī* (a post-Śaṅkara Advaita treatise, by Vidyāraṇya, c. 14<sup>th</sup> century)

**QUESTIONS**

1. What is the central problem of the *Purva Mimamsa* system of philosophy and how is this problem addressed? What is liberation according to *Purva Mimamsa* and how is this achieved?
2. Explain how Shankara's essential teaching amounts to an explication of the fundamental Upanishadic phrase *tat tvam asi*? Why is his system thus referred to as *Advaita Vedanta*?
3. Explain Shankara's teaching about the Self concealed within the five sheaths and how this relates to the syllable *Om* and the levels of consciousness that is the subject of the *Mandukya Upanishad*.
4. From Shankara's point of view what is the relationship between the *karma*, *bhakti*, and *jnana yogas*? What is the highest path to enlightenment and why is this so?
5. What is the difference between the two kinds of *samadhi* that are distinguished by Shankara and thus what is the highest state of enlightenment according to this view? What are the four states of mind that stand as obstacles to the attainment of enlightenment?
6. What are the characteristics of a *jivan-mukta* according to Shankara?
7. Why does Shankara teach that "[o]nly the one who has abandoned the notion that he has realized Brahman is a knower of the Self; and no one else"?
8. In what ways might Mahayana Buddhism have influenced Shankara's philosophy?
9. What are the main features of Ramanuja's version of Vedanta and how does it contrast with Shankara's Advaita Vedanta?
10. What are the distinguishing features of Madhva's system of Vedanta and how does it contrast with Shankara's Advaita Vedanta?