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**THE MĪMĀMSĀ VIEW OF KARMA AND THE SUMMUN BONUM  
OF HUMAN EXISTENCE**

- Abstract -

The article reviews the Mīmāṃsā areas of philosophical investigation and its basic presuppositions. The focus of the article is on *Dharma*, which is the main *puruṣārtha* (the goal of human existence) according to Mīmāṃsā, and *karma* (Vedic ritual) as the main means of attaining the former. The article gives an account of the Mīmāṃsā view of the Veda and the classification of the Vedic texts, the linguistic speculations of the Mīmāṃsā and related issues. It is attempted to prove that Mīmāṃsā, particularly in its early form, is oriented towards *svarga* (heaven) and is not appreciative of *mokṣa* (liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth) which clearly distinguishes it from Advaita Vedānta. The difference between the two schools of Mīmāṃsā, the Bhāṭṭa and the Prābhākara, in their attitude to such concepts as *jñāna* (knowledge of Self), *apūrva*, *kārya* (duty) etc. is highlighted. The close alignment of Mīmāṃsā with another Orthodox school of Indian philosophy, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, in the area of metaphysics is aptly demonstrated. The article is supplied with multiple references to the works of such luminaries of Mīmāṃsā as Jaimini, Śabara, Kumārila, Prabhākara, Śālikanātha and some later thinkers, exploring almost two thousand years-long history of this school of Indian thought, revealing its inner dynamics and tracing the evolution of its key notions and concepts.

*Keywords:* Brahmanism, Mīmāṃsā, Veda, Dharma, Karma, deeds, duty, liberation.

**PERSPECTIVA ȘCOLII MĪMĀMSĀ CU PRIVIRE LA RITUAL (KARMA) ȘI  
BINELE SUPREM (SUMMUN BONUM) AL VIETȚII UMANE**

- Rezumat -

Articolul are în vedere școala indiană Mīmāṃsā, una dintre cele șase școli "ortodoxe" ale hinduismului. Articolul se focalizează asupra conceptelor

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de “datorie [religioasă]” (*dharmā*), care, conform Mīmāṃsai, reprezintă principalul scop al existenței umane (*puruṣārtha*) și de “ritual” (*karmā*), acesta din urmă fiind considerat drept principalul mijloc prin care se poate accede la binele suprem. Articolul discută despre perspective Mīmāṃsai cu privire la corpusul vedic și la clasificarea textelor vedice, despre speculațiile lingvistice și alte subiecte abordate în Veda. Se încearcă demonstrarea faptului că Mīmāṃsā, în special în formele sale timpurii, este orientată asupra accederii la lumile paradisiace (*svarga*) și nu manifestă prea multă apreciere față de idealul eliberării (*mokṣa*) din ciclul nașterii și al morții, caracteristic școlii Advaita Vedānta.

De asemenea, este evidențiată diferența dintre cele două școli ale Mīmāṃsai, Bhāṭṭa și Prābhākara, în ceea ce privește modul lor de a se raporta la concepte gen “*jñāna*” (“cunoașterea Sinelui”), “*apūrva*”, “*kārya*” (“datorie”). Articolul mai scoate în evidență și apropierea dintre sistemul metafizic al Mīmāṃsai și cel al unui alt current ortodox al hinduismului, școala Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Pe tot parcursul lucrării, în sprijinul tezelor propuse, se aduc citate din autorii importanți ai școlii, cum ar fi Jaimini, Śābara, Kumārila, Prabhākara, Śālikanātha și alți filosofi mai târzii. În felul acesta, este explorată istoria de aproape 2000 de ani a acestei școli, reliefându-se dinamica sa internă și evoluția conceptelor sale cheie.

*Cuvinte cheie:* Brahmanism, Mīmāṃsā, Veda, Dharma, Karma, ritual, datorie, eliberare.

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Mīmāṃsā is the only school of Indian thought which makes Vedic ritual the object of its primary focus. It also happens to be the only orthodox school that draws its inspiration from the sources mostly preceding the Upaniṣads. Mīmāṃsā originated in the late Vedic times as a school of exegesis – the name occurs in the early strata of Vedic literature and presupposes investigation into the obscure points of the Vedic ritual practice<sup>1</sup> – and gradually evolved into a full-fledged philosophical system.

The roots of Mīmāṃsā lie in the Brāhmaṇas that mostly focus on the “how” of Vedic rituals, supplying us also with the speculations as to their origin and meaning. The Śrauta Sūtras that systematized and catalogued sacrifices also contributed to the formation of Mīmāṃsā by developing the methodology of ritual

<sup>1</sup> Garge D.V., *Citations in Śābara-bhāṣya*, Deccan College Dissertation Series 8, 1952, Poona, p.1.

studies. There is an obvious similarity and, indeed, continuity between the Brāhmaṇas and the Śrauta Sūtras: “What matters is their similarity, and this similarity as establishing the continuity of the Mīmāṃsā with the Śrauta Sutra tradition, as a larger, more complicated extension of the Śrauta reworking of the material of the Brāhmaṇas”.<sup>2</sup> The Brāhmaṇas and the Mīmāṃsā Sūtras may be viewed as constituting two phases of the same process – that of explanation and justification of the Vedic ritual. Whereas the Brāhmaṇas contain more mythological allusions and deliberations to that effect, the Mīmāṃsā Sūtras of Jaimini, themselves belonging to the stage of reason and vigorous critical enquiry, attempt to develop an intellectually powerful system that would make intelligible the nature of the Veda, language, sacrifice and its performer.

The immediate object of Mīmāṃsā’s enquiry is *Dharma*. The most general meaning of *Dharma* is duty, which defines human being as a member of both socium and universum and which is conferred upon him by the very fact of his birth or at least by the fact of his initiation (both views are found in the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* but the latter is given preference). At the very outset Jaimini dubs *Dharma artha* – something conducive to [human] welfare or a matter of significance.<sup>3</sup> Its significance for human beings lies in the fact that, as it is claimed, it unites them with “*niḥśreyasa*” – ultimate good or final fulfilment – “*so’ rhaḥ puruṣaṃ niḥśreyasena saṃyunakti*”.<sup>4</sup> It also implies that it is different from *anartha*, which consists in actions of a violent nature and is, therefore, sinful.

The same *sūtra* discloses the source of *Dharma*. *Dharma* is “*codanā-lakṣaṇa*”—whose instrumental cause is *codanā*, interpreted as Vedic word in general by the Bhāṭṭas and as injunctive or urging sentence only by the Prābhākaras. Veda is the source of *Dharma* not only in the sense that it supplies us with the information about it but in the sense that it is a “*pramāṇa*” monopolizing the knowledge of *Dharma*, which itself is *adr̥ṣṭa* (supersensuous). Other *pramāṇas* are incapable of giving us the knowledge of *Dharma*. The foremost among them – perception – cannot reveal *Dharma*, if we go by definition: “*Sat-samprayoge puruṣasyendriyānām buddhi-jaṇma tat-pratyakṣa-nimittaṃ vidyā-mānopalambhatvāt*” – “it is the knowledge resultant from the contact of sense-organs with the *presently* existing physical entities (*Sat*)”<sup>5</sup>. *Dharma* is consigned more to the realm of future rather than present. Duty is something yet to be affected

<sup>2</sup> Francis X. Clooney, *Thinking Ritually. Rediscovering the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini*, Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, 17, 1990, Vienna, p.86.

<sup>3</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, I.1.2; *The Aphorisms of the Mīmāṃsā by Jaimini with the Commentary of Śabara-svāmīn*, (ed.) Pandita Mahesachandra Nyayaratna, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> *Śabara-bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, I.1.2.

<sup>5</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, I.1.4.

(*bhāvya*, *kārya*), not discovered as something preexistent. And it is certainly not a physical entity to be cognized by senses. Other *pramāṇas* admitted by Mīmāṃsā (inference, analogy, presumption and even testimony in its non-Vedic aspect) are to some extent dependent on perception and have to be discarded when it comes to knowing *Dharma*.

The orientation of Mīmāṃsā towards the attainment of something in future is seen from the frequency of the words “*bhāvya*” and related causative “*bhāv*” in the texts of the tradition beginning with the *sūtras*.<sup>6</sup> As regards this tendency it was observed: “Jaimini’s Mīmāṃsā is not interested in static existence, nor in attaining what already is but in the event of the new”.<sup>7</sup> Static is of no value for the Mīmāṃsaka, what matters is the effectable (*bhāvya*).

The later Mīmāṃsā tradition interprets *Dharma* as a tool of human welfare (*śreyaskara*)<sup>8</sup> and even makes it the primary meaning of the word. If that belongs to the supersensuous realm, on which only Veda can throw light, there is an aspect of *Dharma* amenable to senses or the phenomenal correlate of the unperceived: the ritual itself<sup>9</sup> and the one who follows the sacrificial routine is said to follow *Dharma*.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, *Dharma* can be interpreted as *karma* and even though the original meaning of the latter is action, including ritual action, in Mīmāṃsā it has much wider connotations. Says Pandurangi: “The expression *karma* refers to all the programmes that are prescribed for a member of a *varṇāśrama* order of society. These have three dimensions, namely, theological, social and moral ... in Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and the Dharmaśāstra each programme has all the three dimensions.”<sup>11</sup> This view is illuminative of the tendency to overemphasize the human perspective and constitutes a contradiction to the original meaning of *Dharma* as both the property and function of a sacrificial element, which implies its relation to other elements and the overall system of such relations on the sacrificial plane, implying a parallel system on the cosmic plane, where it is understood as order, social as well as universal.<sup>12</sup> A number of comparative studies brought out or rather retrieved this meaning and also demonstrated the similarity in the evolution of this

<sup>6</sup> VIII.2.19, XI.1.20, VII.1.9, VII.1.12 etc.

<sup>7</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.114.

<sup>8</sup> Śābara-bhāṣya on Mīmāṃsā-sūtra, I.1.2.

<sup>9</sup> *Yajati-śabda-vācyam eva dharmam samāmananti*, *Ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> *Yo hi yāgam anutiṣṭhati so dhārmikah*; *Ibid*.

<sup>11</sup> Pandurangi K.T., “A Note on the Concepts of Nitya-karma, Naimittika-karma and Kāmya-karma”; *Journal of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, Vol. 11(2), Jan-Apr 1994, p.118.

<sup>12</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

concept in both *āstika* and *nāstika* schools.<sup>13</sup> Thus, there are two meanings of the term “*dharma*” that for a long time have been intertwined – the means of human welfare and universal order which can be safely interpreted as the end in itself.<sup>14</sup> This ambiguity could not be maintained for long and the later schools of Mīmāṃsā were obliged to state clearly what they meant by *dharma*. The Bhāṭṭas chose to emphasize the former meaning in their interpretation of the concept: “*yāgādir eva dharmah*”,<sup>15</sup> while the Prābhākaras the latter.

To facilitate the access to the ultimate sources of *Dharma* the authorities of Mīmāṃsā resorted to meticulous classification of Vedic texts. Out of the four portions of the Vedic canon (the Saṃhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads) Mīmāṃsakas focus on the first two recognizing them as the two main sources of *Dharma*: the Saṃhitā texts are chanted during the performance while the Brāhmaṇas explain sacrificial technicalities. By Veda, Śabara understands two types of texts, *Mantra* (Saṃhitā) and *Vidhi* (Brāhmaṇa): “*Mantrāśca brāhmaṇam ca vedah*”<sup>16</sup> and the whole tradition posterior to him refuses to admit the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads as independently valid, attaching them instead to the Brāhmaṇas having classified them into *arthavāda* (descriptive statements) and *nāmadheya* (proper names). This categorism stems from Jaimini’s assertion that in the Veda all that is not Mantra is Brāhmaṇa.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Mīmāṃsakas admit the entire Veda as revealed but give more importance to the Brāhmaṇas as bearing directly on the purpose of man.

Ignoring the Upaniṣads altogether will put the orthodox school of Mīmāṃsā into a predicament of treating some portions of the Veda as irrelevant. The problem is solved by making them subservient to the injunctive passages of the Veda, which alone are significant, being expressive of something (*vācaka*). Such is the tradition’s conclusion, even though the *Jaimini-sūtras*<sup>18</sup> contain what was probably the original radical Mīmāṃsā view of the utter worthlessness of the non-injunctive parts of the Canon as the sources of *Dharma*.

The accommodating tendency of Mīmāṃsā can be demonstrated on the example of its treatment of *arthavādas*. The later tradition goes to elaborate lengths

<sup>13</sup> Geger, W, “Dhamma und Brahman”, *Dialogue*, Vol. 9, 1982; Mus P., *Barabudur, Equisse d’une Histoire du Bouddhisme Foundee sur la Critique Archeologique des Textes*, 2 vols, Hanoi, 1935.

