CHAPTER XII
PURVA-MīMĀŚĀ

The distinguishing feature of this system, as compared with the others so far considered, is its adherence to the Veda as in itself an infallible authority. We have seen systems like Jainism refusing altogether to recognize its authority and others like the Nyāya attempting to subordinate it to some other. The Mīmāṁsā differs from them all in that it places the Veda or śruti on a footing peculiarly its own. As to the exact place it assigns to reason, we have to refer the reader to what was stated in an earlier chapter (pp. 180-2). It will suffice now to observe that though thus authoritative in its own right, revealed truth comes to us through the medium of words whose interpretation is by no means easy. Hence the need for mīmāṁsā or the investigation of the principles according to which the texts enshrining that truth are to be interpreted.¹ It is only when thus assisted by reason that the Veda will disclose its true import. The primary aim of the Mīmāṁsā as a branch of learning may, therefore, be described as getting back from the expression to the idea behind it, the solving of the important problem of the relation of speech and thought. Since the view taken of language here is that it is independent of the individual using it,² the system involves a great deal of discussion relating to social or folk psychology. This psychological inquiry contains much that is valuable for the modern science of Semantics or the branch of knowledge dealing with meaning in relation to linguistic forms. The Mīmāṁsā in this respect serves as a necessary complement to Vyākaraṇa or Grammar, whose treatment of words is mainly formal. The indirect advantage thus resulting to psychology and philology, forms one of the most important

¹ See e.g. PP. p. 104. Mīmāṁsā is viewed as a form of tārka, since it assists a pramāṇa. Cf. Note 1 on p. 182.
² Compare SD. Sabda-sādhutve hi prayoga-paravaśā vayam na svayam īśmahe (p. 122). Yathā-lokam ca sabdārthāvadhāraṇam na yatheccham (p. 127).
features of the study of Māṁsā. The laws of interpretation formulated by Jaimini and his successors are quite general, and they are applicable as much to works outside the Veda as to that ancient text. They have, in fact, become widely current and are utilized for arriving at a right interpretation of all old texts, particularly legal treatises (dharma-sāstra).

Speaking generally, we may say that the Māṁsā attaches greater importance to the Brāhmaṇas than to the Mantras, which means that it looks upon the Veda as essentially a book of ritual. It not only subordinates the earlier Mantras, but also the later Upaniṣads. Its designation as Pūrva-māṁsā has reference to this latter phase, viz. its being concerned with the teaching of those portions of the Veda that come before the Upaniṣads, the darśana dealing with the latter being termed Uttara-māṁsā. The sacrificial inquiry which forms the main subject-matter of the Māṁsā is, no doubt, very old. It is the chief purpose of the Śrouta-sūtras and is found even in the Brāhmaṇas. Doubts and discussions regarding ritual are but natural, especially when once the stage of its inception is passed. The Māṁsā only extends the scope of the inquiry and makes it more systematic. We must not understand from this that it deals with sacrifices precisely as taught in the Brāhmaṇas. Separated as it must have been in its origin from the Brāhmaṇas by several generations, the Māṁsā marks both growth and decay in its conception of ritual. It does, as a matter of fact, reinterpret and in reinterpreting considerably modify the old system of rites. The doctrine as known to us also exhibits a far more important change, viz. the subordination of the idea of sacrifice itself to that of the attainment of mokṣa. The aim of life as originally conceived was, to state it in general terms, the attainment of heaven (svarga). The replacement of this aim by the ideal of mokṣa points to a radical transformation of the doctrine. By it, the Māṁsā ceases to be a mere commentary on Vedic ritual and becomes a darśana. It is therefore in its present form vastly different from what its other name, Karma-nāṁsā, may suggest. The emphasis that it lays on the performance of rites, so far as that emphasis is still preserved, has now in effect become
quite secondary. This important change should have been brought about by a desire on the part of the later exponents of the Mīmāṃsā to bring it into line with the other systems of thought and not allow it to remain a mere liturgical discussion bearing upon rites which probably had by that time become more or less defunct. The change has not taken place in the Kalpa-sūtras, if we leave out the few references to self-realization (ātma-lābha) in them; but it is clearly seen in Upavarṣa and Śabaravāmin, early commentators on the Sūtra of Jaimini, and is very common in their successors. The darśana aspect of it is, therefore, comparatively late. The speculative spirit underlying it is not new to the Veda as a whole, for it is found in the Upaniṣads and in the allegorical interpretations of rites sometimes given in the Brāhmaṇas themselves. But the special type of philosophic theory which it now represents follows quite other lines. It is not derived from the philosophy of the Mantras; neither does it continue Upaniṣadic speculation. It is traceable to sources other than the Veda and is therefore neither a religion of nature nor a philosophy of the Absolute. Some of its minor tenets may be allied to what is found in the philosophic portions of the Veda; but, strange as it may seem, the larger part of them and the more important among them have, as we shall see, been borrowed from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. The spirit of the Brāhmaṇas was to supersede the simple nature-worship of the Mantras; the spirit of the fully developed Mīmāṃsā is to supersede ritualism as taught in the Brāhmaṇas and later systematized in the Śrouta-sūtras. But the supersession in neither stage is complete, so that the Mīmāṃsā as now known is an admixture of the rational and the dogmatic, the natural and the supernatural and the orthodox and the heterodox. It is with the darśana aspect of the system that we shall deal here and not with its ritualistic theories or its exegetical principles.

The main source of authority in regard to this system is Jaimini’s Mīmāṃsā-sūtra. Its date, as in the case of the other philosophical Sutras, is quite indefinite; but it is commonly believed now to have been the earliest of them all and assigned

1 See Note 1 on p. 93.
to about 200 A.D. The system of thought itself, however, is much older, references to it being found in such early works as the Dharma-sūtras\(^1\) and possibly also in the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali (150 B.C.).\(^2\) The sūtras are considerably over 2,500 in number and are divided into twelve chapters with sixty sub-sections in all. There are nearly a thousand topics discussed so that the work is by far the biggest of the philosophical Sūtras. Like the others of its class the work when read by itself is for the most part unintelligible, and the aid of a commentary which preserves the traditional interpretation is indispensable for understanding it. Such an aid we have in the bhasya of Śabaravāmin, who wrote it probably about 400 A.D. Tradition fondly associates Śabara with King Vikramāditya, who is supposed to have lived in the first century B.C., but there seems to be no truth in it. There was at least one earlier commentary on the work by Upavarsa (A.D. 350), but nothing of it is known to us, except a possible extract from it in Śabara’s bhasya.\(^3\) The bhasya has been explained in two ways by Prabhākara (A.D. 650) and Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (A.D. 700), who differ from each other in certain essential respects. Prabhākara’s ‘great commentary’ known as the Bhṛhatī is yet in manuscript, except for a small fragment which has been published; and the same is the case with the Rju-vimalā, commentary upon it by Sālikanātha, believed to have been a pupil of Prabhākara. The views of the school have therefore to be gathered from the Prakaraṇa-paṅcikā of the latter, which also has unfortunately not been recovered completely. Bhavanātha was another influential writer of the school with his yet unpublished Naya-viveka.

As regards the second school, which for a long time has practically superseded the first, we have adequate material for reference. Kumārila’s own huge and important work is fully printed and consists of a general or philosophical part called the Sloka-vārtika and two others—Tantra-vārtika and Tūp-ṭikā. The first of these has been commented upon in a most lucid manner by Pārthasārathī Miśra in his Nyāya-ratnākara. Maṇḍana Miśra, probably a pupil of Kumārila,

1 See Prof. Keith: Karma-mimāṃsā, p. 2.
2 Cf. IV. i. 14.
3 I. i. 5.
was a famous thinker who has to his credit many works on
the Mīmāṃsā like the Vidhi-viveka and the Bhāvanā-viveka. Several other works of this school are also known, amongst which we may note Pārthasārathi's Sāstra-dīpikā, Mādhava's Nyāya-mālā-vistara (A.D. 1350) and Khaṇḍadeva's Bhāṭṭā-
dīpikā (A.D. 1650). These follow in their explanation the
order of the sūtras of Jaimini. Several independent treatises
also are known which serve as useful manuals on the ritual-
istic or the interpretative side of the system. Such is the
Mīmāṃsā-nyāya-prakāśa of Āpadeva (A.D. 1650) and a
digest—or, according to some, the chief basis1 of it—by
Laugākṣi Bhāskara, the Artha-samgraha. Another work which
deals with the philosophic teaching of the school of Kumārila
or the Bhaṭṭa school, as it is termed, is the Māna-meyodaya.
It has come to light only latterly and is the composition of
two writers who lived about the sixteenth century A.D. Our
 treatment of the system will be general; but wherever there
are important divergences between the two schools from the
philosophical view-point, we shall notice them. The chrono-
logical relation of these schools is yet a matter of dispute;
but, speaking on the whole, the Prabhākara school seems to
be the older and to preserve better the distinctive lineaments
of the original Mīmāṃsā or at least to be nearer in spirit to it
than the other.2

