CHAPTER SIX
PURUSĀRTHA IN MIMAMSĀ SYSTEM

The word Mīmāṃsā means systematic investigation, examination, discussion and consideration.

This system was founded by Jaimini whose date is a subject of controversy. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Jaimini is believed to have lived in 4th century B.C. According to M. Hiriyanna, he lived between the third and the second century B.C. Again, it can be assumed that Jaimini must have lived before the date of Patañjali because Patañjali quoted instances from Mīmāṃsā system in his Mahābhāṣya.

There were two schools of Mīmāṃsā system. One is पुर्व मीमांसा and the other is उत्तर मीमांसा or Vedānta. Mīmāṃsā or Purva Mīmāṃsā deals with correct interpretation of vedic ritual and texts. It is also called Karma Mīmāṃsā while the Vedānta is concerned as Jñāna Mīmāṃsā.

The main purpose of Mīmāṃsā is to support vedic ritualism with a philosophical explanation, which tries to justify every part of the Vedas.

Mīmāṃsā Sutra of Jaimini describes the different sacrifices and their purposes, the theory of Apūrva as well as some philosophical proposition.
The purpose of Mimamsa is to inquire into the nature of Right Action (Dharma). According to Mimamsa system, action is the essence of human existence. Without it knowledge is fruitless, happiness is impossible, human destiny will be a aimless ship without a radder.

All actions are said to have two effects. One is external and the other is internal. The internal effect is eternal and the external effect is transitory.

To examine all the actions enjoyed in the Veda, Mimamsa divides the Veda into two broad divisions. One is Mantra and the other is Brähmaṇa. Its contents also are again divided into five different headings:

1. Injunctions (Vidhi)
2. Hymns (Mantra)
3. Names (Namadheya)
4. Prohibitions (Niṣedha)
5. Explanatory passages (Arthavāda)

Sabara is the chief commentator of Mimamsasūtra. His commentary is known as Sabara Bhāṣya. Both the Mimamsa-sūtras and the Bhāṣya were interpreted differently by three different schools of thought associated with the names of Kumārila, Prabhakara and Murari though we do not know much about Murari's commentary.
The Mīmāṃsā-sūtras are about three thousands in number having twelve chapters and they mainly deal with Dharma. The very first sūtra begins with an enquiry into duty (Dharma) which is the central theme of Mīmāṃsā.

Among independent works on the Mīmāṃsā system, some works are regarded as very important. Those are, Slokavārttika and Tantravārttika of Kumārila, Brhatī and Laghvi of Prabhākara, Prakaranapancikā and Rjuvimalā of Śālikaṇṭha, Śastrādiptikā of Pārthasārathi Misra, the Jaiminiya-nyāyamālā of Mādhva (14th century A.D.), the Upakramaparākrama and the Vidhīrāśāyana of Appayadiśkīta, the Mīmāṃsānyayaprakāśa of Apodeva (Seventeenth century A.D.), the Arthasaṃgraha of Laugāksibhaṭṭa (seventeenth century A.D.), the Bhaṭṭacintamani of Gagābhaṭṭa (17th century A.D.), the Manamayodaya of Narayanabhaṭṭa (17th century A.D.) and the Mīmāṃsā-paribhasa of Kṛṣṇayajvan (18th century A.D.).

In the Purvarājñāna system, Jaimini accepts only three means of knowledge - perception, inference and verbal testimony. To these three, Prabhākara adds two more - one is comparison (Upamāṇa) and the other is postulation (Artha-patti).

1. athato dharmajñāsā sūtramādyam idaṁ kṛtam / dharmakhyām viṣayam vaktum mīmāṃsāyāh prayojanam // Sv, 1/11
2. HCSL, pp.184-185
Again Kunārila recognises non-apprehension (Anupalabdhi) as a means of knowledge and as such the number of Pramaṇas in his school comes to be six. There are certain points of difference between the two sister schools of Mīmāṃsā. While the Prabhākara system recognises nine categories, the Bhāṭṭa accepts five categories. The Bhāṭṭa's theory of illusion is called Viparītakhyāti, that of Prabhākara is Akhyāti in which he rejects false knowledge.

The theory of importation (Khyāhāra) in the Bhaṭṭa school is Sabdādhyāhāra. But in the school of Prabhākara, it is called Arthādhyāhāra. In case of the Verbal knowledge, the Prabhākaras advocate the theory called Amṛtābhīdhānāvāda, while the Bhāṭṭas advance the theory known as Abhihitānayavāda. These are main points of difference between the two systems of Mīmāṃsā. It is to be pointed out that as against to the Nyāya theory of extrinsic validity of knowledge (parataḥ pramāṇyavāda) the two schools of Mīmāṃsā put forward the self-validity or intrinsic validity of knowledge (svataḥ-pramāṇyavāda).