<sup>14</sup> M. Hiriyanna, “The Doctrine of Niyoga”, *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, Vol. XV, part 2, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> *Arthasaṃgraha of Laugākṣi Bhāskara*, A.B. Gajendragarkar, R.D. Karmarkar (eds), 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2007, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Śabara-bhāṣya on Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, II.1.33.

<sup>17</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, II.1.33; See also *Tantravārtika*, Vol.1, p.572.

<sup>18</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, I.2.1.

to classify them,<sup>19</sup> yet the most common among them are eulogistic and deprecatory. Both help one to embark upon the proposed action having persuading and dissuading function respectively. Most *arthavādas* are capable of being construed as serving the purpose of injunctions by giving reasons why particular action should be performed and removing doubts about it.

When taken out of context, *arthavādas* may be inexpressive (as per the Prābhākara's view) or even untrustworthy (according to the Bhāṭṭas) but once they are considered in the framework of Vedic revelation, they are found useful as assisting injunction and facilitating the generation of the inclination to follow it. To illustrate it Śabara quotes an injunction accompanied by the explanatory statement “*audumbaro yūpo bhavati ... ūg udumbara ūrka paśava ūrjo varudhyai*” (one should whittle a sacrificial post out of the Udumbara tree because Udumbara is strong and one obtains strong cattle if one sacrifices at the hard-wood post).<sup>20</sup> This explanation was reasonable for those who shared the belief in mystical association of things (*bandhutā*) underlying the ritualism of Vedas and surely goaded one to act accordingly without delay. Thus, injunctions (*vidhi*) and descriptive sentences (*arthavāda*) complement each other. The former becomes more effective if aided by the latter, while the latter finds its justification and logical conclusion in the former.

*Mantras* are of purely denotative or assertive nature. They are directly connected with the ritual being chanted during its performance, initiated by *vidhis* or the Brāhmaṇas. This makes them somewhat subsidiary to the Brāhmaṇas but it is this connection with the Brāhmaṇas that makes them the source of *Dharma* (Śabara made an attempt to classify Mantras,<sup>21</sup> but his classification lacks the common principle and he appears to be aware of this shortcoming). Kumārila, eager to stress and amplify their importance, even treats them as both assertive and injunctive.<sup>22</sup>

*Nāmadheya* does not pose a significant problem for the Mīmāṃsaka. Proper names often occur in the very body of the injunctive sentences and some of them are the names of sacrifices.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Veda constitutes a whole, with injunctive passages forming the kernel and other passages related to them. As Śabara comments, “The sentences occurring in the Veda are laid down as mutually related,

<sup>19</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-bāla-prakāśa*, for instance, names 38 kinds of them, Ganganath Jha, *The Prābhākara School of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978, p.115.

<sup>20</sup> *Śabara-bhāṣya* on I.2.25.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, on II.1.32.

<sup>22</sup> Kumārila Bhatta, *The Tantravārtika*, (tr.) Ganganath Jha, Bibliotheca Indica, 1924, Reprint, Pilgrims Books Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1998, pp. 568-9.

<sup>23</sup> For example, “*Udbhidā yajeta*” (*Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*, 19.7.2), “*Citrayā yajeta paśukāmaḥ*” (TS, II.4.6.1), while other signify sacrificial materials.

and they always collectively bear upon an action”.<sup>24</sup> The principle at work here seems to be as follows: what is not useful directly has to be useful indirectly. This attitude towards explanatory and other non-injunctive statements may well be an extension of the attitude to secondary ritual actions. Jaimini laid down the rule that if certain rites are mentioned without results in proximity to other rites whose results are mentioned (primary rites) then such rites should be regarded as subsidiary to the primary ones.<sup>25</sup>

Mīmāṃsā’s positive bias towards injunctions stems from its interpretation of Vedas as action-oriented and finds justification in its theory of language. The Mīmāṃsā view of the nature and purpose of language is activistic.<sup>26</sup> Mīmāṃsā endorses the theory of the preeminence of verb in the sentence and, by extension, in language. The idea was articulated and developed by the Nairuktas. Yāska developed the theory of the ultimacy of verb and derivativeness of other parts of speech from verb, “*Tatra nāmāni ākhyātajāni*”.<sup>27</sup> The statement is significant inasmuch as noun and verb constitute the backbone of every sentence. But even in this backbone there is a pivot – the verb. The rest of the sentence appears to serve its purposes.

This has farther metaphysical implications that bid elucidation. The correspondence between the structure of language and the world is one of the basic presuppositions of Mīmāṃsā.<sup>28</sup> Language is supposed to reflect the picture of the world, which makes the Nairuktas’ and the Mīmāṃsakas’ linguistic theory

<sup>24</sup> Śābara-bhāṣya on I.1.32, *The Śābara Bhāṣya*, (tr.) Ganganath Jha, Vol.1, Gaekwad Oriental Series, Baroda, 1933, p.50.

<sup>25</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, IV.4.34.

<sup>26</sup> The activistic nature of language has been corroborated by modern science. Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski opined that language was “a mode of action.” (Malinowski, B., “The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages” in *The Meaning of Meaning – a Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*, (eds) Ogden C.K. and Richards I.A., Harcourt, Brace, New-York, 1945, p. 316). It is “the necessary means of communion, it is the one indispensable instrument without which unified social action is impossible.” (*Ibid.*, p. 310). Wittgenstein concurred that the purpose of language was not the exchange of information but coordination of communal action (*Philosophical Investigations*, Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, The Macmillan Co., New-York, 1917, p. 137).

<sup>27</sup> *The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta*, (ed.) Laksman Sarup, First ed. 1920-7, Reprint, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2002, p.36.

<sup>28</sup> Prasad, H.S., “The Context Principle of Meaning in Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā”, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol.44 (2), 1994, p.317; This is also the view of Wittgenstein, who claimed that language and reality share logical structure and demonstrated the parallelism between names, elementary propositions and propositions on one hand and objects, states of affairs and facts on the other hand (*Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 2.161, 4.0141, 4.04, 4.05; (tr.) Pears D.F. and McGuinness B.F., 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963).

reflective of their view of the world. According to their theory, verbs and nouns express different aspects of reality, “*bhāva-pradhānam ākhyātam, sattva-pradhānāni nāmāni*”.<sup>29</sup> Nouns are expressive of static existence or Being (*sat, sattva*), while verbs of dynamic existence or Becoming (*bhāva*). The nouns’ derivation from the verbs is reflective of the fact that Being is just a modification or a derivative of Becoming, which is the ultimate category. Verbs denote varieties of activity, which is the essence of Becoming. The recapitulation of the types of Becoming (*bhāva-vikāra*) serves the same objective – to establish the preeminence of Becoming over Being. According to Nairuktas, Being (expressed by the finite form “*asti*”) is a legitimate characteristic feature or variety of Becoming as are birth (*janma*), modification (*vipariṇāma*), growth (*vṛddhi*), decay (*apakṣaya*) and termination (*vināśa*). Thus, the ultimate reality is Becoming, the eternal act or change. What is static only appears to be so and is but a modification of change. Substance (*sattva*) is just another form of eternal activity. It is a phase of Becoming. This comes rather close to the Buddhist view of the world as change-ridden and existing in a flux. On the other hand, it is in direct opposition to the Advaita view of the ultimate reality as static (*sat*) upon which the world of Becoming characterized by change and activity is superimposed (*adhyasta*).

Mīmāṃsā is quite open to this theory. It may be demonstrated on the example of its treatment of Being as activity. According to Kumārila, action is of two kinds, belonging to the instigated (*prayojya-vyāpāra*) and belonging to the instigator (*prayojaka-vyāpāra*). The “*tiṅ*” suffixes added to the roots expressive of the states of being (*as, bhū, vid* etc) denote activity vested in the instigated, while the same suffixes connected with the root “*kr*” express the second kind of activity. According to Kumārila, the expression “*ghaṭo bhavati*” can be interpreted as a statement of activity, “*ghaṭa ātmānaṃ bhāvayati*” (“the pot brings itself into being”).<sup>30</sup>

Mīmāṃsā owes a lot of its inspiration to the teaching of Nirukta. This debt can be partially seen in the theory of language acquisition. Whether old or new, the Bhāṭṭas or the Prābhākaras, all Mīmāṃsakas consent to the contextual nature of this process. Language is learnt from the elders by observing their behaviour. There are eight ways of figuring out the meaning of an unknown word<sup>31</sup> but *vṛddha-vyavahāra* is recognized as the most effective one. It is admitted by both schools of Mīmāṃsā and also by Navya-Nyāya. Śālikanātha even claims that it is the sole method of learning: “*Na cātra vṛddha-vyavahāraṃ muktvānyat kāraṇam*

<sup>29</sup> *The Nighaṇṭu and the Nirukta*, pp.27-8.

<sup>30</sup> TV on II.1.1.

<sup>31</sup> Sarma, R.N., *Mīmāṃsā Theory of Meaning*, Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1988, p.45.

*upalabhāmahe*".<sup>32</sup> The behaviour of the elders is prompted by the injunctive verb. It is the meanings of verbs that are first grasped that way. Using the method of omission and commission (*āvāpa* and *uddhāra*, *anvaya* and *vyatireka*, *pratiṣṭhāpana* and *viṣṭhāpana*), the student realizes the difference in the meaning of verbs "bring" and "tether" having observed the behaviour of an elder preceded by the commands "Bring the cow" or "Tether the cow". The meanings of nouns are likewise grasped contextually applying the same method and observing the difference of response in the addressee of commands. Nouns are always seen to be connected with verbs and without a verb no sense can be conveyed. Moreover, entities which constitute the meaning of nouns are invariably found to be in the context of some action. Every single moment they either act or are acted upon.

Mere observing the object is not fruitful as a method of learning its name. What is essential is the realization of its significance for the learning individual. The knowledge of what thing is (*śabdārtha*) is the knowledge of what it means for an individual (*puruṣārtha*) and how it can be utilized for one's good. The nature of a thing is not understood unless it is placed in one's value system.

For Mīmāṃsā (at least for the Bhāṭṭa school), it has a wider epistemological significance. A mere statement of fact, besides that it does not have any utility (since it is *siddha*, not *sādhyā*), cannot constitute a *pramāṇa*. *Pramāṇa* is supposed to supply a unique and fresh knowledge. Statements of fact are superfluous. The mere statement "There is a cow", without a hint of what could or should be done with it, cannot count as *pramāṇa*, since the presence of a cow at a particular place can be ascertained through various types of perception. So, *śabda*, to be a *pramāṇa*, should have an exclusive domain unrivalled by other *pramāṇas* – it should offer cognition of things imperceptible (*adr̥ṣṭa*) and *Dharma* is precisely so.

The view of the inseparable relation between matter and action finds its ultimate expression in the *anvitābhīdhāna* theory of the Prābhākaras (the theory of denotation of related meanings). According to it, the meanings of individual words are grasped only in connection with one another. The theory does not constitute a deviation from the earlier tradition. Its roots lie in the *Jaimini-sūtras*: "There is handling down together of words already formed (prior to use) for the sake of action..."<sup>33</sup> Śābara's interpretation of the *sūtra* accords with this suggestion.

The Prābhākaras opine that sentence-meaning is nothing apart from the already related word-meanings.<sup>34</sup> Words have the double capacity and function of conveying their own sense and the relation to one another. In fact, these are two

<sup>32</sup> *Bṛhatī of Prabhākara Miśra with the Rjuvimalā of Śālikanātha*, (ed.) S.K.Ramanatha Sastri, Madras University Sanskrit Series, 3, Part I, Madras University, 1934, p.352.

<sup>33</sup> I.1.25, quoted by Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.90.