I

The conception of ātman is somewhat different in the two
schools, but both agree regarding its plurality. To consider
first the school of Kumārila: The view is very much like the
Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika one and ātman is conceived as both an
agent (karta) and an enjoyer (bhokta). But while the Nyāya-
Vaiśeṣika admits no action in the self—neither change of
place (spanda), nor change of form (parināma)—here though
the former is denied, the latter is admitted.3 That is, the
system recognizes the possibility of modal change in the
self. Though undergoing modifications it is regarded as

22-3. 2 Prof. Keith, op. cit., pp. 9-10. 3 SV. p. 707, st. 74.
eternal, for Kumārila rejects the view that even internal change militates against permanence. Experience acquaints us daily with many things that change almost constantly, but yet maintain their identity. Jñāna or knowledge is a mode of the self. It is described as an act (kriyā) or process (vyāpāra) and is naturally spoken of as supersensible, since it is found in so ethereal a 'substance' as the self. This change or disturbance which takes place in the ātman brings about a certain relation with the object known. The self, being by hypothesis omnipresent, is necessarily in relation with all existent objects; but that relation is not the same as the one we are now considering. If it were, jñāna would arise in respect of all objects as long as they existed. The relation resulting from jñāna is unique and is described as 'comprehension' (vyāpār-vyāpyatva). The act or process of jñāna is viewed as transitive so that its result (phala) has to be sought in something other than where it manifests itself. The act of cooking, for example, is seen in the agent, but its result—'softness' (vikleda)—is found in the material cooked, viz. the rice-grain. The former is the subject; and the latter, the object. When jñāna arises in the self relating it to an object, the latter is affected in a particular way so that experience is not wholly a subjective modification, but has also an objective modification corresponding to it. The object becomes 'illumined' (prakāśa-viśiṣṭa) thereby; and its being thus illuminated or made known (prākatya or jñātatā) serves as the means for our concluding that jñāna must have arisen in the self previously. The arising of jñāna is thus only to be inferred. While it can reveal other objects, it has no power to manifest itself. Though knowable, jñāna is conceived here as known indirectly through inference and not directly through introspection as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika (p. 251). The new feature of being illuminated which characterizes the object, as a consequence of jñāna arising in respect of it, may mean that it is known mediately or immediately. According to this double nature of the result, jñāna is either mediate (parokṣa) or immediate (pratyakṣa).

The proximate cause of perception which leads to direct

1 SD. pp. 56–7.
knowledge (viśadāvabhāsa) is the contact of the senses with their respective objects. The knowledge that we so get is in the first instance quite vague and indefinite and is named ālocana as in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga (p. 285). It gains clarity and definiteness only afterwards. The earlier stage in this process is described as 'indeterminate' (nirvikalpaka); and the later, 'determinate' (savikalpaka).\(^1\) The conception of the two stages here is therefore different from that in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Another important divergence from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is that the nirvikalpaka here is not merely a theoretical supposition which, beyond explaining the savikalpaka, serves no practical purpose (p. 251). It is quite useful and the Mīmāṁsaka admits that activity may be, and actually is, based upon it. Children and animals whose mental growth is incomplete or imperfect act only under the promptings of this primitive stage of perception and even elderly people do the same when in a flurry.\(^2\) That is, the nirvikalpaka is not here a mere hypothesis formulated to account for some known phase of experience, but is a part of normal experience itself. Like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Mīmāṁsā also recognizes manas as a sense (indriya) in addition to the five admitted by all and its co-operation is laid down as indispensable for all jñāna. Regarding the structural character of the senses also, there is a general agreement—the first four senses of sight, flavour, odour and touch being taken as derived from the elements whose distinctive qualities are their respective objects. In the case of the manas, the view is that it may or may not be derived from the elements (bhūtas). As regards the remaining sense, viz. that of sound, the school, relying on the Vedic statement that 'the organ of hearing proceeds from dik,'\(^3\) makes it delimited space (dik)\(^4\) and does not connect it with ākāśa. The senses including the manas, with or without contact with objects according as the knowledge is immediate or mediate, furnish the external conditions which induce

1 SD. pp. 36 and 40.
2 SD. p. 40 (com.). The reference to the behaviour of animals and children is noteworthy.
3 Mundaka Up. II. i. 4.
4 See SD. p. 36.
change in the self constituting knowledge; and it is the dis-
sociation once for all from them in mokṣa that will set the
self free as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

So far we have taken into consideration the waking state. More or less the same description applies to dream also; only the co-operation of the five external organs of sense is there withdrawn. In regard to sleep (suṣupti), Kumārila holds a somewhat peculiar view. He admits of course that the self endures in it as other Indian thinkers generally do; but in consonance with his view of knowledge, he regards the self as characterized then by the potency to know (jñāna-śakti). In this, he differs from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, which denies jñāna in every form to the self in sleep. He also dissents from the Upaniṣads because he recognizes no happiness then. The later reminiscence of happiness to which the Vedāntin pointedly draws our attention (p. 72), Kumārila explains negatively—as due to the absence at the time of all consciousness of pain. If the self were really in the enjoyment of the highest bliss then, it would be impossible, he says, to explain the feeling of regret which a person feels afterwards if he comes to know that by going to sleep he has missed some common pleasure.¹

There is one other point to which we must allude before we leave this part of the subject and it is the way in which, according to Kumārila, we become aware of our own self. It is known directly through the aham-pratyaya or the 'I-notion' as we may render it.² This forms an important point in the teaching and requires explanation. Kumārila understands ‘self-consciousness’ literally and holds that the self can at once be both subject and object—the knower as well as the known (jada-bodhātmaka) and adduces as evidence therefor the common saying: ‘I know myself.’³

Ascribing such an apparently contradictory character to the self is quite in harmony with the ruling principle of his thought, which, as we shall see, is that the nature of things cannot

¹ SD. p. 124.
² Ibid., p. 122.
³ This saying is to be viewed as only partially representing experience as it actually occurs, for it necessarily includes a reference to an object (say, a ‘jar’) other than the self which is left out here.
be rigidly determined as such and such (bhedābheda-vāda). In a sample of knowledge like ‘I know the jar.’ there are two elements—one comprehending the self (aham-vṛtti) and the other comprehending the object in question (e.g. ghaṭa-vṛtti). That is, self-awareness is constant and accompanies all states of consciousness, being absent only in deep sleep where no object is known. When we say that the self is thus known in all experience, we must not take it to mean that it is known as the subject in the act of knowing. The fact of knowing is itself not known at the time and has, as already pointed out, to be inferred later. We cannot, therefore, know the self then as characterized by or as owning such knowledge, which is what is meant by the term ‘subject.’ But yet the self cannot be unknown, for that would go against the felt personal identity in all one’s experience. It is therefore explained as being known then as the object of the ‘I-notion.’

If we take this along with the view that the self to be known at all must at the time become aware of some object or other, we see that self-consciousness, according to Kumārila, implies not only an internal difference—a self which is opposed to itself as its object, but also an external difference—a self which is distinguished from the not-self.

Prabhākara disagrees with Kumārila in two important respects in his view of the self, and in both he sides with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Not believing in pariṇāma, he does not admit that the self suffers change. Again he objects to the description of the self as ‘knowable,’ and avers that agent and object can never be the same in any act. It is only objects that are knowable. The self, on the other hand, is a subject and is revealed as such in all jñāṇa. If it were not so revealed simultaneously with the object, one’s jñāṇa would be indistinguishable from another’s. From this, it should not be thought that the ātman is self-luminous. It is wholly non-sentient (jaḍa), and therefore requires for its revelation the presence of some knowledge to which the character of self-luminousness is assigned. Though thus dependent upon an aid the self, to be realized, does not require a separate

1 SD. p. 101.  
2 See PP. chap. viii, especially pp. 152 ff.  
3 PP. p. 51.
mental act, it being manifest equally whenever any object is known. The word which the Prābhākaras use for knowledge or experience is saṃvit which, being self-luminous (sva-prakāśa), needs nothing else to make it manifest. Though ultimate in this sense, it is not eternal. It appears and disappears; and, as it does so, reveals both the object and the self simultaneously with itself. This triple revelation is what is described as tripuṭi-jñāna. So far as other psychological details are concerned, it will suffice to remark that there is a still closer approximation here to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika than in the previous school.