The system of Mīmāṃsā is very much important as in it we find a balanced philosophy as rightly observed by Dr. C.K. Raja.3

3. IDM, p. 27.
Mīmāṃsā View of Dharma

Among the six schools of Indian Philosophy only an extreme view of Dharma is taken by the Mīmāṃsā. As we have already mentioned that Mīmāṃsā deals with the earlier portion of the Veda, and is, therefore, called Purva Mīmāṃsā while Vedānta deals with later portion of the Veda and is therefore, called Uttara-Mīmāṃsā, otherwise, known as Jñāna Mīmāṃsā. The former deals with Dharma and the later with Brahma. That is why the former is called Dharma-Mīmāṃsā and the latter is known as Brahma-Mīmāṃsā.

Pre-Sankarite teachers of Vedānta, regarded Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta as forming a single system and has advocated the combination of action and knowledge, known as Karma-Jñāna samuccaya-vāda. The first sutra of Jaimini and the last sutra of Bādarāyana made one compact sāstra.

The great Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila Bhatta also believes in the Jñāna-Karma-Samuccāya-Vāda. He admits that combination of knowledge and action is a means to liberation. According to Rāmānuja and Bhāskara, the Purva and the Uttara Mīmāṃsā together form one science and knowledge of the former is necessary for the study of the latter.

4. veda dvividhah - mantrarūpah brahma-rūpascti, MP, p.l.
The **Mīmāṃsā sūtra** is the biggest of all the philosophical sūtras and contained about one thousand topics. This work begins with an inquiry regarding Dharma.  

Śābarasvāmin has written his great commentary of the **Mīmāṃsā-sūtra** called **Sabarabhāṣya** which has been interpreted by Kumārila and Prabhākara Misra.

According to the **Mīmāṃsā Sūtra**, the Vedas teach only one kind of Dharma which is expressed through commands or injunctions. Jaimini defines Dharma as that which is characterised by **Codanā** or command.

Codanā signifies words or commands which impels men to action, this is observed by Śābarasvāmi, in his commentary on the **Mīmāṃsā sūtra**.

Among the four human goals, Artha and Kāma deal with ordinary common morality and we came to know it from worldly experiences. But Dharma and Mokṣa which deal with spirituality are revealed by the Veda. The main purport of the Vedas is to command man to perform their religious acts or duties. Action is the final import of the Veda which commands us to perform certain actions as well as to refrain

5. athāto dharmajñānāsā . MS. 1.1.1
6. Ibid, 1.1.2
7. codaneti kṛśyāyā pravartakam vacanamāhuh (1,1.2).

SB under MS. 1.1.2.
from doing certain acts. Mainly, the purport of the Vedas is to command man to perform their sacrificial rites or duties. Supremacy of the Veda is supported socially and individually in all the six orthodox philosophies. The statements which propound knowledge are according to this view action oriented. This type of statements is ordinarily called Arthavāda which are meant for only to promote action and have no meaning in themselves.³ Dharma and Adharma are said to be the happiness and pain to be enjoyed or suffered in the life after death.

Action or Kāma performed here produces an unseen result called Apūrva.⁹ It is the link between act and its fruit.

The religious duties or Karmas are broadly divided into three heads, namely, obligatory, optional and prohibited.

Obligatory actions are those actions which must be performed, for, their violation of results in sin, though their performance leads to no merit.

8. arthavādānāṁ tu svārthaparatve.
   pramāñabhāvāt vidhīvākyākavākyatāyā prāmāṇyaṁ. MP,p.2
9. vihitānīsiddhakarmaṇāṁ tat tatphalasāhanātvopagame ...
   ... punyapāparūpamapurvam kalpyate. Ibid, p.4.
Optional actions may or may not be performed, because their performances leads to sin though their non-performance does not lead to no merit.

Obligatory actions are of two kinds: one is Nitya and the other is Naimittika.

Those actions which must be performed daily without any break are called Nityakarmas. Such as, Sandhyāvandana etc.

Naimittika Karmas are those which must be performed on specified occasions, like bathing during the eclipses or performing Śrāddha ceremony are to be done on appropriate occasions.

Optional actions are called Kāmya and their performance leads to merit. These Karmas are to be performed only when some one desires to attain some specific objects or rewards. For example, one has to perform sacrifice if one wants to attain heaven.\(^{10}\)

Prohibited actions are called pratisiddha and their performance incurs sin and leads to hell.

\(^{10}\) svargakāmo yajeta. Ibid, p.3.
Then, there are expiatory acts or prayascittas which are performed in order to ward off completely or partially the evil effect of the performed prohibited actions.