<sup>34</sup> *Padārthā evānvitā abhidhīyamānā vākyārthaḥ, Rjuvimalā on Bṛhatī, op.cit.*, p.390.

aspects of a single potency of words. The words are inherently related to one another and, therefore, are bound to constitute sentences. For example, in the mind of the speaker the idea of cow is never independent from the ideas of bringing, tethering or any similar idea expressed by the verb in Injunctive Mood. Moreover, the very comprehension of the sentence meaning will be impossible if the injunctive verbal form with which all other parts of the sentence are inherently connected is not there, explicitly or implicitly. There cannot be purely informative sentences the way there cannot be contextless nouns conveying unrelated meaning. Says Śabara, “*Yatra kevalaḥ padārthaḥ prayujyamānaḥ prayojanābhāvād anarthakaḥ sañjāyate.*”<sup>35</sup> Prabhākara develops this idea, “*vyavahārārthatvāt prayogasya viśeṣātmakatvāc ca vyavahārasya anvitāvagatir eva tadarthānām.*”<sup>36</sup> Śālikanātha concludes: “*Vyavahāras cānvitārtha-viśayaḥ, tena prayogabalānvitārthāvagamātmakatvaṃ padānām ... tathāpi vṛddha-vyavahāra-vyutpattāv eva kevalena padārthena vyavahārābhāvād anvita eva padārthe padānām vyutpattiḥ.*”<sup>37</sup>

This explanation is not the only one offered by Mīmāṃsakas. The Bhāṭṭas propounded the theory of *abhihitānvaya* (the relation of what is denoted) according to which words first produce unconnected meanings that become combined the next moment into a sentence meaning.<sup>38</sup> Kumārila says that sentence meaning is cognized as tinged by word-meanings, “*padārthair anurakto’ sau vākyārthaḥ sampratīyate.*”<sup>39</sup> However, it is the *anvitābhidhana* theory that represents the acme of the Mīmāṃsā teaching of the preeminence of verb and dominance of injunction in the sentential structure. It sharply distinguishes the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā from Vedānta and the Bhāṭṭa school which are not averse to the idea of word’s conveying its meaning independently, by the very power of denotation inherent in it. If the Nairuktas derived nouns from verbs, the Prābhākaras forever moored nouns to verbs, particularly to injunctive verbs subjugating them to the latter even semantically.

The foregoing discussion is based on and illustrated by the spoken language. To make it relevant to the Vedic context Mīmāṃsakas developed the view of non-difference of the Vedic words and colloquial idiom. The meanings of words are the same in the Vedas and in the world: “*Śabdārthas cāpi lokavat.*”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Śabara-bhāṣya on I.1.25.

<sup>36</sup> Bṛhatī, op.cit., p.397.

<sup>37</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>38</sup> Ślokavārtikam by Kumārilaḥṭṭa with the Commentary Nyāyaratnākara by Pārthasārathimīśra, (ed.) Swami Dvarikadasasastri, Pracyabharati Series 10, Benares, 1978, “Vākyādhikaraṇa”, 229-33.

<sup>39</sup> Śloka-vārtika, “Vākyādhikaraṇa”, 233.

<sup>40</sup> Mīmāṃsā-sūtra, X.3.44.

This is one more contention that Mīmāṃsā probably inherited from Yāska.<sup>41</sup> It enables Mīmāṃsakas to analyse Vedic language on the basis of the spoken one. Says Prabhākara: “*Vṛddha-vyavahāre padapadārthayor nimitta-bhāvo dr̥ṣṭaḥ, vede’ pi ta eva padārthāḥ, tasmād vede’ pi svārthānvitau nimittatvam iti.*”<sup>42</sup> This is also supported by another Mīmāṃsā theory – of the eternity of words and the uncreated (and therefore unchanging) nature of the connection between word and meaning.

Relying on the parallelism between Vedic and colloquial language Mīmāṃsakas conclude that the purpose of Vedas is to instigate one to a certain action. Prabhākara, calling the Veda “*śāstra*”, comments: “*Śāsanāddhi śāstram*”.<sup>43</sup> The later tradition interprets it as something to be done and states that understanding a word is equivalent to the understanding what is to be done: “*Tac chabda-vijñānaṃ kārya-vijñānam*”.<sup>44</sup> Vedas are revelatory of *Dharma* and *Dharma* comprises action, essentially ritual.

Vedic word has an inherent motivating power (*codanā*). It serves two closely related purposes simultaneously. It discloses something significant (*artha*) and acts as motivator (*pravartaka*) goading one to attain this *artha*. Beyond this, there is a divergence of views within Mīmāṃsā, as regards the nature of injunction, the exact mechanism of motivation and the fruition of action.

According to Pāṇini, Optative Mood is capable of expressing at least six meanings. The tone of the five of them is mild and even obsequious. That leaves the sixth – *vidhi* – to express the command making it akin to the Imperative Mood.

Analysing the meaning of *vidhi*, Natarajan remarks that it is a directive or command issued by one in the position of greater authority than the addressee. Secondly, command, unlike order (expressed by the Imperative), requires institutional authority to enforce itself. Orders are issued by those in power, institutional authority being only one form of it. Institutional authority belongs to those of higher status whereas power needs not have connection with status.<sup>45</sup> It fits well with the Vedic injunction. Vedas speak from the position of absolute authority stemming from their “authorlessness” (*apauruṣeyatva*), the theory specially developed by Mīmāṃsā to prove the Veda’s infallible nature, which precludes the possibility of mistake in what it communicates. To err is a human (or at least a personal) quality which is not found in the uncreated Veda. Veda operates due to

<sup>41</sup> See *Nirukta*, 1.15.

<sup>42</sup> *Bṛhatī*, *op.cit.*, Part I, p.356.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Part I, p.105.

<sup>44</sup> *R̥juvimalā* on the above.

<sup>45</sup> Kancana Natarajan, *The Vidhi Viveka of Maṇḍana Miśra: Understanding Vedic Injunctions*, Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1995, p. 11.

its authority and does not require any human or superhuman medium to sanction or enforce it.

There is a grammatical reason for Vedic directives to be expressed in Optative. Optative (*liñ*) and Imperative (*loṭ*) have corresponding meanings, but Imperative extends beyond the common area. Pāṇini authorizes its usage in the following situations:<sup>46</sup>

1. *Praiṣa* (order), for example a directive from master to servant (*kaṭam karotu*).
2. *Atisarga* (option), when the execution depends on the will of the addressee.
3. *Prāptakāla* (proper time), when the addressee is informed that the right moment for a particular action has arrived.

This *sūtra* enables us to make a significant distinction between the Optative in its injunctive aspect and Imperative. In the situation of order, the servant is not interested personally in the completion of work. He does not have any emotional attachment to the fruit of his labour and is motivated by the fear of punishment for disobedience. The second option reveals disinterestedness of the speaker in the acceptance of his message. The third ties the Imperative to the peg of the present.

*Vidhi* (especially its Vedic variety) exhibits remarkable difference from all the above. Its main force is stimulation (*preraṇa*). Veda directs but not without explicitly mentioning the fruits of carrying out the order. It openly appeals to one's desires and promises to satisfy them. Further, Veda is far from offering an option with an air of indifference. Impersonal as it is, it is not unconcerned about human welfare. True, one has an option of not following the injunction even after having heard it but that will be detrimental to one's innermost interest. It is the addressee of ignored injunction, not the Veda that is going to be harmed in case of disobedience. By contrast, in the situation of disobedience to order, there are repercussions for both the master and the servant, though the repercussions for the servant are arguably more severe. Veda certainly speaks to one from the position of authority, though with an air of concern. Therefore, Vedic prescriptive sentences have to be interpreted as injunctions issued by the superior but not as offers (*āmantraṇa*) and requests (*nimantraṇa*) common between equals or pleading (*adhīṣṭa*) and begging (*prārthana*) employed by the inferior person whose welfare depends on the addressee's compliance. Lastly, Imperative seems to be more related to the present time, while Optative is valid in future as well. This makes Vedic injunction valid from the time it is heard onwards.

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<sup>46</sup> *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, III.3.163.

To sum up, *vidhi* certainly represents an imperative but it is more addressee-friendly – it harps on his aspirations and makes him an eager participant in what is enjoined. At the same time, it does not compromise on the superior status of Veda. The obedience to injunction and order have different psychological backdrop. In the latter case, there is a fear of the power vested in the one who issues the order. In the former case, the acceptance of authority of the one who enjoins is based not on the fear of his superiority but on the trust in his awareness about the addressee's needs and, above all, his good intentions. This makes refusal to obey injunctions theoretically plausible but psychologically impossible. The authority of Veda is not enforced with the assistance of external factors. One can (or at least is willing to) resist the dictates of one's master but not the inner urge for something highly desirable. The motivating force of injunctions is uninterrupted and undying since they disclose some significance (*artha*). What has once acquired significance for us cannot become neutral again.<sup>47</sup> The urge towards *artha* is innate to everyone and once significance has been disclosed to a man he will remain motivated to work towards its realization.

What constitutes the authority of Veda (at least, from the human perspective) is that it is the sole source of knowledge in respect of the means to the desired end and it also intimates the invisible connection between the enjoined act in present and the arrival of desired fruit in distant future. From no other source one can learn that in order to attain heaven one should perform rites. This unique feature of the *vidhi* portion of the Veda makes it “*ajñātārtha-jñāpaka*.”<sup>48</sup>

The account of the mechanism of motivation will begin with the version of the Prābhākaras since Prabhākara is believed to precede Kumārila and, in general, is considered to be more faithful to the ideas propounded by Jaimini.<sup>49</sup>

According to the Prābhākaras, the denotation of the injunctive sentence is *kārya* – a task or something to be effected. This is the way they understand the mechanism of *codanā* relegating the desire for the fruit of enjoined activity to a rather secondary position. According to Rjuvimalā, motivated is the one to whom his duty has been explained, “*Coditaḥ pravartitaḥ, kāryam avabodhita ucyate. Nānyathā cetanaḥ pravartayitum śakyate*.”<sup>50</sup>

The Prābhākaras equate *kārya* with *apūrva* (a term used by Śabara quite extensively) saying it is called so because it is not cognized by any means except the injunctive sentence. It is also identified with *niyoga* (prompting), the term favoured by Prabhākara. *Niyoga* has particular act as its object and constitutes the

<sup>47</sup> Francis X. D'Souza, *Śabdaprāmānyam in Śabara and Kumārila*, Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, Vienna, 1980, p. 59.

<sup>48</sup> *Arthasaṃgraha*, p.16.

<sup>49</sup> Bhatt, G.P., *The Basic Ways of Knowing*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989, p.5.

<sup>50</sup> *Bṛhatī*, *op.cit.*, Part I, p.387.

meaning of the injunctive sentence, the most crucial factor thereof. *Dharma* itself is interpreted as *niyoga*, “*Ayam abhiprāyo – dharmo hi niyogaḥ*”.<sup>51</sup> The desired fruit and the very desire of the agent are secondary to the prompting. They are included into injunction for the simple reason of making it complete. There is no *niyoga* (*kārya*, *apūrva*) without exertion, exertion without act, act without an agent and agent without some desire. Every action has *adhikārin*, a person eligible to perform it. If the action is enjoined, *adhikārin* is the addressee of injunction. The addressee (*niyojya*) of Vedic injunction (*niyoga*) is *svargakāma*, a man desirous of heaven. The necessity of having the injunction complete is the sole reason for the inclusion of “*svargakāma*” in it. “*Svargakāma*” defines the addressee of injunction; it does not describe its objective. In the idea of Prabhākara *niyoga* is self-valuable and cannot be made significant by the addition of the qualification of the *niyojya*.

Prabhākara himself tries his best to avoid the postulation of metaphysical entities or potencies that might account for the connection between the event of sacrifice and the fruit it is supposed to produce. He ignores the problem of gap between the sacrificial act and its result and instead relocates *apūrva* to the commencement of the action (*ārambha*).<sup>52</sup> Injunction prompts one to commence the action or, speaking more generally, to get involved in the lifelong sacrificial activity, to make transition from inaction to action.<sup>53</sup> Since the sacrificial activity had not been in progress before the injunction was heard, it is called *apūrva* – that which was not there before. *Niyoga* prompts one to get involved in the process, and that is *kārya*, the task, not the realization of individual goals. The appeal to the instincts of the prospective agent is for the sake of getting him started and does not mitigate the original importance of the injunction – to set the wheel of sacrificial action in motion. Śālikanātha illustrates it with the example of a master who supplies his servant with basic necessities only to accomplish his own purpose that remains primary in the situation, “*Ātma-siddhyartham eva niyogaḥ kāmaya māna-siddhi-hetutvam avalambate svāmivat*”.<sup>54</sup> The seeming subordination of the master to his servant does not make him the servant. Śālikanātha claims that sacrifice only appears to be accessory to the needs of sacrificer.<sup>55</sup> This does not at all mean that Veda dupes its follower into work cheating him of its results. This is in the least inconceivable for the orthodox Mīmāṃsaka. According to Śābara, Veda is unequivocal in its promise of heaven and there is not the slightest scope for doubt whether heaven exists or not, “*Na ca svargakāmo yajeta ityato vacanāt*

<sup>51</sup> *R̥juvimalā* on *Bṛhatī*, *op.cit.*, Part I, p.18.

<sup>52</sup> *Bṛhatī* on II.1.5.

<sup>53</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.248.