II

The main object of the Mīmāṁsaka is to establish the authority of the Veda; but he does not like to do so solely on dogmatic considerations and therefore tries to seek rational grounds for it. He contends that his system does not consist merely in delivering settled judgments (upadeśa-śāstra), but is a reasoned inquiry (parikṣa-śāstra).¹ The very classification by him of revelation along with perception and inference under pramāṇa shows it. The testimony of the Veda is but a particular means of knowing truth; and whatever value there is in it, the Mīmāṁsaka holds, is due to its being a pramāṇa like perception or inference. It is thus that he enters the arena of logic; and, though he may not be a rationalist in the full sense of the term, he cannot at the same time be described as a mere dogmatizer.

The system starts by postulating what is called the svatah-pramāṇya or the self-validity of knowledge (p. 260) both in respect of its origin (utpattau) and ascertainment (jñāptau).² If \(a\), \(b\), and \(c\) (say) account for the genesis of knowledge, those causes themselves explain its validity also. Similarly the validity of knowledge is known when the knowledge itself is known; and no additional means is required therefor. All knowledge is presumably valid and an explanation is called

¹ See SD. p. 18 and cf. Jaimini-sūtra. I. i. 3.
² SD. pp. 19–23 and 48–50; PP. ch. iv.
for only where any particular knowledge fails to be so. We proceed to act always on the supposition that the knowledge we get is true; but if any part of it is discovered to be not so, we seek for the cause of its invalidity in extraneous circumstances that must have interfered with the free functioning of this means. The cause of invalidity is some defect in the means or source of knowledge (karaṇa-doṣa). Thus a person may think that he sees a particular thing, silver, while it is only shell because his eyesight is defective. This is how wrong knowledge arises. It is found out by its incompatibility with subsequent experience (bādhaka-pratyaya). When the person, who fancies that he sees a serpent, at a distance, approaches it and discovers it to be a rope, he concludes that his previous knowledge was erroneous. While thus the Mīmāṃsā agrees with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in its view of the invalidity of knowledge (aprāmāṇya), it disagrees with it in respect of the view it takes of its validity (prāmāṇya). The chief reason for the disagreement is the disaccord between the nature of truth as defined in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the manner in which it proposes to verify it. Truth is stated to be correspondence with reality, but the test does not, indeed cannot, ascertain that correspondence. So the doctrine proposes an indirect test—fruitful activity (saṁvādi-pravṛtti). What serves as the test is thus really another experience—that of thirst being quenched, to cite the example already given. Now this second experience cannot validate the first without itself being similarly validated; and setting about verifying it would only mean going on ad infinitum. Even supposing that this second experience needs no verification, it cannot vouch for the presence of a corresponding reality outside knowledge. A person may dream of water and also of quenching his thirst by drinking it. There is fruitful activity here; but no objective counterpart. What the test actually finds out is only whether two experiences cohere, and to accept such a test as adequate is virtually to give up the realistic position because the supposed correspondence with reality is left wholly unverified. Thus we see that though the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika starts as realism, it fails to maintain its position in the solution of what is one of the crucial problems
of philosophy—that of truth and error. The fact is that a realistic doctrine cannot adhere to the view that validity is determined ab extra (parataḥ-pramāṇa). That is why the Mīmāṃsā, which likewise upholds realism, advocates the opposite view of svataḥ-pramāṇa and, by presuming all knowledge to be valid, normally dispenses with the need for testing it.

We may now point out the bearing of such a view of pramāṇa upon the authority of the Veda which is of paramount importance to the Mīmāṃsaka. Neither the circumstance that renders knowledge invalid nor that which leads to its discovery exists in the case of the Veda. There can be no flaw at the source (karaṇa-doṣa); for the source in the case of verbal testimony is the speaker or writer, and the Veda, according to the Mīmāṃsaka, is self-existent and has had no author at all (apauruṣeya). Nor is there the possibility of its coming into conflict with perceptual or other form of common experience, for what it teaches refers, by hypothesis, only to matters beyond this life and is therefore empirically unverifiable (p. 180). We may think that though not contradicting common experience, the Veda may be discrepant with itself by teaching one thing here and another there. But no such discrepancy will be found, it is maintained, if we properly understand the Veda. It is in determining what a proper understanding of it is that the rules of interpretation, to which we referred above, are laid down. This view, which is peculiar to the Mīmāṃsā, requires further elucidation.

The Veda here stands for a form of uttered words and it is in this sense that the Mīmāṃsaka holds it to be self-existent. He bases his view mainly upon the following considerations:

1. The relation between a word and its meaning is natural and therefore necessary and eternal. We ought not to think that things were there already before they were named. The word and the thing it names go together and it is impossible to think of either as having had a beginning in time.¹ But we must carefully note what in this view is meant by the terms ‘word’ and ‘thing.’ In order to know the character of the

¹ SD. pp. 90–7 and 116–17. See also p. 44, com.
former, it is necessary to distinguish first between varṇa and dhvani. A varṇa is an articulate sound. It is conceived as integral (niravayava) and omnipresent (sarva-gata) and therefore also eternal (nitya). That a varṇa can be uttered several times or in several ways does not mean that there are as many particular cases of it with a universal running through them. What thus diversify it are its accidental features; and, however much they may change, a varṇa remains the same. One of the important arguments adduced in support of its permanence is the ready recognition we have when the same varṇa is uttered more than once, which implies that all those utterances refer but to an identical thing. We say for example that the a-sound is uttered ten times and not that ten a-sounds are uttered. If they did not refer to the same the recognition would have to be explained—without adequate reason for doing so—as an illusion, no identity being possible between the fleeting utterances themselves. The latter, viz. dhvani, is viewed as the means of manifesting the varṇa which has all along been there; and it may be compared to the written symbol, the chief difference being that, when there are several varṇas, we have a temporal series of utterances in the one case, but a spatial series of written signs in the other. The variety of ways in which a varṇa may be uttered, as e.g. with different stresses, is explained as due to differences in this means of utterance. The nature of dhvani is explained in alternative ways, but we need not enter here into a discussion of such details. It is enough for our purpose to regard it as 'tone' which, as the means of revealing varṇas, must be different from them. It is also transient and limited to the place where it is heard. A 'word' (śabda) is two or more of these varṇas, and is regarded as merely an aggregate (samudāya) and not as a whole (avayavin) distinguishable from each of its constituent parts and from all of them. But yet the necessity is recognized in the case of every word for the varṇas in it occurring in a specific order; for otherwise words like dīna ('pitiful') and nadi ('river'), which consist of the same varṇas but placed in a different order, would not differ in their connotation. This order, however, can refer only to their manifestation.
and not to the varṇas themselves which are, by hypothesis, present everywhere and at all times. Their gradual or progressive utterance does not interfere with the unity of the word as the perceptual process, for instance, which also is gradual, does not affect the unity of an object like a tree when it is seen. As regards the 'things' signified by words, we are not to understand the particular facts of experience which come into being and disappear, but the corresponding universals which are eternal and of which the passing individuals are nothing more than signs. That is, the significance of the word is general though, when associated with other words to form a sentence, it may come to denote a particular. The word and the meaning being both eternal, the relation between them also is necessarily so. It does not follow from this that the Mimāṃsaka rejects the conventional element in language. He only assigns a subordinate place (sahakārī) to it though a necessary one, the purpose it serves being illustrated by that of light in seeing. If the conventional element were not admitted, tuition or instruction regarding the meanings of words by one who is already familiar with them, which is known to be necessary for learning a language, would become superfluous. The problem discussed here is a philological one and the solution reached is that language is not a creation of the human or even of the divine mind—the former being the view held in modern and the latter, in ancient Nyāya—but a natural phenomenon. In holding such a view, the Mimāṃsā resembles the older school of modern philologists, which maintained that philology was a natural science.

(2) The permanence of the relation between a word and its meaning, even though it be granted, does not establish the

1 The meaning of proper names is regarded as due to mere convention (See PP. pp. 135-6 and SV. p. 674, st. 120). But even here the connotation is general, e.g. 'Devadatta' means not the person so named in any particular stage of life but the individual who, in spite of minor changes, endures throughout life. Cf. Mammaṭa's Kāvyaprakāśa, ii, 8.
2 SD. p. 91.
3 SM. p. 361.
4 It is social also in so far as it involves a conventional element. The diversity of existing languages is explained as the result of corruption in an original ideal speech. That is to put the cart before the horse.
eternity of the Veda. It merely serves as a negative aid to it by precluding the conclusion which one may draw at once that whatever is verbal in form must necessarily have had an origin in time. The Veda consists of words, and so far it is like any other literary work. If the permanence of the word and meaning constituted the criterion of eternity, all literary works, in fact all uttered statements, would alike be eternal. If the Veda alone is so and not other works also, it should be traced to some unique feature it possesses; and such a feature, it is said, is the particular order (ānupūrvi) in which the several words occur in it. When the Mīmāṃsaka states that the Veda is eternal, it is this permanence of the text that he means. He views the Veda as produced by no author—human or divine; and he maintains that it has been preserved intact during a beginningless period by being handed down from teacher to pupil with scrupulous care.¹ This belief is based on the circumstance that tradition, though going back to a far-distant antiquity, has throughout been silent in regard to the authorship of the Veda, while in the case of even very ancient works—like those of Buddha or the Mahābhārata—mention is made of some author or other. While the order of the words in those works was determined by their authors, it is self-determined in the Veda. This argument again, granting that tradition is really silent on the authorship of the Veda, is negative and can lead to nothing that is decisive.