The earlier Mīmāṃsaka believed in Dharma and not in Mokṣa and attainment of heaven was only their ideal. While latter Mīmāṃsakas believed in Mokṣa and their ideal was the attainment of liberation (Apavarga). Both Prabhākara and Kumārila believe that the goal of human life is liberation and they follow it with a negative manner like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

The principle of sacrifice assumes a cosmic significance in the Vedas. The whole world is conceived as universal sacrifice.

Dr. V.S. Agarwala in his work\(^\text{11}\) observes that all manifestation of Agni or Energy at a point and within a system is Yajñā.

The creation on the cosmic plane is universal sacrifice or Virāta Yajñā in which the creator offers himself as the Ahuti or offering. It is called a Sarvāhuta Yajñā in the Rgveda (x.90.1.9). Agni, is the Puruṣa or Prajāpati of this cosmic Yajñā. Aditi and Dakṣa together represent the Yajñā for the universal creative activity. It is the source

\(^{11}\) SVF, p. 39
of all creation, the creation of living beings as well as non-living beings.

In the opinion of the Bhagavad Gita, Prajapati created beings with Yajna in the beginning and ask them to grow and multiply by taking resource to Yajna and to fulfill all their desires.  

Yajña is given a deeper meaning in the vedic tradition. It is identified ultimately with God himself. It is the dynamic principle of creation, the cause of the origination, growth and sustenance of all beings and is conducive to the good of man.

According to the Mimamsa view, the mysteries of Dharma are revealed only by the Vedas. Reason cannot be defined as the nature of man's religious duties or actions. For achieving the goal of one's life and to promote the well-being of human society these actions are performed.

Reason plays an important role as it interprets the vedic statements clearly. The Mimamsakas believe that to interpret the truth of Dharma in a systematic manner, Reason is necessary.

12. sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ srstāḥ purovāca prajapatih / anena prasavīṣyadhvameṣa vośtvistakāmāhuk // - BG.III/10

13. yajno vai viṣnūḥ. TS, 1.7.4.
There is an inter-relation between the soul and body and this happens due to Karma, which is the cause of bondage. So, when the cause is removed, the effect is also removed. So abstention from Karma automatically leads to dissolution of the soul with its body etc. and return to its pure nature. To keep away from Karma does not mean abstention from all Karmas but from the optional and prohibited Karma only. This view is admitted by both Prabhakara and Kumarila. The performance of the Kamya Karma leads to merit and to heaven while that of the prohibited Karma leads to demerit and to hell. But who are hankering after liberation has to rise above both merit and demerit.

As these actions or Karmas are the commands of the Veda, therefore, these actions must be performed without any attachment. Kumārila believes that the performance of these actions is a means to realise the ultimate end i.e. liberation. Prabhākara admits knowledge as a means to liberation though he believes in the supremacy of action. Kumārila believes in jñāna-karma-samuchchayavāda or a combination of knowledge and action as a means to liberation and thus makes the way for Advaita Vedānta. Kumārila was able to make a link between Prabhākara and Samkara, between the Purva and the Uttara Mimamsā by admitting that knowledge of the self born of the true meditative act is the immediate cause of liberation.
So, we find that the central theme of Mīmāṁsā is stated in the first sutra of the Mīmāṁsā Sutra.\textsuperscript{14}

Here Dharma or duty is defined as an object distinguished by a command. The term 'Dharma' is derived from the root 'Dhrn' i.e. 'to hold, maintain, preserve' which I have mentioned earlier. When used in the individual sense it means the code of conduct that sustains the soul and helps man to fulfil his divine destiny. But when it is used metaphysically, it means those universal laws of Nature that sustain the operation of the Universe and the manifestation of all things. Therefore, Dharma is that which produces virtue, morality and religious merit leading towards the development of man.

Mīmāṁsā helps us to show how all the rituals and ceremonies enjoined in the Veda are based on Dharma and lead to the spiritual welfare of man.

Mīmāṁsā interprets the Veda in this way that by the proper performance of rituals related to Dharma one can attain the eternal happiness.

According to Jaimini, Verbal Testimony (Sābdā) is the main source of knowledge of Dharma. The Mīmāṁsā system lays stress on Sābdā as a means of knowledge. Jaimini accepts

\textsuperscript{14} athato dharmajijnāsā. MS. 1.1.1.
Sabda or Verbal Testimony as a means of knowledge. To support his views, he lays down five propositions which are as follows:

(1) Every word is eternal as it has an inherent power to convey its meaning.

(2) The knowledge derived from the word (Sabda) is called Upadesa (teachings).

(3) In the invisible kingdom, the word (Sabda) is the infallible guide. Just like a torch in the darkness.

(4) In the opinion of Badarayana, the word is authoritative.

(5) The word is self-sufficient and does not depend upon any other for its meaning, otherwise, it would become involved in the fallacy of regressus ad infinitum.

For establishing the eternal character of the word, Jainini refutes several objections raised against it.

