

3 Main schools of thought within Hinduism

1. Advaita Vedānta. Philosopher: **Sankara** (Śam kara/Sankarācārya), 9th Century. Name of philosophical school: “Nondualism,” *Advaita Vedanta*. Emphases: Upanisadic teachings, study, and meditation. Brahman without qualities (*nirguna*).

2. Vishishta Advaita. Philosopher: **Ramanuja**, 11th Century. Name of philosophical school: “Qualified nondualism,” *Vishishta Advaita*. Emphases: devotion to Brahman through the deities, meditation, Brahman as source of grace, Brahman with qualities (*saguna*).

3. Dvaita. Philosopher: **Madhva**, 13th Century. Name of philosophical school: “Strict dualism,” *Dvaita*. Emphases: Brahman as source of grace, Vishnu and Krishna as incarnations and personifications of that grace.

Śam kara’s *Nirguna* Brahman concept = Brahman without qualities

Śam kara’s Advaita Vedānta

A. soteriology

1. knowledge, *jñāna* / Jñāna Yoga

B. *samsara* as *māyā*

C. pure being, *sat*

D. pure consciousness, *cit*

E. bliss, *ānanda*

F. the human problem and solution

1. ignorance, *avidyā*

2. false superimposition, *adhyāsa* (metaphor: the rope and the snake)

G. the relationship between Brahman and the world

1. “unevolved name-and-form,” *avyakrte namarupa*

Chandogya Upanishad, Chapter 6. Śam kara referred to this Upanishad most and wrote a commentary upon it (*1000 Teachings*) that is considered authoritative today.