CHAPTER VII

THE PATH TO PERFECTION
Pre-requisites to the study of Vedānta.

The present Chapter is devoted to the discussion of some of the important issues arising out of the interpretation of the first aphorism of Vedānta, by the Mīmāṃsakās and the Vedāntins. Though, all of them agree with regard to the general meaning of the Sūtra, they differ fundamentally in respect of the interpretation of the word 'then' (atha) appearing in it. This word significantly points out that the inquiry into the nature of Brahman (Brahman-jijnāsā) is to be preceded by some preliminaries. It implies that something must have gone before to which Brahman-inquiry is invariably related. What is that something? The Vedāntin’s answer to this question is, that there are four factors which constitute the pre-requisites to Brahman inquiry. These are discrimination of things eternal from non-eternal, non-attachment to the enjoyment of fruit here or hereafter, the possession in abundance of means like calmness and equanimity and the desire for release. Mīmāṃsakas, on the contrary, maintain that the study of the rituals invariably precedes Brahman-enquiry. The main reason for holding such a view is that Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, which is concerned with the ritualistic portion of the Vedas and Uttar-Mīmāṃsā or Vedānta, which deals with Brahman-knowledge constitute one integral whole.

2. VPS, pp.564-65.
3. Śrī-bhāṣya, p.2.
and as such the study of the rituals is an indispensable prolegomena to the Brahman-enquiry.

(b) **Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā & Uttar-Mīmāṃsā.**

Before refuting the Mīmāṃsaka's view, we shall see what is the relation between Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā & Uttar-Mīmāṃsā. The Mīmāṃsā philosophy has two parts, (1) the one enquires into Dharma - the right regulation of conduct and (2) the other into Brahman. The former is ethics. It lays down the course of action leading on to progressive evolution. The latter enquires into the ultimate metaphysical truth - the Brahman. It gives freedom and salvation. In order to bring out the specific requirements for an enquiry into Brahman, it is compared and contrasted with the enquiry about Dharma or religious duty. Neither Dharma nor Brahman is an empirical object and we never come upon them in the course of our ordinary experience. We know about them only from the Vedas. So a study of the Vedas is pre-supposed by both the enquiries. We would like to know here, what besides a study of the Vedas, is specifically required for an enquiry about Brahman.

There are schools of thought who seem to think that these two terms are successive forms of culture - the one paves

1. Deussen : The system of the Vedānta, p.82.
the way for the other and is invariably antecedent to wisdom. The true foundation and explanation of our ethical life is to be found in the life of wisdom, so that both parts of a life in which knowledge or wisdom has a place side by side with service. Hence it is supposed that the performance of sacrifices and the right regulation of conduct have a direct connection with the life of wisdom. The Vedāntism of Sankara accepts all these with a qualification. It accepts all these as preliminaries preparing one for enquiry into Brahman by furnishing one with intelligence, purity and tranquillity necessary to the attainment of wisdom, but of wisdom itself, they form no direct foundation or basis and are not conditions, absolutely necessary, for one is seen to have acquired knowledge of Brahman, even when one has no culture of and practice in, performance of sacrifices etc.

Therefore, such a supposition that in addition to the study of the Vedas, what is needed for an enquiry about Brahman, is the knowledge of various religious duties or rites, in the performance of which the Vedic religion largely consists, would not be right, in as much as a man, who has studied the Vedas, may very well desire to know Brahman,

1. 'Satadūṣṭanī, Vāda 8.
ever before or without desiring to know Dharma at all.
There is no relation of necessary sequence between the two
enquiries. It cannot be made out that one enquiry is part
of the other or that one is competent to ask about Brahman
only when one has already known about Dharma.

Besides, we know that these two enquiries have different
objects as well as different results. What results from the
knowledge of Dharma is well-being or prosperity whether in
this life or in the next and too is dependent upon our actual
performance of Dharma. What results from the knowledge of
Brahman is the highest end of our life, called liberation and
it does not depend upon any other performance. The Dharma,
which is sought to be known, does not yet exist when we
merely know about it. It has to be brought about by some
action of a human agent. In the case of Brahman, what is
sought to be known is the existent reality which, being
eternal, is never dependent upon any action of man.