<sup>54</sup> *Prakaraṇapañcikā of Śrī Śālikanātha Miśra with Nyāyasiddhi*, ed. with Introduction and notes by A. Subrahmanya Sastri, Benares, 1961, p.443.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, “*Vākyārtha-mātrkā*”, verse 28.

*sandigdham avabudhyate – bhavati vā svargo na vā bhavatīti. Na ca niścitam avagamyamānaṃ mithyā syat.*<sup>56</sup>

Veda effects heaven at the later stage but heaven is supplied as a factor of injunction primarily to transform an uninterested spectator into an active participant in the fulfilment of sacrificial cycle. *Svarga*, like any other fruit mentioned in injunction, is understood as a consequence of *niyoga*, not its objective. It is a by-product of the accomplishment of *niyoga*. Once *niyoga* is accomplished, the arrival of fruit is certain. This does not denigrate *niyoga* to the position of the means or operative cause (*karana*) of the fruit, while keeping it antecedent to it, illustrating the rule that not every antecedent is a cause. As per the Prābhākaras, it is *niyoga* that has an unrivalled priority and overarching importance in the sacrificial system, not the sacrificer's goals and desires. Indeed, "the result of describing *svarga* as a mere consequent and not as the end directly aimed at, is that *niyoga* occupies the foremost place in the injunctive situation..."<sup>57</sup> What Vedic injunction ultimately urges one to realize is not *svarga*, but *niyoga*. *Niyoga* is *kārya* (what is to be achieved) and the mature Prābhākara school even goes to the extent of declaring its realization *puruṣārtha*.<sup>58</sup>

Prabhākara deliberately avoids speculating on how the agent gets the desired fruit concentrating instead on how he is motivated and what turns him from the neutral person into an eager agent. The Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā prefers to remain the philosophy of sacrifice per se. The question of the beginning of one's involvement in duty is, indeed, crucial, whereas the question of the end of this involvement with one's death is not. The mechanism of human understanding and adequate response to the task (*kārya*) is important for the Prābhākaras, while the metaphysical aspect of one's uniting with the fruit of one's labour is of little practical value, provided one has full faith in the words of Veda that promise the fruit. Metaphysics has its pitfalls and has limited significance for the commencement and maintenance of the sacrificial process. There is no sufficient reason to indulge in it: if the attainment of heaven is certainty why rack one's brains trying to figure out the nature of the forces involved in it. This position is rendered in the *pūrvapakṣa* in *Tantravārtika*.<sup>59</sup> This is quite akin to the spirit of early Buddhism wherein the student was motivated not by the curiosity about nebulous metaphysical theories but by the deliberation on the painful experience underlying worldly existence. For early Buddhists it sufficed to make sure that the student understood that, by following a particular discipline, he was to come out of

<sup>56</sup> Śabara-bhāṣya on I.1.2.

<sup>57</sup> M. Hiriyanna, *The Doctrine of Niyoga*, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> Rāmānujācārya of Dharmapurī, *Tantrarahasya: A Primer of Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā*, (ed.) R. Shama Shastri, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda, 1923, p. 66.

<sup>59</sup> *Tantravārtika* on II.1.5, Vol. I, p.501.

suffering. The questions of the metaphysics of one's disengagement and particularly of the subsequent state were avoided as not facilitating the primary purpose – to get one motivated to work out one's liberation. The psychology of the self was preferred to its metaphysics in both the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā and early Buddhism, except that their purposes were different: Prabhākara motivated one to enter the process of sacrificial activity while Buddha urged one towards moral action. In both systems, the concept of self is restricted to what is necessary from the point of view of the ultimate goal of each system: the agent and enjoyer of fruit in the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā and the victim of suffering in early Buddhism. Avoidance of commitment to the far-going metaphysical investigations and restriction of discourse to what is practically useful characterize both systems.

Unlike the Prābhākaras, the Bhāṭṭas maintain that sentence conveys *bhāvanā*, “the volition or effort towards some action with a desire to achieve some purpose...”<sup>60</sup> It is the primary sense of every sentence and its chief qualificand, everything else in the sentence being its qualifier.

Mīmāṃsakas analyzed *bhāvanā* as *śābdī bhāvanā*<sup>61</sup> and *ārthī bhāvanā*, the effect accomplishing force. The former resides in injunction through the relation of inherence (*samavaya*).<sup>62</sup> It conveys nothing except enforcement and the only meaning it produces is that of enforcing the hearer. It may be described as *codanā* or *pravartanā*.

*Śābdī bhāvanā* is a potency of words. According to Mīmāṃsā, words themselves have the capacity to stimulate. Locating the impelling force directly in the word is a legitimate outcome of the concept of *apauruṣeyatva* of Veda. There is no impelling agent behind Vedic injunction. Veda impels all by itself, relying exclusively on its potency, while in a secular situation *śābdī bhāvanā* is a mental function of the speaker of the injunction.

Impelling the addressee as it does, *śābdī bhāvanā* is not sufficient to motivate him into action. The activity cannot commence without the operation of *ārthī bhāvanā*. It is an effort, a resolution (*prayatna*) towards the realization of a particular goal through proper action. Maṇḍana defines it as the operation characterized by the total absence of neutrality: “*audāsīnya-pracyutyupalakṣyamānātmā prayatna-śabda-samvedanīyo vyāpārah*”.<sup>63</sup> Once the *ārthī bhāvanā* started operating, the hearer of the injunction is no more indifferent to the enjoined action but is oriented to it as agent.

<sup>60</sup> Sreekrishna Sarma, “Syntactical Meaning – Two Theories”, *Adyar Library Bulletin*, Vol.23 (1-2), 1959, p.44.

<sup>61</sup> Kumāriḷa's *abhidhā-bhāvanā*, the verbally impelling or efficient force, *Tantravārtika* on 2.1.2.

<sup>62</sup> Natarajan, *op.cit.*, p.30.

<sup>63</sup> Maṇḍana Miśra's *Distinction of Activity, Bhāvanāviveka*, with Introduction, English translation, notes and Sanskrit text, (ed.) V. P. Bhatta, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, 1994, p.274.

*Śābdī bhāvanā* generates *ārthī bhāvanā*. The two have been aptly described as two stages of a single process.<sup>64</sup> Together, they ensure the infallibility of injunction. If one is impelled by the former, the latter will ensure the timely arrival of the fruit spelling the actualization of injunction.<sup>65</sup>

Three factors constitute *bhāvanā*: the object answering the question “*kiṃ bhāvayet?*”, the means answering the question “*kena bhāvayet?*” and the procedure answering the question “*katham bhāvayet?*” The questions arise spontaneously the moment one hears the injunction.<sup>66</sup> The first is regarding the desired object (like *svarga*) and is the field of *ārthī bhāvanā* proper. The answer to the second is general – in Vedic injunctions, it is usually the name of the sacrifice supplied for the purpose (“*Jyotiṣṭomena*”, “*Agnihotreṇa*” etc). The last question is usually not answered by the injunction itself. It is too extensive to be covered in a single sentence and calls for other sources of knowledge. But the availability of the procedure is presupposed by the very fact of injunction. The answer to the second question supplies the method, which stands in need of a modus operandi (*itī-kartavyatā*) given by the answer to the third question. It is possible to say that the procedure or modus operandi, to a great extent, constitutes itself the means, the way subsidiary sacrifices (*prayāja*) woven into the fabric of main sacrifice become an organic part of the process or, in a secular context, the way actions like blowing of the fire etc, make up cooking as a means of bringing boiled rice (the object) into being. These three factors are related as mutual auxiliaries – each of them presupposes the other two.<sup>67</sup> Injunction cannot function (i.e. cannot be an injunction) if it is found deficient in one of these factors. Injunction conveys *bhāvanā* simultaneously with disclosing all its factors – it cannot be cognized apart from them. The object of the *śābdī bhāvanā* is *ārthī bhāvanā*; the means – the knowledge of the beneficiality of the action comprehended from the Optative; the procedure – the knowledge of the excellence of the action enjoined communicated by the *arthavādas*. The *ārthī bhāvanā* has *svarga* for its object, sacrifice for the means and subsidiary rites for the procedure.

The Bhāṭṭas’ theory of syntactical meaning (*abhihitānvaya*) enables them to establish the meaning of words separately from the context, which makes it possible to pinpoint the location of *bhāvanā*. *Bhāvanā* is the primary meaning of the sentence in the sense that it is its purpose. It inheres in every sentence since sentence is never uttered without a purpose. It is only a verb that is capable of expressing the purpose of the sentence that has been held “*kriyārtha*” since the

<sup>64</sup> D’Souza, *op.cit.*, p.177.

<sup>65</sup> *Tantravārtika*, 15-22, p. 114; 20-28, p.378.

<sup>66</sup> *Śabara-bhāṣya* on II.1.1.

<sup>67</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, “Vākyādhikaraṇa”, 265-6.

time of Jaimini.<sup>68</sup> So, *bhāvanā* has to be located in the verb. Its ultimate locus is the verbal suffix (*pratyaya*) where it coexists with the grammatical number of agent, being nevertheless the primary denotation of the suffix.

Verbal suffix denotes both *bhāvanās*. *Śābdī bhāvanā* is conveyed by the Optative part of it (*liñ-amśa*), while *ārthī bhāvanā* is known from the common verbality (*ākhyātāmśa*).

Since both *bhāvanās* are denoted by the verbal suffix and *bhāvanā* plays an important role in the sentence, Mīmāṃsakas advocate the idea of semantic predominance of the suffix over the root.<sup>69</sup> This tendency is observed already in Śābara: “*Dhātunā kriyocyate pratyayena kartā. Tayoḥ kartā pradhāna-bhūtaḥ. Upasarjana-bhūtā kriyā.*”<sup>70</sup> The Bhāṭṭas were particularly keen to support this thesis. The root may convey the idea of action. Action, nevertheless, is different from the activity which is denoted only by the suffix. As Maṇḍana concludes, “*Pradhānaṃ ca prāyeṇa pratyayārthatvāt prādhānyād api pratyayārthatvam*”.<sup>71</sup>

*Bhāvanā* is oriented towards the goal of activity. It is this goal that should be effected, not the activity itself. Developing the theory of *bhāvanā*, Kumārila follows Śābara in reorganizing Mīmāṃsā into an anthropocentric system, where human goal matters the most. He even paraphrases the oft-quoted injunction “*svargakāmo yajeta*” into “*yāgena svargaṃ bhāvayet*” (one should effect *svarga* through sacrifice),<sup>72</sup> clearly transforming the sacrifice into the tool and *svarga* into the dominant factor of the injunction. *Bhāvanā* and its object are related as *prayojana* and *prayojya*: “*Prayojanatayā caiṣām artham icchanti bhāvanām*”.<sup>73</sup> Now, since *bhāvanā* is the chief meaning of injunctive sentences that constitute the most authoritative part of the Veda, it follows that, on the Bhāṭṭas’ view, *svarga* is prescribed by the Veda and it is imperative that one strives after it. This certainly makes the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā appear performer-friendly and sensitive to his needs and aspirations.

The Bhāṭṭas arguably understood the psychology of the prospective agent better than the Prābhākaras. The sense of duty, the mere feeling that something has to be done because it is prescribed is not enough to motivate one to undertake activity, especially the ritual activity which is expensive, time-consuming and troublesome. The mere meaning of the Optative verbal suffix (*ta*) does not instigate one to action. The cognition of the literal meaning of the injunction does not result

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

<sup>69</sup> Joshi, S.D., “The Mīmāṃsā Theories of Verbal Denotation”, *Viśveśvarānand Indological Journal*, Vol.12, 1974, p.139.

<sup>70</sup> Śābara-bhāṣya on XI.1.22.

<sup>71</sup> *Bhāvanā-viveka*, p. 288.

<sup>72</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, “Vākyādhikaraṇa”, 255.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 344-6.

in activity either. Human motivation, then, must lie not in the linguistic structures or words themselves, otherwise even the utterance of nouns will instigate the hearer or the command issued by the servant will set the master busy. Says Natarajan, “The hearer’s positive response might be awakened by the language in the sense that the language expresses and informs her/him what s/he has to do. There are other extra-linguistic factors like whether the act itself is feasible for her/him to perform, whether there are many inhibitory conditions that would hamper the performance of action. All these factors govern and regulate the decision to get engaged in the act”.<sup>74</sup> True, consideration of these factors is posterior to the comprehension of the direct meaning of words comprising the injunction but it is still unavoidable for one to be stimulated to undertake an action.

