

Study Questions

Philosophy of Religion

Buddhism

1. What are the three marks of existence according to Buddhism?
2. What are the different ways Buddhists have understood “anatta”?
3. What is meant by “nirvana”? What are the different ways in which Buddhists have understood this idea?
4. What does sunyata mean? How did Nagarjuna interpret this idea?
5. What was Nagarjuna’s criticism of abhidharma Buddhists?
6. What does Nagarjuna’s view of sunyata imply for the concepts of nirvana and samsara? How should the latter be interpreted in the light of Nagarjuna’s interpretation of sunyata?
7. Why does Nagarjuna reject substantialist metaphysics?
8. How does Nagarjuna connect substantialist metaphysics and the Buddhist idea of attachment and dukkha (suffering)?
9. What is the difference between the svabhava and nihsvabhava way?
10. The nihsvabhava way is not a theory advanced against substantialist svabhavic thought. Explain.
11. How is Nagarjuna’s viewpoint related to Sankara’s advaita Vedanta philosophy? In agreement? Disagreement? In what ways?