Thus the Mīmāṃsaka doctrine of the fixity of the Vedic text rests upon a certain view of language it takes and upon the supposed absence of all reference in long-standing tradition to its having been composed by one or more authors. In neither case, it is clear, is the premise adequate to support the important conclusion that is drawn from it. The belief in its present form is therefore nothing more than a dogma. This ‘idolatry of scripture’ appears comparatively late and seems to have been arrived at by extending to the form of the Veda what was once taken to hold good of its content. The truth concealed under this purely scholastic view, therefore, is that the Veda embodies eternal verities. In the case of

¹ Jaimini-sūtra. I. i. 27–32.
smṛtis, as distinguished from the śruti, it is even now held that this content constitutes the truth revealed, though an attempt is made, under the influence of views similar to the one we are now considering, to trace it (p. 91) eventually to some śruti which is no longer extant. In this connection it is instructive to cite the opinion of the grammarian Patañjali of the second century B.C., that while the sense of the Veda is eternal the order of the words in it is not so. 'Is it not said that the Vedas were not composed—but are eternal? Quite so; but it is their sense that is so, not the order of the syllables in them.'

Coming now to the Mīmāṁsaka theory of knowledge, we have to note that it is realistic, both according to Kumārila and Prabhākara; and there is no knowledge which does not point to a corresponding object outside it. But all knowledge is here presumed to be true, according to the theory of self-validity and verification becomes necessary only when any doubt is cast upon its validity. The one kind of knowledge that does not come under this description is memory. According to the Bhāṭṭas, recollection is not valid for novelty is a necessary condition of validity. Truth should not only be not contradicted by subsequent knowledge (abādhita); it should also point to something not hitherto known (anadhi-gata). Prabhākara does not accept this condition, for all experience (anubhūti)—whether the object be already known or not—is valid for him. Even the so-called error, as we shall immediately see, satisfies this requirement. But he also differentiates recollection from anubhūti, for it is not experience in the primary sense of the term, being dependent upon a former one (sāpekṣa). If all experience by its very nature is valid, it may be asked how error arises at all. Kumārila and Prabhākara differ considerably in their answers to this question and their explanations are known respectively as viparita-khyāti and akhyāti. It would be better to begin with a description of the latter and then contrast the former with it.

(i) Akhyāti.—The word khyāti means 'knowledge' and

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1 IV. iii. 101. 2 See e.g. SV. p. 217, st. 3; PP. iv. 66. 3 SD. p. 45; SV. p. 431, st. 104–6. 4 PP. pp. 42–3. 127.
the term akhyāti, which is literally equivalent to 'no knowledge,' is applied to Prabhākara's theory to indicate that error, according to it, is not a unit of knowledge, but a composite of two jñānas.\(^1\) When shell is mistaken for silver and we say to ourselves, 'This is silver,' the 'this' is actually perceived as also certain features of the shell which it possesses in common with silver. The knowledge of those features revives in our mind the impression of a former experience and we recollect silver. The so-called error here really consists of these two jñānas—perception immediately followed by memory. Of these the first is true so far as it goes, though it may not go sufficiently far. Its object 'this' is not sublated afterwards since, even when the error is discovered, we feel 'This is shell.' The same, no doubt, cannot be said of the second jñāna because its object, silver, is not found in the given context. But in this it only exhibits its normal character; for it is memory—although we at the time lose sight of that fact (smṛti-pramoṣa)\(^2\)—and does not as such signify that the object is present then. That is, the former knowledge claims to be valid and the claim is justified; the latter does not put forward any such claim at all. Indeed, Prabhākara does not admit that knowledge can ever play false to its logical nature; and there is consequently no error, according to him, in the common acceptance of the term. In what passes for error, we overlook the fact that there are two jñānas;\(^3\) and, as a natural consequence, we also fail to notice the separateness of their respective objects. This failure to know, however, cannot by itself account for the 'error'; because, if it did, errors would occur in dreamless sleep,\(^4\) which also is characterized by absence of knowledge. The negative factor of failure is therefore viewed as operating

\(^1\) Strictly this should be 'saṃvit.' But to secure uniformity of terminology in considering this topic of truth and error in the two schools, we use 'jñāna.'

\(^2\) Dreams, according to Prabhākara, are memory without the consciousness at the time that they are so. See NM. p. 179.

\(^3\) Recognition likewise partakes of the character of both perception and memory, but one is aware at the time of the recollective element there. It is therefore different from the instance we are considering. See SD. p. 45.

\(^4\) PP, iv. st. 5.
in giving rise to error with a positive one to which we have already referred, viz. the perception of the 'this' as characterized by the features that are common to shell and silver. We may therefore describe what is commonly supposed to be error as partial or incomplete knowledge; only in so doing we must be careful to remember that there is no single unit of knowledge to which that term is applicable. To take another instance: A white crystal placed by the side of a red flower may be wrongly regarded as a red crystal. There also we have two jñānas, viz. the perception of the crystal minus its true colour and the sensation of the redness alone of the flower. Each of these jñānas is quite valid so far as it goes; only here both the jñānas are derived through the senses. As before they convey a partial knowledge of the objects, viz. the crystal and the flower; but the basis of error here lies in the contiguity of the objects, not in their similarity as in the previous example. Further, there are two objects bodily given here instead of one and the features comprehended are what characterize them singly and not their common ones. But the distinction between the two jñānas as well as that between their objects is not as before grasped and we are therefore said to fall into error. Here also the akhyāti view lays down two conditions—one positive and the other negative for error becoming possible at all—a partial knowledge of the things presented and a failure to note the distinction between them.¹

(2) Viparita-khyāti.²—Kumārila also maintains that knowledge always points to an object beyond itself. In shell-silver, for instance, there is something directly given, viz. the 'this'; but the silver is not so given. Yet it should not on that account be taken as ideal or non-existent, for its notion, being due to the suggestion of a former experience, goes back eventually to an objective counterpart. This view, like the previous one, splits up the object of erroneous knowledge into two parts—the 'this' (viṣaya) and the 'what' (parakāra) —and explains them separately. The first of them as before is not sublated when the mistake is rectified; and the

¹ Compare the earlier Sāṇkhya view of error, set forth in the previous chapter.
explanation of the second element also is practically the same as before. Though not given here and now, the silver must have been experienced before; for otherwise it could not at all have been fancied in the shell. The difference between the two views is that while, according to akhyāti, error is due to a losing sight of the fact that the presentative and the representative factors stand apart unrelated (asamsargāgraha), here in viparīta-khyāti it is ascribed to a wrong synthesis of them (samsarga-graha). In the former case error, so far as that term is applicable at all, is due to omission because it only fails to grasp some relevant part of what is given. Hence its discovery, when it takes place, does not mean the discarding of any feature previously cognized. In the latter, the error becomes one of commission, for it includes as its content more than there is warrant for in the reality that is presented. In other words, illusion is here explained as unitary knowledge instead of as two jñānas. The subject and predicate elements consequently seem related in it, while they are not so in reality. Similarly in the case of the red crystal, the two relata, viz. the crystal and the redness, are actually given; but while they are not unified in fact, they appear so in error. As a consequence the redness of the flower, instead of standing apart, shows itself in the crystal and makes it appear differently (viparīta) from what it is.¹ This view is no doubt more in accord than the previous one with experience which points to the object of illusion as a synthetic whole, but epistemologically it presents a difficulty, viz. the inclusion of an ideal element within the content of knowledge. However unconvincing the akhyāti view may be, it is true to its realistic postulate in admitting no subjective element whatsoever. Knowledge may not be adequate to the given reality, but it never goes

¹ This, by the way, accounts for the name viparīta-khyāti, which literally means 'appears as other.' See SV. p. 245, st. 117 and p. 312, st. 160 (com.). The Bhatta view is commonly identified with the Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika one. There is no doubt much that is common between the two, but there are differences in matters of detail. The Bhaṭṭas do not, for example, recognize what is known as alaukika-pratyakṣa which is essential to the Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika explanation of errors like 'shell-silver.'
beyond it. Here, on the other hand, it overshoots the mark.\footnote{Compare the later Sānkhya view of error as stated on p. 291 ante.}

That is, error is partial misrepresentation; and to admit that knowledge can misrepresent its object, even though it be only in part, is to abandon to that extent the realistic principle on which the doctrine claims itself to be based.