The presence of the desired fruit in the background is by far the most important among these factors. Every activity has an objective – to acquire an object or attain a state desirable for the agent. The activity without an objective of this kind is completely uninstanced. As Kumārila remarks, “*Prayojanam anuddīśya mando’pi na pravartate*”.<sup>75</sup> For the Bhāṭṭas, *svarga* is such an objective. *Svarga* is to be realized (*sādhya, kārya*) by Vedic means and what Veda does is to urge men to realize *svarga*.

Maṇḍana goes even beyond Kumārila in being sensitive and tolerant to human foibles. He even modifies the concept of *sābdī bhāvanā* into *iṣṭa-sāadhanatā-jñāna* (the knowledge that the action suggested by the injunction is beneficial to the attainment of what is desired).<sup>76</sup> In another treatise he clearly states that it is *iṣṭa-sāadhanatā-jñāna* that motivates the person, not *kāryatā-jñāna* (the knowledge of what is to be done).<sup>77</sup> *Iṣṭa-sāadhanatā-jñāna* gives rise to *pravartanā* (impelling force) or, to paraphrase it, man allows *pravartanā* to influence himself if and only if he knows that it is conducive to his welfare, “*Sā ca [pravartanā] kriyānām apekṣitapāyataiva*.”<sup>78</sup> *Iṣṭasāadhanatā*, according to Maṇḍana, is the ultimate meaning of the verbal suffix and it holds true in both Vedic and secular contexts. In fact, Maṇḍana’s analysis of the mechanism behind the Vedic injunction is based on the observation how a common injunction is understood and followed in day-to-day life.

Mīmāṃsā insists on the time-lag between the event of sacrifice and the arrival of the fruit. There are three possible ways to account for it: either the sacrifice should be taken to be enduring on some supra-physical level, or the favour

<sup>74</sup> Kanchana Natarajan, *op.cit.*, p.37.

<sup>75</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, “Sambandhākṣepaparihāra”, 55.

<sup>76</sup> *Bhāvanā-viveka*, p.18.

<sup>77</sup> *Brahmasiddhi*, p.116.

<sup>78</sup> *Vidhi-viveka of Maṇḍana Miśra with the Commentary Nyāya Kaṇikā of Vācaspati Miśra*, (ed.) Mahaprabhulal Goswami, Tara Publications, Benares, 1978, p.173.

of some deity should be introduced as a factor,<sup>79</sup> or the sacrifice should be allowed to effect some change (*samskāra*) in the performer.<sup>80</sup> The first alternative was routinely taken as incongruous by the Mīmāṃsakas who followed perceptual evidence in deciding about the transient nature of sacrifice. However, as the sources suggest, there were some who advocated the continuity of sacrifice on the different plane, too subtle to be perceived by the senses.<sup>81</sup> The second alternative was even more repulsive to the Mīmāṃsā thinkers. Sacrifice, in their opinion, was not meant to please deities, the way it was not meant to satisfy humans. It had an intrinsic value for at least the early Mīmāṃsā tradition, whatever its popular perception might have been. Besides, the introduction of deities could undermine the infallible nature of sacrifice. Sacrifice was supposed to bear its fruit with utmost precision, which would certainly be compromised, were the sweet will of deities allowed to have its way. The certainty of the way of sacrifice and the presence of deities between the sacrifice and its fruit do not sit together comfortably. Mīmāṃsā, in general, is characterized by a mistrust of individuals, whether human or superhuman, which ultimately resulted in the development of the concept of the uncreatedness of the Vedas. Individuals after all, are imperfect – they may and do have selfish motives which warp their vision and affect their conduct. If the function of bestowing fruits were vested in deities, the performer of sacrifices would never be certain of the outcome. To solve this and related problems, Mīmāṃsā decided to do away with the very existence of deities at the earliest stage. They were viewed as just another factor of the sacrifice, the way the sacrificial material (*dravya*) was.<sup>82</sup> The mention of deities and their anthropomorphic description in the Veda was interpreted as purely figurative and was, perhaps, meant to make the event of sacrifice intelligible to the sacrificer. Deities are said to be mere words used in the Mantras, words empty of all substance.<sup>83</sup> Jaimini mentions deities when he discusses the question of eligibility for sacrificing but there are allegations against the authenticity of this *sūtra*.<sup>84</sup>

The third option brought in its trail something early Mīmāṃsakas were not open to – the necessity of developing a soul theory and entering the field of metaphysics. But, with the passage of time and due to the intercourse with the *darśanas* directly inspired by the Upaniṣads, the *darśanas* that were keenly interested in metaphysical speculation, Mīmāṃsā must have felt obliged to satisfy

<sup>79</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, IX.1.8.

<sup>80</sup> *Bṛhatī* on II.1.5.

<sup>81</sup> *Tantravārtika*, Vol. I, p.501-2.

<sup>82</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, IX.1.9 and *Śabara-bhāṣya* thereon.

<sup>83</sup> *Śabara-bhāṣya* on X.4.23.

<sup>84</sup> Nilakanta Sastry, K.A., “The Mīmāṃsā Doctrine of Works,” *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. L, 1921, p. 243.

the curiosity of its students about the nature of phenomenal world in order to successfully compete with other orthodox schools. On the other hand, Mīmāṃsakas probably felt the necessity to clearly distinguish themselves from Buddhists, who did not admit an enduring self. Indeed, Kumāṛila claims that it was the fact that Mīmāṃsā had been perceived as a *nāstika* school that prompted him to compose his most comprehensive work, *Ślokavārtika*.<sup>85</sup> These compulsions finally urged one of the two major schools of Mīmāṃsā, the Bhāṭṭas, to temper with the ritual-focused nature of Jaimini's teaching and tackle the problem of connection between the rite and its fruit, making use of the third alternative.

This alternative presupposes the enduring relation between the performer of sacrifice and the potency which is supposed to be the immediate effect of the sacrifice. This potency or power is, according to the Bhāṭṭas, what the early texts of the tradition called "*apūrva*."<sup>86</sup> According to this school, it is called *apūrva* because it is not known through any *pramāṇa* apart from *śabda* and is not cognized by senses due to its subtlety. This interpretation of *apūrva* is not in consonance with the *sūtras*. The most comprehensive meaning of the word in the *sūtras* is "...what is new...some thing or action which occurs due to instigation of the Vedic text."<sup>87</sup> It has to do with the relationship between word and ritual action, to be precise with the origination of such action (*ārambha*).<sup>88</sup>

This position left an ample scope for objections in the anthropocentric atmosphere of the Upaniṣads and early *darśanas*, that were concerned with finding a rather immediate solution to the human predicament. This inevitable change in the orientation of Indian thought prompted Mīmāṃsā to shift focus from the sacrifice to its performer, that necessarily entailed assigning greater importance to human needs. The mechanism of the rite's fruition becomes important already for Śābara. He postulates the existence of *apūrva* and also affirms that it is produced by sacrifice<sup>89</sup> and is the *sādhya* of the sacrifice<sup>90</sup> so that any word expressive of activity enjoins the generation of *apūrva*: "*codanety apūrvaṃ brūmaḥ*".<sup>91</sup> *Apūrva*, in turn, produces the result.<sup>92</sup> The act has its limitations in time and space, which makes it an unlikely cause of the fruit deemed to be eternal. It is rather logical to conclude that, if Veda talks about sacrifice generating a result, it means that first a

<sup>85</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, 10.

<sup>86</sup> The Vedic precursor of *apūrva* is *iṣṭāpūrta*, the potency of rites that helps the sacrificer to unite with the fruit of sacrifice in the afterlife. See *Ṛg-Veda*, X.14.2.

<sup>87</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.234.

<sup>88</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, II.1.5.

<sup>89</sup> "*Tasmād [yāgo' nyad] utpādayati*", *Śābara-bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, II.1.5.

<sup>90</sup> *Śābara-bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, II.2.1.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* on *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, II.1.2.

<sup>92</sup> It is said to be "*phalavat*", *Śābara-bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, VII.1.1.

certain potency is generated and, in fact, it is this potency that is enjoined to be produced. This potency endures till the appearance of the result of the act. In this scheme the act loses its intrinsic value and becomes instead a mere tool (*karāṇa*) in the production of this potency.<sup>93</sup> The potency is not produced by a mere act. The details and the exact procedure (*iti-kartavyatā*) are responsible for it.<sup>94</sup> Offering made without the observance of the minutiae of the Vedic ritual is impotent, according to Śabara. This allows Śabara to accommodate and give sufficient recognition to the elaboration of the ritual developed in the Brāhmaṇas, whose authors insisted on the painfully punctilious observance of the ritual trivia, the hairsplitting discarded by the *nāstika* schools as futile or considerably devalued by the anthropocentric and metaphysics-oriented *āstika* schools, like Sāṃkhya and Vedānta.

Śabara establishes the existence of *apūrva* using presumption (*arthāpatti*) but refrains from any comment on its nature or locus. It is only at Kumāriḷa that the concept of *apūrva* is developed to the utmost. Kumāriḷa's view of *apūrva* as a potency (*śakti*) that survives the action is a valuable addition to the *karma* theory, as it attempts to elucidate the process that enables the performer of the action to reap its fruit with inevitability. However, Kumāriḷa himself appears to be unclear on the precise manner of the operation of *apūrva*.

To start on the positive note, Kumāriḷa's conclusions about the working of *apūrva* have the backing of common experience and do not seem downright arbitrary. A number of activities in everyday life do not yield fruit immediately on their completion. The activity of studying which has for its result mastering the subject is protracted and the result is achieved gradually. Farming is yet another example of the gradual manner of fructification of the action. This indicates that the arrival of the result is not an event, but rather a long process comprising a number of modifications that may not be perceived. Milk does not turn into curd rightaway but undergoes a process of change. From this Kumāriḷa infers that the potency is produced immediately after the completion of the act and it is this potency that undergoes modifications.<sup>95</sup> It is claimed that *apūrva* blossoms, as it were, into a fully developed result. In other words, the result of the action is produced immediately but is developed gradually. The introduction of *apūrva* serves yet another purpose. It saves Kumāriḷa from coming dangerously close to the *satkāryavāda* view of causality, the contingency of acknowledging the long and transformative process of the change of cause into effect.

<sup>93</sup> Śabara-bhāṣya on VII.1.3.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Tantravārtika*, Vol.1, pp. 506-7.

The term “*apūrva*” is used only with reference to the seed sown by the performer of ritual action,<sup>96</sup> even though the operation of the potencies produced by secular activities is the same.

In order to endure, the potency must have a substrate. Kumāṛila’s speculations on the substrate of *apūrva* are significant, though contradictory and inconclusive. At the very outset he declares that *apūrva* inheres in the form of *yogyatā* (appropriateness) either in the principal action (*pradhāna*) either in the performer,<sup>97</sup> which are actually two different lines of argument. The first seems to be the development of Śabara’s idea that although every action produces *apūrva*, not all *apūrvas* serve the same purpose.<sup>98</sup> Sacrifice resulting in heaven is rather complex and is accompanied by a number of subsidiary rites (*guṇa*), each of them generating its own potency. These potencies somehow join together and assist in the generation of the result produced by the main sacrifice. The result is supposed to be yielded by a sacrificial session as a whole which necessitates the presumption that minor rites included into it, although they have their own potencies, end up contributing to the main purpose of the session (the way words conveying separate meanings produce the meaning of a sentence when they are grouped together and bound by *ākāṅkṣā*, *yogyatā* and *sannidhi*, according to the Bhāṭṭa theory of syntactical denotation).<sup>99</sup>

This still leaves scope for the question of the connection between the *apūrva* and the agent. Trying to solve this problem with a single blow, Kumāṛila places *apūrva* in the very self of the agent. This ultimately compels Kumāṛila to admit that action and its potency are not merely related to Ātman but are non-different from it, “*kriyātmanor atyanta-bhedābhāvāt.*”<sup>100</sup>

The concept of *apūrva* was introduced to tackle the problem of the time-lag between the act and its result and to bridge the yawning gap between the transient sacrifice and its eternal fruit. The success of the concept is far from certain. *Apūrva* is apparently transient. It is produced by sacrifice and does not survive the arrival of the result for coexistence of cause and effect is a logical impossibility. The transience of *apūrva* makes it not different from sacrifice, except for its duration. This was probably what prompted Kumāṛila to continue his deliberations on the issue. He proclaims that *apūrva* is eternally present in the self in a latent form, twisting Śabara’s text in a rather merciless manner. This also takes care of the controversial issue of the production of a single *apūrva* out of several

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p.506.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p.504.

<sup>98</sup> Śabara-*bhāṣya* on XI.1.57.

<sup>99</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.232.