Further, the Vedic injunctions or declarations from
which we learn about Brahman and Dharma differ in their
significance. What a religious duty or Dharma is, is
determined by the Vedic injunction alone. Our religious
duties are what the Vedas enjoin. Such an injunction is

1. धमनिक्षेपः अभिवेदन्य! पत्तीते विद्वदृष्टं भृद्मीमिश्रोपत्तमानुः।
   VPS, p. 529.
2. पत्तीते श्वेताक्षणे भिन्नत्वात्।
3. यथा पूर्वते सुन्भानपिखे भुवयः - - - - - - पत्तीते।
Intelligible only as a direction to perform the particular action enjoined. But the Vedic declaration about Brahman gives us only knowledge about Brahman, but no direction whatever for any action. Knowledge is never produced by an injunction. It arises automatically when its particular conditions are fulfilled as we see in the case of our perception of an external object, which results automatically from its contact with our senses, without any direction from anybody. It is not proper that Brahman knowledge which rejects all notions of distinction of action, causal correlates and fruit, should need a subsidiary or relation to an auxiliary means; for Brahman - knowledge has for content the inner Self which excludes all objects and whose fruit is liberation. It has been said, "One desirous of release should always renounce action along with its means. It is only by one, that so renounces that the inner Self, which is the supreme goal is realised." Therefore, it is not intelligible that knowledge should require the help of or be dependent upon action.

Moreover, the life of action and the life of wisdom are distinctively different. One is the transformation of will, the other is eradication of will in the sense of attaining will-less bliss. Their natures are inherently different.

1. VPS, p. 564.
2. "Jñāna or Brahma - realisation requires nothing else other than itself for the sublation of Avidyā and all its modifications, injunctions which are essential for accomplishment of rituals etc. can not apply to it all."

The distinctive nature of knowledge and duty is drawn out beautifully in the Upadeśa Sāhasrī - "Knowledge simply reveals the nature of things, but cannot freely determine it. It can state only what it is, but cannot change its nature." Action or injunction to any form of action is purely dependent upon us. We can do it or not do it, choose it or not choose it, we have the power of free choice. Action originates something not existing before or helps to evolve something potentially existing. Knowledge does not create anything new. The one is guided by the idea of realisation of the good, the other of truth. But any form of enthusiasm, besides knowledge, has not an enduring effect since it is empirical and all forms of culture - the training of will and the transformation of our moral nature help us onward to the perception of truth by cultivating purity of soul and serenity of heart and thereby realising in the ultimate course of its evolution that the truth is good, for nothing can permanently attract us and awaken our enthusiasm which is not true.

We may conclude that the performances of sacrifices etc. purify the mental consciousness and help concentration and meditation by making the mind calm and quiet. In this way, they all help us in dispensing with the materialistic cast of mind and in opening the door to knowledge - the

1. उत्साहमयें सैलहर्वि शिल्पा व चिरात्हनु ।
   नृच्छुर्विवार् ततकानूं कर्म तत्वा न यावननु ॥
   Naiskarmya-siddhi, 53.
2. VPS, p. 702.
3. विशल्प भूप्रेयें कर्म न तु चासुपल्लेयं, VC, 8.
direct path to perfection. Nobody can seriously maintain that these have any direct bearing upon knowledge. For in their very nature, they are so far removed from it that any direct connection cannot be thought to exist between them. Knowledge can remove ignorance, Karma is inherently incapable of removing ignorance, for that which is opposed to ignorance, can destroy it. But Karma is not opposed to it. Moreover, it is pointed out in the Vivarana-prameya-saṅgraha "If the life of action had been conducive to knowledge, one could not have been asked to renounce it."

Hence, it is obvious that the already enumerated requirements (Sādhanā-catuṣṭaya) in the elect are, according to the Vedāntins, the only ones which are indispensable. As soon as they are fulfilled, the investigation of the Brahman can begin and it is not essential that the 'investigation of duty', that is the study of the Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini should precede it. Therefore, all imperatives, even if they are taken from the scriptures are, when directed to the knowledge of Brahman, as blunt as a knife with which one would cut a stone. Therefore, also all the commands of the scripture, that we should investigate the Brahman, have the only meaning that they turn the thoughts from their natural tendency towards outward things to the inner soul.

1. अन्यवा ब्राह्मण्यां वर्ष कर्मस्याशब्दवाचः नेपपर्यस्त ।
   VPS, p. 557.

2. कर्मात्मन्त संबंध एवं वृत्त्ततंत्वाय सुलभ ।
   ibid, p. 535.
Almost all the philosophical schools of ancient India regarded the process of birth and death as bondage and suffering. The absolute cessation of this process, is therefore described by them as liberation. Difference of opinion arises regarding the means to liberation. Some hold that both knowledge and action\(^1\) (jñāna-karma-samuccaya) are necessary for getting permanent relief from the worldly life. There is another view, according to which devotion\(^2\) alone constitutes the means to liberation. There is yet another view accepted by the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsa, which is chiefly concerned with the interpretations of the rituals and their resultant fruits and with the Mokṣa, attainable through the path of Karman.\(^3\) The Uttar-Mīmāṃsa, on the other hand, maintains that liberation from the worldly life can be obtained through knowledge of the tattva.\(^4\) The foregoing discussion raises an important issue regarding the place of karman in the scheme of philosophic discipline, as for an Advaitin mokṣa or self-realization, which is the goal of all human endeavour is secured through jñāna as taught in the Upaniṣads and not through karman as accepted by the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsa.\(^5\)