These views of error imply a fundamental contrast between the two schools of Mīmāṃsā in their conception of knowledge. Kumārila recognizes error as such, and it can therefore be easily distinguished from truth. According to Prabhākara, on the other hand, there being truly no error at all the distinction disappears. The distinction, however, being universally recognized must have some basis; and if Prabhākara would explain it, he cannot like Kumārila do so from the purely logical point of view, but has to seek another. The new standpoint he finds in the view he takes of knowledge—that it is essentially a means to an end and that its sole function is to guide action or subserve vyavahāra, as it is said. All knowledge, according to him, prompts activity\footnote{Compare the view of śabda-pramāṇa as stated in PP. pp. 91–94.} and, judged by this fresh criterion of practical utility, truth becomes quite distinguishable from error. Knowledge, no doubt, can never deceive on its logical side; but it may be such as does or does not ‘work.’ In the one case, we have truth; in the other, error. The latter has cognitive value as much as the former, but it lacks practical worth; and when we describe it as error, we only mean this—that it is deceptive in respect of the claim it puts forward to be serviceable.\footnote{PP. iv. st. 37 ff.}

Accordingly when after rectification error yields place to truth, what happens is not any modification of its logical meaning but only the abandonment of the activity that has been prompted by it.\footnote{In cases where error has led to suspension of activity, its discovery will prompt it.} In other words, the effect of the discovery of error is seen on the reactive side of consciousness—not on its receptive side. In viparīta-khyāti also its discovery arrests activity; but that is looked upon as only a further result, the immediate one being a readjustment of
our cognitive attitude towards the object. Any effect this readjustment may have on our volition is only subsequent to it. Kumārila's attitude towards knowledge is thus primarily detached and scientific; that of Prabhākara, pragmatic.

The Mīmāṃsakas of the Bhāṭṭa school recognize six pramāṇas, while those of the other accept only five of them:—

(1) *Perception* (pratyakṣa), which has already been considered.

(2) *Inference* (anumāṇa).—There is a general resemblance here with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, as, for example, in the view taken of inductive generalization (vyāpti). But there are differences also. It will take us too far away from our purpose here to dwell upon them or upon the features distinguishing the views of the two Mīmāṃsā schools in their conception of this pramāṇa.

(3) *Verbal Testimony* (śabda).—The place of this pramāṇa in Mīmāṃsā logic has been indicated already and it now remains to point out one or two of the more important differences between the two schools: The Prābhākaras, unlike the Bhāṭṭas, adhere to what appears to have been the earliest view of śabda as a pramāṇa (p. 178) and equate it with the Veda, explaining other forms of verbal testimony as mere inference (p. 257).

Again a verbal statement, according to Kumārila, may point to an existent something (siddha) or to something that is yet to be accomplished (sādhya). For example, the sentence 'There are fruits in the next room' refers to a fact, while 'Fetch a cow' refers to a task. Though thus admitting the two-fold character of the import of propositions, he restricts it to the sādhya or what is yet to be done, when he comes to speak of the Veda. Prabhākara declines to admit that verbal statements, whether Vedic or not, can ever point merely to existent things and limits their scope to the sādhya, in keeping with the pragmatic view he takes of all knowledge. All utterance should be relevant to some context in practical life and therefore point to an action as its ultimate meaning. What-

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1 SD pp. 72-3; PP. pp. 87 ff.
2 See PP. p. 94.
3 Jaimini-sūtra, I. ii. 1-18.
ever be the difference between the two thinkers in this respect, we see that they agree in holding that action is the final import of the Veda. Assertive propositions found in it, they explain, as fully significant only when construed with an appropriate injunction or prohibition found in the particular context. On this view depends the well-known division of the Veda broadly into two parts, viz. vidhi or ‘injunction’ and artha-vāda or ‘explanatory passage.’ The latter, consisting of statements describing things as they are or were, have accordingly no independent logical status and are to be understood as complementary to what is taught in the other portion, viz. vidhi. As complements of injunctions they commend what is prescribed; as complements of prohibitions, they condemn what is forbidden. ¹

The bearing of this view of scripture on Upaniṣadic statements like Tat tvam asi, which are not injunctive, is that they also are to be construed with reference to some action taught in the Veda—a point to which we shall recur when treating of the Vedānta.

(4) Comparison (upamāna). ²—The Mīmāṃsaka like the Naiyāyika disagrees with the view that this is not an independent pramāṇa and can be brought wholly or partly under one or other of the other pramāṇas. But he conceives it altogether differently from the latter. According to the Nyāya, it may be remembered, this pramāṇa has for its sole object the relation between a word and its meaning learnt under certain conditions (p. 259). Here it is reciprocal similarity that is known through it. When a person who is familiar with the cow (say) casually comes across a gavaya, an animal of the same species, and notices the resemblance of the latter to the former, he discovers that the cow is also similar to the gavaya. It is this second resemblance or, to be

¹ To give the stock illustration: There is in the Yajurveda (II. i. 1) an injunction ‘One should sacrifice a white (animal) to Vāyu,’ and in the same context is seen the assertive proposition ‘Vāyu verily is the swiftest deity.’ The latter is a glorification of Vāyu and is, according to the principle stated above, to be construed with the former. When so construed, it signifies that it is good to offer this sacrifice; for the reward will be speedy.

² SD. pp. 74-6; PP. 110-12.
more exact, the recollected cow characterized by it that is known through upamāṇa. This view, no doubt, renders the pramāṇa liable to be classed under inference. But the Mīmāṃsaka defends his position by pointing out that the basis for inference, viz. a knowledge of inductive relation (vyāpti) is not needed here. The relevant major premise here would signify that if one thing, say B, is similar to another, say A, that other is similar to the first. As giving expression to a general truth, it implies the simultaneous observation of both A and B. But the conditions of upamāṇa do not require it, as even a person who has never seen two similar things together but meets with a cow and thereafter a gavaya in the manner described above is able to arrive at the conclusion in question. A matter of metaphysical importance here is that ‘similarity’ (sādṛṣya) is conceived as dual, the similarity of A to B being distinct from that of B to A.

(5) Presumption (arthāpatti).—This is postulating something to account for what apparently clashes with experience and is therefore in the nature of a hypothesis. We may otherwise state it as rendering explicit what is already implicit in two truths both of which have been properly tested, but which appear mutually incompatible. Thus if we know that Devadatta is alive and do not find him in his house, we conclude that he should be somewhere else. Another example commonly given in this connection is that of a person who, though not eating by day, continues to be healthy and strong, which leads to the conclusion that he should be eating by night. That this is a valid form of discovering the unknown from the known is clear, but it may appear to be only inference. Some like the Naiyāyika therefore class it under anumāṇa, and do not regard it as a distinct pramāṇa. The argument in support of the opposite view is as follows: The result here cannot be represented as reached through inference inasmuch as there is no middle term at all to serve as its means. To take the first of the above examples, ‘being alive’ by itself cannot serve that purpose, for that does not necessarily lead to the conclusion in question viz. that Devadatta is outside his house. He may then as

1 SD. 76-83; PP. pp. 113-18.
well remain in his house as elsewhere. Nor can ‘not being in his house’ by itself take that place, since that reason may equally properly lead to the conclusion that Devadatta is no longer alive. So we are forced to view the middle term as formed by combining both these—‘being alive’ and ‘not being at home.’ But in this combined form it involves a reference to what is to be established through the inference viz. that Devadatta is somewhere outside his house.¹ That is, the conclusion is already included in the middle term which is never the case in inference. We might add another reason: while in inference the ground (‘the fact of smoke’) is explained by the conclusion (‘fire’), here the ground (‘being alive and not being found in the house’) explains the conclusion (‘being elsewhere’).² The truth is that arthāpatti is disjunctive reasoning and is not syllogistic in the ordinary sense of the expression. If we reduce it to the syllogistic form, the major premise will be a negative universal referring to things beyond the universe of discourse; and it therefore ceases to be significant. In this connection it may be stated that, unlike the Naiyāyikas, the Mīmāṃsakas of both the schools reject the negative universal as the major premise in a syllogism. They consider that it can generally be expressed in a positive form. The scope for arthāpatti is just where it cannot be so expressed.