<sup>100</sup> *Tantravārtika*, II.1.2.5, *Mīmāṃsā Kośa*, (ed.) Kevalananda Sarasvati, (Prajñā Pāṭhśālā Maṇḍala Grantha Mālā, 1966, Vol. I, p.523.

minor *apūrvas*. On this view, what a particular act does is only manifesting what is already inherent in the performer's self. It brings about a refinement or a particular modification in the self (*saṃskāra*), which allows the self to achieve what it desires.

The opponent of Mīmāṃsā is bent on maintaining the integrity of the self. According to him, the self cannot undergo refinements as it is eternal and immutable.<sup>101</sup> He naturally finds the very word "*saṃskāra*" suspicious. To meet this objection Kumāriḷa modifies his view even further. He declares the self to be perfect, capable of attaining everything by its very nature. What prevents it are the obstacles that are removed by means of sacrifices, which makes manifestation of *apūrvā* nothing but the reversal to one's own nature by means of removing what obstructs or conceals it. It sounds similar to the Jain view of the self's perfections and excellences obscured by the inflow of *karma* and manifested gradually as the karmic obscurations are shed. The difference, however, lies in Bhāṭṭa's conviction that action is instrumental in the removal of impediments. Needless to say, Kumāriḷa strides too far from the early and even the contemporary (Prābhākara) Mīmāṃsā to suit his purposes. The tone of his discussion indicates a lack of conviction. He appears to be guessing and his guesswork brings him in proximity to the rival schools of thought. Moreover, he is least original when thinking that the potency of the action is lodged in the self. Kumāriḷa's heavy reliance on the Vaiśeṣika theories in this question has been demonstrated.<sup>102</sup> According to Vaiśeṣika, *adr̥ṣṭa* (the retributive potency comprising both *dharma* and *adharmā*) generated by ethical and ritual activities is a quality (*guṇa*) of the self. In Nyāya, the picture is quite similar, except for the preference this school gives to the term "*saṃskāra*."<sup>103</sup> It may be mentioned here that there is a definite similarity with the Jain view as well, according to which the self becomes literally infused or infected with karmic particles attracted to it by its volitional actions.<sup>104</sup> The line Kumāriḷa follows seems to have developed from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view of the self characterized by the attribution of certain purely psychic qualities to the transcendental self. It is in direct opposition to the view of Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Vedānta, that all *saṃskāras* or defilements are lodged in or affect the psychic apparatus, leaving the conscious principle absolutely untouched and beyond any modification or refinement.

<sup>101</sup> *Tantravārtika*, Vol.I, pp.503-4.

<sup>102</sup> Halbfass, W., "Karma, Apūrvā and "Natural" Causes: Observations on the Growth and Limits of the Theory of Saṃsāra" in W.D. O'Flaherty (ed.), *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1999, p. 281.

<sup>103</sup> *Nyāya-bhāṣya* on *Nyāya-sūtra*, IV.1.44.

<sup>104</sup> Walter Schubring, *The Doctrine of the Jainas*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1962, p.173.

It has been shown that the purpose of Mīmāṃsā as a philosophical system is to investigate *Dharma*, held to be the meaning of the Veda and reflected in the sacrificial activity. This prompts the question as to the purpose of *Dharma* itself and its meaning for the individual. It necessarily leads to the question about the goal of human existence, according to Mīmāṃsā. The latter is not free from controversy, for the views of Mīmāṃsā on this point underwent considerable change over time. Moreover, Mīmāṃsā had to compromise with the prevalent opinions and revise its conceptual framework in accordance with changed circumstances.

As a system, Mīmāṃsā is a product of the age when the kinds, nature and purpose of the Vedic ritual had to be defended by logical reasoning and not merely elaborated, catalogued and supplied with mythological underpinning, as in the time of the Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta-sūtras. This reasoning involved more anthropocentric approach and had to present ritual activity as conducive to the attainment of man's goals. The spirit of early archaic ritualism is quite different and it exercised its influence on the early Mīmāṃsā thinkers, particularly on Jaimini.

The basic assumption behind not only Vedic but any ritualism is the functioning of some universal law or order that activates the whole existence but is not viewed as an ontological entity behind the veil of phenomenal manifestation, on which the latter haplessly hinges and from which it derives its existence.<sup>105</sup> It is a principle that enables the world to continue. In the Vedic religion, it corresponded to *Ṛta*. As the etymology of the word suggests, it is motion or activity. Thus, it is activity from which everything originates and which preexists to substance. Any substance or creature is seen to be brought about as a result of some activity. Activity is never purposeless, nor is it resultless. It produces everything and inheres everywhere, not being static. Existence unavoidably implies being an agent, object of action or some other factor of activity and embodies the universal order, *Ṛta*. The world is brought into existence by the activity of the Primordial Being (Prajāpati of the Brāhmaṇas). This activity is likened to the sacrifice of the Primordial Being, by which he turned into the world or brought the world out of himself. On the phenomenal plane, sacrificial act is meant to replay the primordial cosmogonic act or some other related archetypal acts so that the world could be recreated or renewed. The principle of sacrifice is exchange or renunciation of the property rights for the sake of acquiring something else. The Primordial Being sacrifices itself to bring out the world and thereby to actualize its godship; men support gods by their offerings while gods grant the wishes of their

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<sup>105</sup> The following brief exposition of archaic ritualistic mentality is based on Raimundo Panikkar, *The Vedic Experience*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1977, pp. 346-55.

worshippers.<sup>106</sup> This perpetual exchange, regular surrender of something for the sake of acquiring something else is the law that supports the world. The world's survival depends on the cooperation of all the beings that constitute it, who are mutually dependant and cannot exist on their own, without being a part of a larger whole.<sup>107</sup> This makes sacrifice stand for the inner dynamism of the world that enables it to subsist. Every sacrificial act is a recreation-cum-maintenance of the world and has repercussions on its every inhabitant. The sacrificer is thus charged with enormous responsibility of contributing to the world's survival.<sup>108</sup> The world's survival, in turn, guarantees each sacrificer's survival and prosperity.

The dominant idea of the ritualistic view is that the world is essentially good and it is extremely important to maintain it the way it is, which obligates its every denizen to act in a certain way and to keep the sacrificial wheel in motion. The only alternative to the continuation of the world is its perishing subsequent on the cessation of life-giving sacrifices. If the activity that keeps the world going is disrupted, if the world order (*Rta*) is broken, the world will certainly cease to be and this catastrophe will be final since there nothing else the world can fall back upon – no ultimate reality or receptacle to absorb it, nothing to return to and spring from later on. Therefore, good is what helps to maintain the world and prevent the disaster; it is imperative that one follows it. This good is certainly not considered as personal good only. Personal good is inherent in collective good and should be brought strictly in accordance with the world-governing law. Says Panikkar, “To perform sacrifice is not to participate in a good act or to do good to gods, to mankind or to oneself: it is to live, to make one's own survival and that of the whole universe. It is the act by which the universe itself continues in existence.”<sup>109</sup> Personal attainments through sacrifices are certainly not as significant as preventing the world from slipping into chaos.

The overarching importance of sacrifice can be clearly seen at Jaimini and is, to some extent, evident at Prabhākara. Jaimini sets out to subordinate all ritual factors to the event of sacrifice (*karma*). He states that Vedic mantras<sup>110</sup> as well as deities<sup>111</sup> are accessory to it. He is aware that action, including a ritualistic one, is commenced for the sake of acquiring some fruit. But fruits are, again, for the sake

<sup>106</sup> *Iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, III.12.

<sup>107</sup> *Devān bhāvayatānena te deva bhavayantu vaḥ/ Parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śreyah param avāpsyatha*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, III.11.

<sup>108</sup> *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* even claims that if Agnihotra is not performed, the sun will not rise. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II.3.1.5.

<sup>109</sup> Panikkar, *op.cit.*, p.353.

<sup>110</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, III.2.1.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII.1.31, IX.1.4.

of action (*karmārthatvāt*).<sup>112</sup> On the face of it, it appears that there is no ultimate referent in this system, representing a closed circle. Yet, Jaimini tries to make sacrifice fill this place. Sacrifice itself is a motivating force, *yajña-prayojaka*,<sup>113</sup> the focus and fulcrum of all its elements, including the sacrificer. Sacrifice is ultimately for its own sake, while its participants may mistakenly view it as a means of achieving their needs. Sacrifice is universally beneficial and it engages the sacrificer, submitting him to its impersonal will by promising to grant his desires.

It can be surmised that early ritualists superseded by Mīmāṃsā believed that the objective of the sacrificial system was to maintain the existing beneficial world order. Original Mīmāṃsā, greatly influenced by earlier ideas, most probably refused to focus on what is in the *Dharma* for each particular sacrificer considering recreation of the world self-valuable and important enough to stimulate man to undertake ritual actions. Jaimini himself hardly dwells on what happens after the rite is performed and how this accomplishment affects the sacrificer. He calls the completion of rite, rather vaguely, *nirvṛtti* or *apavarga*. *Nirvṛtti* is the opposite of *pravṛtti*, the actual performance of sacrifice or actualization of the abstract sacrificial pattern.<sup>114</sup> *Pravṛtti* is what accomplishes the purpose of rite. It is caused by *codanā*.<sup>115</sup> When the purpose is fulfilled, it is known as *phala-vṛtti*.<sup>116</sup> So, *nirvṛtti* is the cessation of ritual activity after what ought to be done has been done and the result of the endeavour (*artha*) has been achieved. As any activity is painful and undertaken for the sake of some result, *nirvṛtti* should be the desired end of activity, that combines cessation with the accomplishment of what is sought after. Typologically, it approximates the Buddhist notion of *nirvāṇa* but a full-fledged comparison does not seem to be possible here for, in the later Mīmāṃsā sources, *nirvṛtti* was not developed into a metaphysical concept. As it was observed, Jaimini was reticent on the precise nature of *nirvṛtti*, as the early Buddhists were on the nature of *nirvāṇa*.<sup>117</sup> Both traditions mention *artha/attha* (purpose) but prefer to concentrate on the process and method of achieving it (*dharma/dhamma*).

There is one more result of the sacrificial chores that may be inferred from the early Mīmāṃsā's subordination of the narrow human goal to the larger sacrificial objective (*yajñārtha*). It is the experience of transcendence of one's personality – a psychological effect on each and every sacrificer. Man enters the

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, III.1.4-6.

<sup>113</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, IX.1.19.

<sup>114</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.108.

<sup>115</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, VII.1.1-12.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, II.1.29.

<sup>117</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.210.

world of sacrificial activity goaded by desires and having his limited perspective. Desire for fruit has been maintained as the chief qualification (*adhikāra*) of the sacrificer since the time of Jaimini.<sup>118</sup> Once an agent, man turns from a self-centred individual into a factor in a wider system – the system of relationships between sacrificial materials, people, ritual actions, words, etc. that constitute *Dharma*.<sup>119</sup> He surrenders his previous narrow identity to assume a functional identity in the sacrificial system, which makes him aware of being a part of a larger whole and playing a role in a drama of universal importance. He learns about other perspectives on sacrifice and adjusts his own perspective to them, without radically altering it. Having entered the sacrificial system through desire, he maintains and satisfies it, but all the same widens his horizon. On this view, it is desire and not desirelessness as the Upaniṣadic sages maintained that helps to transcend. It is not the discovery of a deeper, true, desireless self, as in Vedānta, or segregation of the self from the matter, as in Sāṃkhya-Yoga, but a change in perspective that occurs on the realization of belonging to a sacrificial system that makes for transcendence, according to the early Mīmāṃsā.

It was not until Śabara that Mīmāṃsā started focusing on the nature of the person's gain as a result of adhering to the dictates of Veda. In common perception, corroborated by the Vedic injunctions, *svarga* (heaven) was supposed to be the fruit of life dedicated to sacrifices. Śabara set out to demythologize this notion. In general, Śabara seems to be antagonistic to the popular beliefs and traditions springing from them, unsupported by reason, which can be observed in his destructive criticism of the anthropomorphic image and the very existence of deities. On the other hand, he belongs to the age that was characterized by shifting of focus to man and his needs and the acute sense of dissatisfaction with vague concepts, unexplained dogmas and unintelligible routine imposed as duty.