Even our day to day life also is not free from the influence of the teachings of Mimamsa. All rituals and ceremonies, all moral conduct as well as all the Hindu Laws are guided by it. So, we can say that our Hindu culture is completely based upon the teachings of Mimamsa and Vedanta.
It has already been stated earlier that in Indian schools of philosophy Puruṣārtha is used to mean Mokṣa. So, Artha and Kāma are not taken up by the systems for discussion. In Mimamsā, we find Dharma and Mokṣa discussed.
In early Mimamsa, the attainment of Heaven is the highest good. The earlier Mimamsakas like Jaimini and Sabara believed in Dharma and not in Moksa as they enjoin the performance of Vedic rites and sacrifices as means to the attainment of Heaven. According to them, freedom from bondage is not the highest good and Heaven is considered as the usual end. But some of the early Mimamsakas deny to recognise the reality of Heaven as they believe that it is nothing but another name of the soul.

The later Mimamsakas consider the nature of liberation and substitute the ideal of Heaven by that of liberation (Apavarga). Kumarila and Prabhakara both follow the negative way of conception of liberation.

Prabhakara's conception of liberation is that he believes in the supremacy of action along with knowledge as a means of liberation. In his view, liberation means complete disappearance of merit (Dharma) and demerit (Adharma) which is the cause of birth as well as death. All worldly pleasures are mixed up with pain so he always try to avoid past and prescribed acts which brings happiness here and hereafter. Liberation is the cessation of worldly pain. For final release, both action and knowledge have equal importance. He says liberation is not a state of bliss.

15. mokṣastu sāṁsārikadukhopasamāt purusārtha iti puskalam.

PP, p. 335.
Kumarila believes in Jnāna-karma Samuchchayavāda i.e. combination of knowledge and action as a means of liberation. This view makes it possible for us to understand easily the Advaita vedānta. Upāsanā or meditation also leads to liberation. So, we find there is a similarity between Kumarila and Prabhākara. Kumarila admits the potential consciousness of the self. Liberation is a state of soul which is free from all pain. There is no mention of eternality of heavenly bliss. It is a state of absolute negation of all experience of earthly feelings. In his view, liberation is the state where self exists in its pure nature.

Jaimini and Bādarāyana also hold the view that Karma (action) and Upāsana (meditation) are absolutely necessary to have true knowledge.

16 V.N.K. Reddy mentions in his essay 'Concept of Man' that 'according to Jaimini, man's physical body is an aggregate of atoms brought together by the Law of Karma and man's essence is in the intrinsic nature of the soul. It has a potentiality for consciousness, though it is independent of all consciousness'.

Among the schools of Indian Philosophy, Mīmāṃsā is the most enthusiastic about the importance of Karma or action in the affairs of life. It differs from Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in

16 Donald H. Bishop, Indian Thought, p. 261.
treating action in addition to self-knowledge with regard to the realization of liberation.

Yamunācarya in his work *Siddhitraya* has mentioned three well-known doctrines of *Jñānayoga*, *Karmayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga* including with the doctrine *Anyatā* according to which there are two alternative ways of the realization of the ideal life, namely (a) action regarded as primary and knowledge as auxiliary to it, and (b) knowledge regarded as primary and action as auxiliary to it, either of which may be chosen, depending on the aptitude and inclination of the individual who makes the choice. According to Parthasarathi Misra, Kumārila holds that he who supports the former alternative to them sumnum bonum of life is not Mokṣa (liberation) but svarga, i.e. happiness in heaven which is said to be perishable. And he who chooses the latter alternative, the ultimate goal of human life to them is Mokṣa in the sense of freedom from experience, which is eternal. Therefore, the Mīmāṃsaka view of the way to realization of the ideal of life, on the one hand, is that the predominance of action in human life may at best lead to perishable heavenly happiness, but is an obstacle to the attainment of imperishable freedom from experience which is Mokṣa. On the other hand, knowledge, including self-knowledge, in its predominance over action, leads the individual to establish in imperishable liberated life.

To attain liberation, man must perform required rites or Nityākarmas like Sandhyāprayers. By performance of which
there is no benefit but the non-performance of which produces sins. So as S.N. Dasgupta mentions in his work that liberation can be attained when a man enjoys and suffers the fruits of his good and bad actions and thereby exhausts them refraining from the performance of kāmya-karmas i.e. sacrifices etc. performed for the attainment of certain beneficial results stops further production of new effects.

The Mīmāṃsā Darsana contends that when Dharma or Yoga is performed for some selfish purpose, it is limited, and when it is performed in the spirit of the service of God, it becomes the cause of celestial bliss i.e. Niḥśreyasa.

17. nityanaimittikayorakaśreṇe pratyaśayaḥ kṛte tu phalam nāstīti kecit. MP, p. 15