(6) Non-apprehension (anupalabdhi).³—This is the specific pramāṇa by which negation, not nothing, is known, e.g. the absence of a jar or of atoms somewhere. Like the Nyāya (p. 237), the Bhāṭṭa school of Mīmāṃsā admits negative facts (abhāva); but, unlike it (p. 249), it formulates a separate pramāṇa for knowing them. The word anupalabdhi means the ‘absence of apprehension,’ i.e. the absence of knowledge derived through any of the five foregoing pramāṇas. This means that, as knowledge got through any of the pramāṇas points to the existence (bhāva) of objects, the absence of such knowledge indicates, other conditions remaining the same, their non-existence (abhāva). Only it should be remembered that the absence, to serve as the index of non-existence, must be aided by the mental presentation of the

¹ SV. p. 455, st. 19 ff. ² NM. p. 44. ³ SD. pp. 83-7.
relevant object. There may be several objects not found in a particular place; but we think of the absence of that alone among them all, which some other circumstance has made us think of. The Naiyāyika divides 'negations' into two classes according as their correlate (pratiyogin) is perceivable or not. The means of knowing the former kind, he holds, is perception; that of the latter, inference. Here in the Mīmāṃsā, this sixth pramāṇa is postulated as the common means of knowing both varieties of negation. The knowledge of no negation, it is contended, is perceptual. For, in the first place, no sense-contact which is necessary for such knowledge is conceivable in the case of negation. Secondly, there are instances where a knowledge of the negation of perceivable objects arises even when no organ of sense is functioning. Thus a person who did not think of an elephant at all in the morning on a particular day, may later come to realize, owing to some circumstance or other, that he did not see it then. The knowledge, because it refers to the past, cannot be connected with the functioning of the senses at the time of realizing the negation. Nor can it be ascribed to their functioning in the morning, since the correlate (pratiyogin), viz. the elephant, was by hypothesis not thought of then for its negation to be apprehended. Again the pramāṇa by which negation is known cannot be brought under inference; for, if it is, the major premise of the syllogism will be 'Wherever there is absence of knowledge of a thing, there is—other circumstances being the same—absence of the corresponding object.' This premise relates two negations and, as an inductive generalization should eventually be based upon perception, it assumes that their knowledge is perceptual which is against the present contention that it is inference. The Prābhākaras do not admit this pramāṇa, for they do not recognize negation which is its sole object. They explain abhāva in terms of the positive factors involved in it, as we shall see in the next section.

1 SV. p. 479, st. 18. 2 PP. pp. 118–25.
The Mimarhsaka is a realist, and his realism has some features of its own. Unlike the Sautrântika and the Vaibhâsika, for example, he believes in the existence of permanent dravyas which are the substrata of qualities and are not merely aggregates of fleeting sense-data. So far, the doctrine agrees with the Nyâya-Vaiśeṣika. But it differs from that doctrine also—to confine our attention first to the Bhâṭṭa school—in not admitting that a dravya can be produced anew, and recognizing the principle of change instead. Every dravya is eternal, and endures however much its forms or attributes may change. The clay that we see before us may at one time be made into a jar, at another time into a saucer; it may be brown now, and red hereafter. But in all these transformations the same material persists. The dravya endures; its modes alone appear and disappear.¹ In other words, Kumârila dismisses the notion that things are self-identical units which ever remain the same, excluding all difference.² This view of reality exhibits kinship with the Sâṅkhya-Yoga in general. It is pariñâma-vâda, and the relation between the material cause and the effect is, as in the other system, one of identity in difference (bhedâbheda). One important difference between the two doctrines is that here the changing dravyas are ultimately many and not only one. Another difference, by the way, is in that the Mimâmsâ extends the notion of modal transformation to the ātman also which is absolutely static and passive according to the other doctrine. The change that characterizes the physical reality is ever in progress. It never began and is never going to end, the Mimarhsaka recognizing no creation (srṣṭi) or dissolution (pralaya) of the universe as a whole.³ 'There was never a time,' he says, 'when the world was otherwise than now': Na kadâcit anîdṛśam jagat. Individual things, no doubt, come and go; but that is accounted for by the self-evolvent character of reality. Whatever stimulus is required

¹ SV. pp. 443, st. 32–3.  
² Cf. SV. p. 476, st. 12.  
³ SV. p. 673, st. 113.
for such change to take place comes from the past karma of
the selves that are on life’s pilgrimage at the time. This
means the abolition of the idea of God\(^1\) from the system,
which is indeed a strange tenet to be held by a school
claiming to be orthodox *par excellence*. To characterize the
whole view in one word, it is pure empiricism\(^2\) excepting only
in one point, viz. the recognition of a supernatural sphere of
being and of a revealed authority through which a knowledge
of it can be attained. As regards the other sphere—that of
common experience—it beats every naturalistic school of
thought known to history. In fact, a standing charge against
the Mīmāṃsā, at least in one stage of its growth, was that it
was thoroughly materialistic in its outlook.\(^3\)

The Mīmāṃsaka is also a pluralist and believes that variety
is at the root of the physical universe.\(^4\) The school of Kumā-
rilā accepts all the nine dravyas known to the Nyāya-
Vaiśeṣika and its conception of them is more or less the same.
It adds two more to them, viz. tāmas or ‘darkness’ and śabda
or ‘sound.’\(^5\) Time is perceivable,\(^6\) the view being that all
perceptual experience, no matter through what sense it is
acquired, includes a reference to this element. It cannot,
however, be apprehended by itself, but only along with
some other object. Other dravyas also are regarded as
perceivable excepting only the manas which is known
mediately.\(^7\) It is curious that darkness should be regarded
as a positive dravya in preference to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika
view, which is also Prabhākara’s,\(^8\) of equating it with the
absence of light. The reason assigned, viz. that it is character-
ized by colour and movement which can only be found in
dravyas, is too naïve to appeal to anyone. Śālikanātha
describes it as ‘crude.’ The statement that it cannot be nega-
tion (abhāva), since its supposed correlate (pratīyogin),

\(^1\) The gods of Indian mythology also are repudiated, and sacrificial
offerings, it is explained, are made as if there were gods. See p. 36
ante.\(^2\) Cf. Yatha saṁdṛṣṭyate tathā: SV. p. 552, st. 29.

\(^3\) SV. p. 4, st. 10.

\(^5\) *Māṇa-meyodaya*, p. 66.
\(^6\) SD. pp. 45–6.

\(^7\) *Māṇa-meyodaya*, pp. 78–80.
\(^8\) PP. pp. 144 ff.; *Māṇa-meyodaya*, p. 68.
'light,' is not thought of wherever darkness is seen is equally unconvincing. Of these dravyas, the first four as well as darkness are stated to be of atomic structure and the remaining ones, including soul, are described as infinite and ultimate. By 'atom' in this system should not be understood the infinitesimal paramāṇu of the Vaiśeṣika, but the smallest particle which experience acquaints us with, viz. the mote in the sunbeam which corresponds to the tryāṇuṇa of the other doctrine. The Vaiśeṣika conception of atom is described as purely speculative, but it does not seem to be altogether rejected.1 From all the atomic substances, objects of different magnitudes may, as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, be derived; only the relation between the material cause and the effect is here viewed as bhedābheda or tādātmya ('identity in difference'), instead of samavāya (p. 239), in accordance with the Bhāṭṭa belief in sat-kārya-vāda. These dravyas form only the support, as it were, of the universe. There are also other features of it which are divisible into three classes—guna, karma and sāmāṇya or jāti, which together with dravya form the four positive categories of Kumārila's system. But it must be remembered that they are not conceived as entirely distinct from the dravyas to which they belong. The relation between them is one of identity in difference,2 so that the significance of 'category' here is not the same as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. Kumārila's list also includes negation (abhāva), and we therefore have five categories in all.3 The first of them has already been described and it is sufficient for our purpose to state that the notion of the others is for the most part like that in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

The Prābhākaras accept four more positive categories of which we need refer here only to one, viz. samavāya. Its recognition means the entire rejection of the relation of identity in difference (bhedābheda) admitted by the Bhāṭṭas.4 As a consequence substance and attribute, universal and particular, material cause and effect come to be conceived as altogether distinct, and the doctrine does not subscribe to

1 SV. p. 404, st. 183-4. 2 Māna-meyodaya, p. 6. 3 Id. p. 65. 4 PP. p. 27.
the sat-kārya-vāda. This signifies a vast difference between the two schools in their conception of reality. While siding with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in this respect, the Prabhākaraś differ from it in discarding abhāva as an independent category, their view being that it can always be represented as a positive something. Thus the absence of a jar in a room is the mere empty room; its prior negation, the clay; and so forth. Amongst the eight positive categories recognized, the dravyas are nine as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and their conception also is generally the same.