Śabara's interpretation of *svarga* is quite in tune with the spirit of his time. He reads *svarga* as happiness (*prīti*), refusing to identify it with some definite place and mentions that yearning for happiness is seen in every creature, "*Prītir hi svargaḥ, sarvaḥ prītiṃ prārthayate*" and earlier "*Sa svargaḥ syāt sarvān pratyaviśiṣṭatvāt.*"<sup>120</sup> *Svarga* is happiness unmixed with sorrow and uninterrupted: "*Yan na duḥkhena sambhinnam na ca grastam anantaram/ abhilāṣopanītam ca tat sukham svaḥ-padāspadam.*"<sup>121</sup> It implies that *svarga* is not some pleasure-giving object, as it is suggested by the popular figurative expressions "*kauśeyāni sūkṣmāṇi vasanāni svargaḥ, candanāni svargaḥ, dvyāṣṭavarṣāḥ striyaḥ*

<sup>118</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, VI.1.4.

<sup>119</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.159.

<sup>120</sup> *Śabara-bhāṣya*, IV.3.15.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.1.1.

*svargah.*”<sup>122</sup> *Svarga* is real and yet it does not have any specific referent and is not restricted to some place or object, “*aviśeṣa-vacanaḥ śabda na viśeṣe vyavasthāpito bhaviṣyati.*”<sup>123</sup>

Desire for happiness is spontaneous and Veda’s imperative neatly dovetails with it. Veda can not prescribe the desire for happiness, which is already there (*siddha*); it can only instruct about the modus operandi to achieve it, which is still unrealized. Śabara develops the idea of *puruṣārtha* in accordance with his view of happiness as goal. He interprets *puruṣārtha* as “a thing for man’s sake or for the purpose of attaining happiness” (*avibhakto’ hi puruṣārthaḥ prītyā yo yaḥ prīti-sādhanaḥ sa puruṣārthaḥ*).<sup>124</sup> One strives for *puruṣārtha* as the instrument to one’s ultimate aim, happiness. This helps in understanding the theory of four *puruṣārthas* more or less contemporary to Śabara. *Puruṣārthas* are desired inasmuch as they help achieve happiness that remain the fundamental objective of man throughout.<sup>125</sup> This makes Śabara conclude that rites enjoined are for the sake of happiness (experienced sooner or later) and they are not to be performed if they are not known to produce happiness: “*tasmād akartavyo yāgaḥ yadi na prītyarthaḥ*”.<sup>126</sup> Another word used by Śabara is “*niḥśreyasa*”, which he treats as synonymous with *svarga*, interpreted in the above-mentioned way. It should be understood not in the sense of *mokṣa* – the sense it acquires in the classical Sanskrit and later philosophical literature, but literally – the extreme or ultimate happiness.<sup>127</sup>

Śabara refused to speculate on what happens to the pious sacrificer in the afterlife. The question whether the state of happiness won by rituals was permanent, remained open as well. A number of the Brāhmaṇa passages hint on the limitations of the posthumous existence in heaven and Mīmāṃsakas can hardly ignore them. Kumārila even declares heaven evanescent.<sup>128</sup> A possible way out of this predicament is the idea of the periods of heavenly enjoyment intermittent with the periods of sacrificial activity on earth. “As it is produced by *apūrva* and everything that is produced has an end, heaven also has an end. After experiencing heaven, man has to come back to the earth, and has again to accumulate *apūrva* through fresh action in order to enjoy heaven again. This is the ideal of life

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.1.1.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.3.15.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.1.22.

<sup>125</sup> *Yo hi prītyarthaḥ sa sādhyate, nānyaḥ; Śabara-bhāṣya*, VI.1.1.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> The equation between *niḥśreyasa* and *svarga*, at least at Śabara, was attested by Krishna Warriar, A.G., *The Concept of Mukti in Advaita Vedanta*, University of Madras, 1981, p.197.

<sup>128</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, “Sambandhākṣepa-parihāra”, 101-7.

according to the Mīmāṃsā, an ideal of eternal activity.”<sup>129</sup> This conclusion is somewhat forced on Mīmāṃsā. Mīmāṃsakas would prefer another option – to keep the question open and to refrain as far as possible from the discussion that might take them outside their clearly defined area of their specialization – sacrifice and its minutiae.

A feeble attempt to reconcile the popular perception of *svarga* as starry regions or the region of Mount Meru with its psychological perception as happiness was made by Kumārila<sup>130</sup> with reliance on *arthāpatti*. Since in this world pleasure is known to be mixed with some amount of pain and the pleasure promised by Vedas as a result of sacrifices is supposed to be unalloyed, it has to be presumed that it is to be experienced in some other region.

The happiness which is *svarga* is supposed to be unexcelled, unlike earthly happiness. As Kumārila states, “*Svargas tu janmāntara eva. Sa hi niratīśayā prītiḥ.*”<sup>131</sup> It is also identified with *sukha*, one of the *guṇas* of the self, enumerated by Vaiśeṣika. Developed Mīmāṃsā, heavily relying on the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika metaphysics, had to conclude that heaven is a state of happiness that abides in the self (Ātman) as a *guṇa*. This also implies that it is a positive experience, not a mere absence of pain.<sup>132</sup> The Mīmāṃsā schools are unanimous on the point that it is attainable only in the afterlife. This seems to be the conclusion of mature Mīmāṃsā as to what is the ultimate goal of human existence and that is how it interpreted “*niḥśreyasa*”.

The development of Mīmāṃsā did not stop at this. The popularity of the idea of *mokṣa*, that arose in a quite different milieu, compelled Mīmāṃsā thinkers to give it recognition and accommodate it in their system. It was one of the several compromises Mīmāṃsā had to make to survive in the changed philosophical climate. By itself, Mīmāṃsā holds *Dharma*, the ritual system interpreted either as a tool to human happiness or as a means of maintaining the world order, the original and ultimate *puruṣārtha*. Mīmāṃsā is rooted in the Vedic thought that was free from the perception of the world as unwholesome and of *saṃsāra* and *mokṣa*. In early Mīmāṃsā, the strict observance of rituals was viewed as a panacea for all ills and evils capable of even conquering “redeath” (the antecedent of the concept of rebirth). Indeed, Mīmāṃsā, on the one hand, and *mokṣa*-oriented *āstika* philosophies (chiefly Vedānta and Sāṃkhya-Yoga), on the other, adhere to two radically different eschatologies,<sup>133</sup> are characterized by two opposing views of the

<sup>129</sup> Raju, P.T., “Activism in Indian Thought,” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, vol.39, 1958, p.216.

<sup>130</sup> *Tantravārtika*, Vol.I, p. 336.

<sup>131</sup> “Tupīkā”, IV.3.11.28, “Varṇaka” 2, *Mīmāṃsā Kośa*, Vol. 7, p. 4468.

<sup>132</sup> *Prakarāṇa-pāñcikā*, p.435.

<sup>133</sup> Van Buitenen, J.A.B., “Dharma and Mokṣa”, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol.7, 1957, p.33.

world (fundamentally beneficial and inherently painful respectively) and have two diverging goals: maintenance of the world and its abandonment. In the era of the Upaniṣads, the *mokṣa*-centric ideology unquestionably prevailed, which fact posed a choice before Mīmāṃsā: to make considerable adjustments in its conceptual scheme or to become history. One of such adjustments was the insistence on the acquisition of *svarga* only in the afterlife in an effort to draw the line between the ultimate happiness and worldly experience which was definitely a sign of recognition of the suffering-ridden nature of the world. Another move was to admit *mokṣa* but to present it in a somewhat unattractive light so as not to allow it to become chief *puruṣārtha* or at least to insure that it is out of competition with *Dharma* and its promised result, *svarga*. This was achieved by embracing the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view of *mokṣa*, which is purely negative. According to Kumārila, it is a total absence of both *sukha* and *duḥkha*, experienced on the exhaustion of all *karma* as well as of *dharma* and *adharmā*. It is, like *svarga*, impossible to experience in this life, which precludes all talk about *jīvanmukti*. The experience of a total blank achievable only in the afterlife cannot be more attractive than the experience of happiness that Mīmāṃsā orients its aspirant to. This interpretation of *mokṣa* is shared by both the Prābhākaras and the Bhāṭṭas.<sup>134</sup>

It took Mīmāṃsā ages to recognize *mokṣa* as a *puruṣārtha*. Jaimini and Śābara are silent on it. Prabhākara seems to treat *mokṣa* and *dharma* as two possible and legitimate ways (of which *dharma* is obviously more preferable), which is evident from his insistence that Mīmāṃsā does not deal with *mokṣa*, but is meant for a man engaged in action. He also interprets Śābara's silence on the question of *mokṣa* not as a sign of limited knowledge but as a result of keeping up with the spirit of Mīmāṃsā, which does not favour renunciation.<sup>135</sup> It is only Kumārila and the later Prābhākaras that developed a somewhat consistent attitude to *mokṣa*. The metaphysical aspects of their view of *mokṣa* as well as the psychology and the method of its acquisition are indicative of heavy borrowing from the rival *darśanas* and betray Mīmāṃsā's reluctance to state something substantially new on the subject.

This transition to the new value system was probably easier with the Bhāṭṭas, who had held *karma* to be instrumental in the attainment of *svarga* and now had to simply extend the utility of *karma*. This was quite difficult with the Prābhākaras, considering their notion of Vedic duty for its own sake and preference of collective to personal goals, of which *mokṣa* was the ultimate. Even so, Mīmāṃsā was eager to remain useful for attaining *mokṣa*, whatever its ultimate significance and nature might have been. A similar tendency is found in the history

<sup>134</sup> *Prakarāṇa-pāñcīkā*, p.341, *Śloka-vārtika*, "Sambandhākṣepa-parihāra", 108-10.

<sup>135</sup> *Bṛhatī*, Vol. I, p.256.

of other *śāstras*, for example *vyākaraṇa*. Grammar was initially viewed as conducive to and even instrumental to attaining *svarga*. Its role in the process of ascending to heaven (*abhyudaya*) was quite similar to that of sacrifice: refined and correct speech was supposed to produce in the speaker a special merit (*dharma-viśeṣa*) which, in turn, produced the experience of celestial happiness. When *mokṣa* entered the scene as a *puruṣārtha*, grammarians tried to prove the utility of their science in bringing about *mokṣa* as well. Says Bhartṛhari, “*Niyato’ bhyudayah, niyatā kṣema-prāptih.*”<sup>136</sup>

Likewise, Mīmāṃsā stressed the necessity of ritual observances in the process of attaining *mokṣa*. Since the omission of compulsory (*nitya*) rites (*Agnihotra* - to be performed thrice a day, *Darśapūrṇamāsa*, *Cāturmāsya* etc.) results in an accumulation of sin (*pratyavāya*), which sooner or later will have to be exhausted by suffering in this or another body, Kumārila maintains that the man desiring liberation should keep performing them: “*Mokṣārthinā’ py avaśyaṃ pāpa-kṣaya eṣitavyaḥ, tasminn asati mokṣābhāvāt.*”<sup>137</sup> It has to be noted here that, according to him, experience (*bhoga*) is the only way of exhausting the karmic stock. This routine should be coupled with abstention from the prohibited (*niśiddha*) acts (contaminating and violent practices) and optional (*kāmya*) acts (*Jyotiṣṭoma*, *Putra-kāmyeṣṭi*, *Sautrāmaṇī*) since these too result in the accrual of demerit and merit respectively.<sup>138</sup> Besides, these two types of actions are extensions of some certain desires that take the individual in the direction opposite to the desirelessness of *mokṣa*. This attests Mīmāṃsā’s final acceptance of the idea of bondage. Nevertheless, Mīmāṃsā’s interpretation of it is different from that of Advaita and Sāṃkhya-Yoga. For Mīmāṃsā, bondage is quite real but nevertheless transcendable.

Kumārila also reserves some role in this process to the knowledge of the self (*jñāna*). His view on the point is known as *jñāna-karma-samuccaya-vāda*, wherein *karma* remains the immediate cause of liberation. Firstly, the knowledge of the self is important inasmuch as it stimulates one to follow the right conduct and undertake actions conducive to attaining *mokṣa*. Before indulging in certain activities, it helps to know the nature of the agent. It is sometimes claimed that the knowledge of the self should be obtained for the success of activities, having nothing to do with liberation: “*Ātma jñātavya ityetan mokṣārthaṃ na ca coditam/ karma-pravṛtti-hetutvam ātma-jñānasya lakṣyate.*”<sup>139</sup> The knowledge-oriented passages of the Veda are, therefore, interpreted as *arthavādas*, adding to the

<sup>136</sup> *Vṛtti* on *Vākyapadīya*, I.131. See also Subramania Iyer, K.K., “Bhartṛhari on Vyākaraṇa as a Means of Attaining Mokṣa”, *Adyar Library Bulletin*, Vol.28 (1-2), 1964, p.120.

<sup>137</sup> “*Tuṣṭikā*”, VI.3.1.2, *Mīmāṃsā Kośa*, Vol.6, p.3175.

