

Study Questions

Medieval Philosophy

Ramanuja (Set 2)

1. According to Ramanuja, what do the sastras prove concerning Shankara's claim that Brahman is non-differentiated pure consciousness?
2. Against Ramanuja's claim that the sastras prove that Brahman has attributes (saguna), what does Shankara say? Does he deny this? Accept it? Reinterpret it?
3. Why does Ramanuja think that the designation of Brahman as satchitananda proves that Brahman has attributes, not as a mere provisional fact but absolutely?
4. How does Ramanuja respond to Shankara's claim that the Upanishads teach that Brahman is nirguna (without attributes)?
5. "Brahman is one only without a second." Chandogya 6.1.1 How does Ramanuja interpret this passage differently than Shankara?
6. What is Ramanuja's interpretation of Tat Tvam Asi? Chandogya Upanishad 6.13.3
7. How does Ramanuja think that the sources of knowledge other than scripture refute Shankara's claim that Brahman is non-differentiated pure consciousness? Do they prove that this is false? Or otherwise undermine the claim?
8. How does the appeal to "experience" undermine Shankara's advaita philosophy?
9. How does the appeal to "consciousness" undermine Shankara's advaita philosophy?
10. How does the appeal to "direct perception" undermine Shankara's advaita philosophy?
11. How does the appeal to "inference" undermine Shankara's advaita philosophy?
12. Why can't consciousness and existence be one, according to Ramanuja?
13. According to Ramanuja, why can't the Self be pure consciousness?
14. How is affirming avidya (ignorance) problematic for the advaitin? (See BS, 55-58; cf power point, "Introduction to Ramanuja," slide 3).