IV

The admixture of the rational with the dogmatic which we noticed in connection with the theoretical teaching of the Mīmāṃśā is equally striking on its practical side. So far as ordinary morality goes, the doctrine adopts a point of view which is severely secular and explains virtue as a conscious or semi-conscious adjustment of conduct to interest. Śabara says that charitable acts like providing water-huts (prapā), though for the benefit of others and therefore good, are not yet dharma. That is, the Mīmāṃśā judges conduct by a utilitarian standard; but it is not egoistic and, as is indicated by the very example given by Śabara, is based upon the realization of the social nature of man. A scheme of morality founded upon such a principle is not without parallels in the history of ethics. But what is peculiar about the Mīmāṃśā is that it refuses such morality the highest place in life's ideal. As in metaphysics, here also it conceives of another sphere of activity whose significance is extra-empirical and confines the title of dharma to it alone. Common morality, according to the Mīmāṃsaka, is purely an empirical affair which none but the short-sighted fail to understand. True spirituality consists in fixing one's attention on dharma or such acts of duty as lead to success in the life beyond. It may appear that such a shifting of the attention from the present life to the coming one will throw morality into the shade and thus tend

1 Cf. SD. pp. 83 ff.  
2 I. iii. 2.
to reduce its value in the eyes of man. It does nothing of the kind. For, as conceived in the Mīmāṃsā, ceremonial life does not exclude common morality; it is, on the other hand, founded in it. ‘The Vedas cleanse not the unrighteous.’

Though not viewed as the highest, ethical purity is regarded as a pre-condition as well as a necessary accompaniment of religious or spiritual life. The few occasions on which the dictates of common morality seem to be neglected, as for example in the immolation of an animal in a rite, are explained as only the exceptions that prove the rule. However unconvincing the explanation given in justification of these acts, it should be admitted that generally the Veda supports conclusions that are ethically quite unexceptionable. In the present case, for instance, it explicitly forbids injury to living beings: Na himsyāt sarvā bhūtāni.

When dharma is understood in this unique sense, it naturally requires an equally unique pramāṇa to make it known (p. 109). That pramāṇa is the Veda. While the standard of judgment for common morality is human, that for dharma is superhuman. ‘We should distinguish,’ Kumārila says, ‘between what relates to dharma and mokṣa which is known from the Veda and what relates to artha and kāma which is learnt by worldly intercourse.’

It is not merely common human experience that is of no avail in knowing dharma and adharma, but also the higher faculty of yogic perception recognized for the purpose in doctrines like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika (p. 262). The single name of apūrva (literally meaning ‘never before’) which Prabhākara gives to dharma and adharma emphasizes their inaccessibility to the other pramāṇas (mānāntarāpūrva). It is conceived by him as the result of sacrificial and such other acts—not those acts themselves as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika—and corresponds to the punya and pāpa of the other doctrine. But it abides like the latter in the self (ātma-samavāyi), so that apūrva is a subjective feature to be distinguished from the objective act leading to it. According to Kumārila these forms of activity

1 Acāra-hinam na punanti Vedāh: Quoted by Śaṅkara in his com. on VS. iii. i. 10.  
2 Jaimini-sūtra, I. i. 2.  
3 Tantra-vārtika, I. iii. 2.  
4 See PP. pp. 187, 195.
are themselves dharma and adharma — the former standing for permitted or obligatory deeds like a sacrifice, the latter for prohibited deeds like drinking or killing an animal; and it is to know what is prescribed or prohibited that we have to seek the aid of the Veda. That is, though there is nothing transcendental about the acts themselves described as dharma and adharma, the fact of their being the means of a supernatural good is not humanly ascertainable. It is from this standpoint that they are represented here as known through revelation and revelation alone.

The Veda reveals dharma, according to both the schools, as the subject of a mandate (vidhi or niyoga) — as something to be accomplished, in accordance with the Mīmāṁsā conclusion that action is the final import of the Veda. But they differ considerably in their view of the motive for obeying that mandate. In fact, this question of the motive has split the Mīmāṁsakas into several camps. It is not necessary to refer to them all. We shall only note the commonly recognized distinction between the two schools. According to the Bhāṭṭas, the Veda not only acquaints us with dharma and adharma, but also specifies the desirable results to be obtained by following the one and abstaining from the other, viz. the attainment of some pleasure or the avoidance of some pain. In the usual example of the jyotistoma sacrifice, it is heaven (svarga) that is held out as the end; in the case of destroying life, it is hell (naraka) against which one is warned. Thus the Bhāṭṭa school, like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika (p. 263), believes that pleasure and pain are the only ultimate motives. ‘Not even the stupid act,’ Kumārila

1 Yāgādireva dharmaḥ: SD. pp. 25-6. The term yāga strictly stands for a certain resolve which is the prelude to the performance of a sacrifice and is explained as tyāga, or, the spirit of renunciation involved in giving away what belongs to oneself. (Cf. the formula ‘no more mine’—na mama—uttered at the time of the offer.) Devatām uḍdiṣya dravya-tyāgo yāgaḥ (Nyāya-mālā-vistara, IV. ii. 27-8). In this sense, dharma would of course be a characteristic of the subject.  
2 See Tantra-rahasya, ch. iv.  
3 For a fuller discussion of this and allied topics, reference may be made to Ethics of the Hindus, by Dr. S. K. Maitra (Calcutta Uni. Pr.).
remarks in a parallel context, 'without some good in view.' But we should not conclude from this that the end is included in the behest and that it commands us either to seek pleasure or to shun pain. The desire for good is already there in man, and the Veda merely admits it as a psychological fact without pronouncing any judgment on the value of pleasure or on the lack of it in pain. In other words, we have here what is described as psychological hedonism and not ethical hedonism. But it should be acknowledged that the injunction, in this view, utilizes subjective desire by appealing to it as the incentive to make itself operative. The Prābhākaraśas demur to the admission of a hedonistic aim as necessary for the Vedic imperative to operate. The Veda, they say, is not so helpless as to need an extraneous aid in enforcing its mandatory power. It neither coaxes nor threatens anyone; and the only motive it presupposes is reverence for the mandate itself. But Vedic injunctions like 'one should sacrifice' (yajeta) do no apply to all. They are addressed only to some, and expressions like 'he that desires heaven' (svarga-kāma) found in them do not point to any benefit to be derived by obeying them, as the Bhāṭtas assume, but only limit the sphere of its applicability by specifying the persons (niyojya) whose duty those injunctions set forth. In the case of any particular injunction, only those will respond who answer to the description contained in it. What prompts them to act is this consciousness that it is their duty to do so (kāryatā-jñāna), and never the prospect of satisfying any desire that they may have (iṣṭa-sādhanatā-jñāna). The good or evil that may result therefrom is accordingly looked upon as a consequence rather than as an end directly aimed at. There is no doubt that the idea of the fruit resulting from ritualistic activity is pushed farther into the background here than in the other school; but for all practical purposes the two views are the same, because both alike admit that an end is attained—no matter what name they give it. The

1 Prayojanam anuddhiśya na mandopi pravartate: SV. p. 653, st. 55.  
2 SV. p. 125, st. 266.  
3 NM. p. 350.  
4 PP. p. 191.  
5 Ibid., pp. 177 and 180.  
6 It is termed here not phala but niyojya-viśeṣaṇa: PP. p. 191.
specially important point to note here is the concern which both the schools exhibit to maintain that it is not of the essence of a command to contain either a promise or a threat and the consequent exclusion from Vedic teaching proper of the idea of recompense, which doubtless constituted originally the sole motive of sacrifices.

We have thus far considered what are termed kāmya and pratiṣiddha karmas or optional and forbidden deeds (p. 108), which constitute the sphere of the hypothetical imperative, and seen that there is practically no difference between the Bhāṭṭas and the Prābhākaras in their attitude towards them. There is, however, an important distinction between the two views and it comes out clearly in the case of the third variety of ‘unconditional duties’ (nitya-karma) like the regular offering of twilight prayers (sandhyā), which after all constitute, as we shall see, the essential part of the discipline of the Mīmāṁsā regarded as a darśana. In accordance with the hedonistic basis of conduct accepted in the Bhāṭṭa school, these duties also are conceived as serving an end, viz. overcoming past sin (durita-kṣaya). Further, by adherence to them, one keeps off the sin (pratyavaya) that is sure to result from their neglect.\(^1\) In neither case does their performance bring any positive gain, but they are not without an aim. According to the other school, such deeds have no consequence whatsoever and are to be performed for their own sake. They are not a means to an end, but are themselves the end.\(^2\) While according to the Bhāṭṭas dharma even in its form of nitya-karmas is only of instrumental value, this school pursues it as the supreme good, regarding it as definitely above artha and kāma or empirical motives taken in their totality. Here we have a conception of duty for duty’s sake, and that in a sense far more rigorous than in the Gītā, since even motives so pure as ‘cleansing the heart’ and ‘subserving the purposes of God’ (p. 125) are excluded and the doing of duty is placed on a basis of absolute disinterestedness. The law governing dharma here may there-

\(^1\) SD. p. 130.
\(^2\) Apūrva, in general, is described as svayam-prayojana-bhūta. See Tantra-rahasya, p. 70.
fore be said to correspond to the ‘categorical imperative’ of Kant. But what, it may be asked, is the penalty, according to the Prābhākaras, if one should disobey such mandates? The reply to this question, we shall state in the words of the *Tantra-rahasya,*¹ one of the few published works of the school:

‘The personal ending such as that of the potential mood (liṅ), you say, teaches apūrva as a duty to be accomplished. In that case one may not set about it, although it is known as a duty, because it serves no end.’