<sup>138</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, “Sambandhākṣepa-parihāra”, 108-10.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

stimulation conveyed by *vidhis*. Wrong conclusions regarding the self are likely to result in wrong behaviour. For instance, viewing self as essentially inactive (the way Advaita and Sāṃkhya-Yoga do) can give rise to inactivity on the phenomenal plane (renunciation), which will make *mokṣa* forever unattainable.

The late Prābhākaras also consider the knowledge of the self as necessary for liberation, only to the greater extent than the Bhāṭṭas.<sup>140</sup> Śālikanātha even claims that knowledge destroys *sañcita-karma* (accumulated stock). That, however, may well be due to the influence of Advaita, as there are some reasons to believe that the Prābhākaras contemporary to Śaṅkara and Sureśvara did not hold *jñāna* in high esteem and may not have even granted it recognition.<sup>141</sup>

One of the clearest expositions of *samuccaya-vāda* is found in the *Brahma-siddhi* of the renowned Bhāṭṭa Maṇḍana Mīśra. Even though based on Kumārila, he shows signs of compromise with Advaita and may be placed somewhere between the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā that he officially represents and the Advaita that he tries to accommodate. He advocates two views of the utility of *karma* in the process of liberation: *saṃyoga-prthaktva* and *saṃskāra*.<sup>142</sup> According to the former, all Vedic rites have two functions: bringing about the fruits mentioned in the injunctions and preparing one for the knowledge of the self. The latter means Vedic rites have a purifying effect upon the agent, which makes him fit for the knowledge of the self. Maṇḍana agrees on the efficacy of *karmas* as a stepping stone to the knowledge which results in liberation but diverges from Kumārila, who considers them indispensable in attaining knowledge. In this matter, Maṇḍana relies on Bādarāyaṇa<sup>143</sup> and concludes that a combination of *jñāna* and *karma* makes it convenient for the practitioner to secure liberation. Liberation, no doubt, is possible to achieve even bypassing the *grhastha* stage governed by *dharma* and given to ritual observances. But the process will be accelerated if one combines both *jñāna* and *karma*: “*Sādhana-viśeṣāddhi sa kṣipraṃ kṣiprataram ca vyajyate, tadabhāve cireṇa ciratareṇa ca.*”<sup>144</sup> Thus, employment of sacrificial activity is preferable due to its efficacy, though not imperative. There is one more glaring difference between Kumārila and Maṇḍana: the latter’s being open to and even being characterized by the active acceptance of the idea of the attainability of *mokṣa* in this life. Maṇḍana makes quite clear his allegiance to the ideal of *jīvanmukti*, alien to the rest of the

<sup>140</sup> *Prakaraṇa-pāñcikā*, p.341.

<sup>141</sup> See Sureśvara’s exposition of the alleged Prābhākara position on *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, I.14-21.

<sup>142</sup> *Brahma-siddhi*, p.36.

<sup>143</sup> *Brahma-sūtra*, III.4.26.

<sup>144</sup> *Brahma-siddhi*, p.36. One can reach the village faster if one rides a horse instead of walking.

Mīmāṃsakas.<sup>145</sup> In his opinion, liberation is possible even before the exhaustion of *prārabdha-karma*, which may still operate without having whatsoever sway over *jñānī*. Knowledge has much more than a nominal value at Maṇḍana: it is capable of cancelling the accumulated (*sañcita*) *karma*. Thus, it is knowledge, honed and reinforced by ritual action, that directly results in liberation.

According to all schools of Mīmāṃsā, the self is essentially an agent (*kartr*). Being eternal and omnipresent, it nevertheless wills and its volitions activate the psychological apparatus that exerts itself in activity. It is also an experiencer of pleasure, pain etc., resultant from actions.<sup>146</sup> Following Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā recognizes eight *guṇas* of self: *buddhi*, *sukha*, *duḥkha*, *icchā*, *dveṣa*, *prayatna*, *dharma* and *adharmā*.<sup>147</sup> These, however, manifest only in the body, with the help of the atomic mind (*manas*), in the absence of which (in liberation, for example), the self, though a cognizer (*jñātr*), at least according to the Bhāṭṭas, cannot be aware of them. This implies that in liberation the properties of the self that are inalienable persist in a latent form but there is no chance of their manifestation. The Prābhākaras are more consistent with the view of Vaiśeṣika, considering the self essentially insentient (*jaḍa*),<sup>148</sup> denying its self-luminosity and ascribing this instead to the mental act or experience (*saṃvid*).

In Mīmāṃsā, knowing is viewed as an activity and that makes the self the agent of the act of knowing.<sup>149</sup> This activity constantly effects modifications (*pariṇāma*) in the self, which means the self is eternally changeable.<sup>150</sup> Kumāriḷa considers the self consciousness,<sup>151</sup> which means it is self-luminous.<sup>152</sup> This, however, should not be taken as the final conclusion of the Bhāṭṭas on the question. Pārthasārathi, for example, rejects the self-luminosity of Ātman.<sup>153</sup> Prabhākara distinguishes between consciousness (*saṃvid*) and the self. This view preserves the unchangeability of the self but sacrifices its self-luminosity.

Establishment of the eternal self, different from the body, allows Mīmāṃsā to resolve the apparent contradiction between the scriptures that mention the physical ascent of sacrificer to heaven and the perceptual evidence of his reduction to ashes in the funeral pyre. Possessing the knowledge of the self as essentially an experiencer also orients one towards *svarga*, which is of the nature of happiness,

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.130-4.

<sup>146</sup> “Kartṛ-bhoktrtaivātmā”, *Bṛhatī*, Vol. I, p.236; *Śloka-vārtika*, “Ātmavāda”, 8, 28.

<sup>147</sup> *Nyāya-sūtra*, I.1.10.

<sup>148</sup> *Prakaraṇa-pāñcikā*, p.333.

<sup>149</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, “Ātmavāda”, 76.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, “Pratyakṣa”, 52-3.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, “Ātmavāda”, 74-5; *Tantravārtika*, II.1.5.

<sup>152</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, “Ātmavāda”, 142.

<sup>153</sup> *Śāstradīpikā of Pārthasārathi Miśra with the Commentary of Mayūkhmalikā by Somanātha*, Sri Dharmadatta Jha (ed.), Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi, 1988, pp.127-8.

and hence preferable to *mokṣa*, described as pure blank, where nothing material or immaterial, including happiness, is cognized or experienced.<sup>154</sup>

According to Mīmāṃsā, self-knowledge is of two kinds: discriminatory knowledge and knowledge in the form of worship (*upāsanā*) and meditation, that are but varieties of action. Like action, they presuppose the agent, the object of action and the whole set of action factors (*kāraṇa*). Moreover, knowledge happens to be enjoined by the Veda, like any ritual action, “*Amṛtatva-kāma ātmānam upāsīta iti vidhiḥ kalpyate.*”<sup>155</sup> There is a number of passages in the Upaniṣads that directly enjoin knowledge of the self.<sup>156</sup> This knowledge is not, however, immediately productive of liberation. What it does is to inspire the agent to perform particular actions and to abstain from other. That way, it is conducive to the attainment of both heaven and *mokṣa*. It also supplies valuable information about the agent. Serving these two purposes, it is classified as both *kratvartha* (helpful to the sacrifice) and *puruṣārtha* (helpful to man).<sup>157</sup> This statement gains further significance since it applies the classification of ritual actions introduced by early Mīmāṃsā to knowledge and practices culminating in its acquisition. According to Jaimini, *puruṣārtha* is an action that accomplishes some human purpose by itself.<sup>158</sup> The *Darśapaurṇamāsa* rite results in the acquisition of heaven and has to be counted as *puruṣārtha*, while subsidiary rites (*prayāja*) are helpful only in accomplishing the main rite. Substances may be classified in the same manner. These include sacrificial utensils, goods offered, donation items etc. Sacrificial utensils are *kratvartha*. So are the offerings as well as the actions connected with their preparation and purification.<sup>159</sup> The former may sometimes be *puruṣārtha*, sometimes *kratvartha*. For example, curd can be just a material offered for the accomplishment of some other purpose or the material that activates the sacrificer’s sense-organs, when offered, in which case it is certainly *puruṣārtha*.<sup>160</sup> The activity of earning money may be *puruṣārtha* (when it is for the sake of making one’s livelihood) and *kratvartha* (since the possession of money is a

<sup>154</sup> Substantially diverging from the literal interpretation of the Upaniṣads, the Bhāṭṭas mete out a similar treatment to *susupti*. According to them, there is no evidence of bliss experienced in that state and the relevant scriptural statements should be interpreted as pointing to a mere absence of pain but not to any positive experience. *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Nyāyasiddhi* on *Prakarāṇa-pāñcikā*, p.242.

<sup>156</sup> *Ātmānam upāsīta* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, I.4.8), *Ātmā va are draṣṭavyaḥ, śrotavyo, mantavyo, nididhyāsitavyaḥ* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, IV.5.6), *So’nveṣṭavyaḥ, sa vijijñāsitavyaḥ* (*Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, VIII.7.1).

<sup>157</sup> *Tantravārtika*, Vol. I, p.321.

<sup>158</sup> *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, IV.1.2.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.3.1.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.3.5-7.

qualification of the sacrificer).<sup>161</sup> Thus, all actions fall into two categories, based on the motives of their agents. This classification had to be modified to fit Kumārila's scheme. In the passage referred to above, Kumārila interprets *kratvartha* as leading to happiness and *puruṣārtha* as helpful in attaining *mokṣa*. This, however, contradicts his own statement that knowledge under no circumstances can be a direct cause of *mokṣa* and that it is the exhaustion of karmic residuum, understood as resulting not from the abstention from all actions but from the abstention from the *kāmya* and the *niṣiddha* ones, coupled with the performance of obligatory rites like *Agnihotra*, that results in *mokṣa*.<sup>162</sup>

On the whole, the doctrine of liberation remains an alien element in the Mīmāṃsā system of thought. Mīmāṃsā is basically concerned with the man engaged in action and actionlessness goes against its fundamental assumptions. The Mīmāṃsā of the early period certainly had no problems with human weaknesses and imperfections. In its opinion, Veda itself took advantage of the craving human ego to involve man in achieving its purpose, granting his petty wishes in the process. For the early Mīmāṃsā, the phenomenal self is of utmost significance, so that any enquiry into what underlies it could be even detrimental to its orientation and purpose. Sacrificial activity is initiated by the Veda itself and, since Veda is eternal, the activity it generates is unavoidable and there is absolutely no need to try to escape from it. The early Mīmāṃsā and the strata of the ritualistic thought that gave rise to it were least of all interested in liberating the self or even purifying it beyond the measure directly necessary for participating in the sacrificial activity.<sup>163</sup> *Dharma* was, undoubtedly, the highest goal, and *artha* and *kāma* were utilized as instruments of its realization. The popularity of the idea of *mokṣa* made Mīmāṃsā modify its stance, but the basic principle of the attainability of everything through the Veda-sanctioned rites remained unshaken and unrevised.<sup>164</sup> The ideologues of the later Mīmāṃsā spent much force trying to prove the omnipotence of Veda and the capacity of rituals to grant even liberation making, however, a concession to the rival circles by admitting *jñāna*, the knowledge of the self, as useful but subordinate to the omnipotent sacrifice that retained its arch-importance due to Mīmāṃsā's unwaveringly activist interpretation of the message of Veda. Knowledge, again, is not an entity and is, therefore, impotent to dissolve real bondage or destroy the karmic stock which is also far from being illusory<sup>165</sup> (Maṇḍana's view on the role of knowledge constitutes a notable exception from the mainstream Mīmāṃsā).

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, IV.1.2.

<sup>162</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, "Sambandhākṣepa-parihāra", 101-7.

<sup>163</sup> Clooney, *op.cit.*, p.211.

<sup>164</sup> *Karmaprayogeṇa phalaṃ bhāvayet. Śabara-bhāṣya on Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, XI.1.20.

<sup>165</sup> *Śloka-vārtika*, "Sambandhākṣepa-parihāra", 94-6.

Mīmāṃsā's venture into an area previously unknown to it, the area of metaphysical speculation, resulted in a number of compromises and inconsistencies. That gave its rivals enough opportunities to criticize it. Mīmāṃsā's embrace of *mokṣa* was later paralleled in its attempt to court theism which is clear from Laugākṣi Bhāskara's and even Kumārila's use of salutations to God at the beginning of their works, despite the tremendous effort of the early Mīmāṃsā to demolish the concept of God as creator. Both developments seem to be quite artificial and inconsistent with the spirit of the original Mīmāṃsā.