‘Even in respect of optional deeds, which are known to have an end, one may not act. What is to be done? The function of a pramāṇa ceases with the mere revealing of its object.’

‘Well, in the case of the optional deeds, the failure to perform them means missing their fruit and that is the penalty. What is the penalty in the case of unconditional duties?’

‘The Vedic mandate will not then have been carried out.’

‘What of that?’

‘That itself is the punishment, for obeying the Vedic mandate itself is of ultimate value (puruṣārtha). It is on the analogy of these karmas that we say that carrying out the mandate is the true end even in the case of optional deeds and that the attainment of the so-called phala is incidental.’

‘How can their non-accomplishment be itself the punish-
ment?’

‘The good, who praise those that obey the Vedic behest and blame those that do not, will answer that question. Or one’s own conscience, which feels guilty of having proved faithless to it, will do so.’

The appeal here, it will be seen, is first to the judgment of the better mind of the community and then to the verdict of our own conscience.² But it is conscience not in the sense

¹ P. 66.
² The former of these two explanations seems to be more in keeping with the Prābhākara ideal; the latter is hardly different from the Gītā teaching of sattva-śuddhi.
that it is an independent guide in discriminating right from wrong, but in the sense that it constrains us to follow dharma when it is once known. The communication of what is right or wrong is still left to an external code. The appeal in its double form, we may add, implies that man is conceived here not merely as a spiritual being himself, but also as a member of a society of spiritual beings.

In one important respect the aim of the Mīmāṃsa, it is clear, should differ from that of the other systems. It should pursue not the ideal of mokṣa but dharma, whether as a means to an end or as an end in itself. Such seems to have been its aim till a certain stage was reached in the history of the system. In that early period in the growth of the Mīmāṃsa, only dharma, artha and kāma (tri-varga) were accepted (p. 109) as human values and not the fourth one of mokṣa also.1 To speak generally, dharma is still the highest ideal in the Kalpa-sūtras; but the doctrine in its present form has practically thrown it overboard, and replaced it by the ideal of mokṣa. The transformation means the virtual abandonment of many of the rites taught in the Veda.2 But the change is of a far more subversive kind in the case of the Prabhākara school than in that of Kumārila. The latter conceive of dharma as a means to an end and the introduction of the mokṣa ideal means only the substitution of one end for another. If the old aim was svarga, the attainment of some positive good, the new one is apavarga, the negative one of escape from saṃsāra. But in the case of the former, which pursued dharma as its own end, the acceptance of the new ideal means deserting its cherished principle of doing duty for its own sake, and going over completely to the side of the Bhāṭṭas; for its idea of mokṣa, to judge from Śālikanātha’s

1 Compare NM. pp. 514 ff; VS. Ill. iv. 18.
2 In this connection we may draw attention to the view of some later exponents of the doctrine who, following the teaching of the Gitā, replace the divergent phalas of the several karmas by the single one of ‘pleasing God’ by their performance (Mīmāṃsā-nyāya-prakāśa, p. 273). This change is quite against the atheistic spirit of the Mīmāṃsa and shows how completely the Gitā ideal influenced orthodox thought.
description, is also the seeking of an end, viz. escape from the trials and travails of samsāra.¹

We shall now briefly touch upon the nature of this new ideal and the discipline laid down for its attainment. Our knowledge of the Nyāya-Vaiṣeṣika conception of bondage and release will be of much use here, for the two doctrines resemble each other in this respect so very much. We may add that almost the same criticism applies to the one ideal as to the other. The self is conceived in the Mīmāṁsā as eternal and omnipresent; but, as a matter of fact, it is conditioned by various adjuncts which are not at all indispensable to it. Its empirical encumbrance is three-fold²: To begin with, there is the physical body as limited by which alone it enjoys pain or pleasure; secondly, there are the organs of sense which are the sole means relating it to the outside world; and lastly, there is that world itself so far as it forms the object of the individual’s experience. It is this connection with things other than itself that constitutes bondage, and release means separation from them once for all. The Mīmāṁsaka refutes the Vedāntic view that the physical world is sublated or transcended in mokṣa. Nor does he admit that the relation between the world and the individual self is unreal as the Sānkhya-Yoga does. According to him, the world is real and endures in exactly the same form even when a self becomes free; and mokṣa means only the realization that the relation of the self to it though real is not necessary. This state is described negatively as excluding all pain and along with it all pleasure also.³ There seem, however, to have been one or more interpreters of Kumārila who maintained that it is a state of bliss or ānanda.⁴ It is controverted by Pārthasārathī and a consideration of Kumārila’s remarks⁵

¹ PP. pp. 156–7. This glaring discrepancy can be explained only by supposing that the stress laid upon dharma as the ultimate puruṣārtha, or the disinclination to bring duty and pleasure into relation with each other, was a characteristic of an earlier phase of the Prabhākara doctrine and that it remains as but a relic in Śālikānātha’s exposition of it. For evidence in support of the existence of such a phase, see Journal of Oriental Research (Madras) 1930, pp. 99–108.
² SD. pp. 125.
⁴ Mana-meyodaya, pp. 87–9.
⁵ SD. pp. 127–8.
⁶ SV. p. 670, st. 107.
in that connection seems to support him. No such difference of opinion seems to have existed in the case of the other school. In this condition, all the specific characteristics of the self such as jñāna, pain and pleasure disappear. The self is not conscious then even of itself, for the manas has ceased to operate. But unlike the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Mimāṃsā of the Bhatta school maintains that the capacity for manifesting such features persists. The only advantage gained by this deviation from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is the maintenance of consistency in regard to the parināma-vāda which the school advocates; for the latent capacity to know, to feel or to will which is supposed to persist in the self then is never manifested again. Distinctions like these, moreover, affect only the state attained after death. So far as mokṣa may be taken to represent the condition of the enlightened in this life, there is entire agreement with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

As in the other doctrines, detachment from worldly concerns and faith in the teaching are needed here also as preliminary requirements. Without them, no serious effort is possible towards securing final freedom. The direct means of release is deduced from the general Indian belief which the Mimāṃsaka shares that karma is the cause of bondage. When the cause is removed, the effect must necessarily cease to be; and abstention from karma, the Mimāṃsaka thinks, should automatically result in restoring the self to its original state. The karmas to be abstained from, however, are not all but only those of the optional (kāmya) and the prohibited (pratiiddha) types. The performance of the one gives rise to some merit; that of the other, to some demerit. They are thus a means of renewing bondage and have to be eschewed by a person that is seeking freedom. The third or the nitya variety of karma, even the seeker after mokṣa should perform; for otherwise he will be disobeying the Vedic law enjoying them.¹ That would be equivalent to indulging in prohibited deeds, the only difference being that while the first counts as a sin of omission, the second does as one of commission. It is to avoid becoming entangled again in the

¹ The influence of the Gītā is again clear in this restriction of activity to nitya-karmas.
miseries of sāṃsāra as a consequence of such sin, that one should carry on the nitya-karmas. Thus the course of discipline laid down here is two-fold: (1) abstention from the optional and forbidden deeds, and (2) adherence to the obligatory ones. In neither case, it should be added, is there anything positive effected, the conception of mokṣa being negative in the system, viz. the restoration of the self to its normal condition. As regards the exact part which a knowledge of the self, according to Kumārila, plays in securing freedom, there is some doubt owing to a discrepancy between the *Sloka-vārtika* and the *Tantra-vārtika* in that respect.\(^1\)

Without entering into the polemics of this question we may state, following Pārthasārathi's interpretation, that a knowledge of the self or more strictly the insight born of meditation upon its true nature, is a contributory aid to freedom, so that the doctrine is what is technically described as jñāna-karma-samuccaya-vāda. The followers of Prabhākara agree in this respect; only they do not admit any purpose in the performance of nitya-karmas beyond obeying the call of duty. Their acceptance of the need for jñāna as a means of release, along with the performance of unconditional duties, is quite explicitly stated.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Cf. SV. pp. 669 ff. and *Tantra-vārtika*, I. iii. 25.

\(^2\) PP. p. 157.