---

1. VPS, p.548.
2. 'Therefore to help man realize the Reality which is otherwise inaccessible even to the mind and speech, a psychologically tenable means viz. devotion has been recommended.' R.N.Vyās: The Bhāgavata Bhakti Cult, p.5.
4. VPS, p.365.
The Mīmāṃsaka lays down the process of the attainment of Mokṣa through karman in the following manner. Karma, according to this school of philosophy is not only responsible for bondage but can also put an end to it and as such, a Mīmāṃsaka does not agree to the view that all karman are to be voluntarily relinquished. A seeker after mokṣa should abstain from kāmya and pratiṣiddha karmans but he should never give up the performances of Nitya and Naimittika rites. Just as there results sin from indulging in prohibited acts, there ensues sin also as a consequence of not performing the obligatory rites. So a mumukṣu must not only avoid the error of commission, but he must also be free from the error of omission. Scripture is the sole authority in matters of religious rites. What it prescribes one must perform and what it prohibits one must avoid, otherwise he will have to remain involved in the cycle of recurring births and deaths for ever. By abstinence from selfish and prohibited acts no fresh sins are to be incurred and no fresh fruits are to be accumulated. The fruits of past karmans, which occasioned the present body and keep on bringing about its various enjoyments as well as others, already accumulated, are completely exhausted

2. Ślokavārtika, pp.108-110.
together with the termination of the body, in consequence of the performance of obligatory and occasional acts. Thus there being no fresh karma in the stock, whose fruits still remain to be enjoyed, the desired mokṣa will ensue automatically, after the falling off the present body.\(^\text{1}\)

That the entire veda has injunction alone for purport seems to be the doctrine of the Mīmāṃśaka. To the Prabhākara no proposition would be significant if it did not refer to an act. Though Kumārila admits that a word may connote an object unrelated to action, he does not grant an independent logical status to assertive propositions.\(^\text{2}\)

Hence in the Mīmāṃśa view, texts about Brahman or the Self are arthavādas without any purport. Since all scripture is for the sake of ritual, there is validity for injunctive texts alone. Scripture has codanā or command for purport. It is incumbent on man to carry out the commands of the veda and to abstain from acts which are proscribed.

As against the Mīmāṃśa view, Vidyāraṇya says that a proposition may have even existent things for purport. Such a statement as, "A son is born to you", is not without significance. The ritualistic section of the veda teaches religious duty (dharma). But the Upaniṣads have Brahman

for purport. Religious duty which is what is to be done depends on human volition. But for Brahman, which is existent, there is no dependence on a human being. That which is dependent on a human being can be done, not done, or done otherwise. In ordinary experience, Devadatta goes on horse-back or does not go or goes on foot. His going depends entirely on his will. Similarly in the Vedas too, religious rites are observed to depend on the will of a man. Doing and not doing of an act are declared in the texts, 'In the atirātra one uses the sixteenth cup', 'In the atirātra one does not use the sixteenth cup'. Doing and doing-otherwise are to be found in the passages, 'He offers oblation after sunrise,' and 'He offers oblation before sunrise'. There are in the ritualistic section of the Veda prescriptions like, 'He is to sacrifice with the jyotiṣṭoma' and prohibitions like 'Do not eat the flesh of any animal struck with a poisoned weapon.' There is option at will in 'He is to sacrifice with rice-grains or with barley.' There is combination of the six sacrifices constituting the dārśapūrṇamāsa. There are general rules like 'Injure not any living being' and exceptions like 'He is to kill the agnīśomiya animal'. In respect of certain modelled

1. VPS, p.702.
rites, there is the sublation of the basic material transferred from the model rite i.e. there is the sublation of the barhis (sacrificial grass) consisting of kūṣa, transferred from the model rite, by the barhis consisting of śara, taught in the modelled rite. When the nāriṣṭahomas belonging to the model rite are performed in combination with the upahomas of the modelled rite, it is called supplementation. There is differentiated option consequent on the differences of the section of the veda to which one belongs. In one section, it is taught 'He offers oblation after sunrise', and in another it is declared, 'He offers oblation before sunrise.' Thus in the case of ritual rites there is the possibility of dependence on a human being, prescription, prohibition, option at will, combination, general rule, exception, sublation, supplementation, differentiated option etc. But these are not possible in the case of the existent Brahman.\(^1\)

Brahman is not the fruit of an act. The fruit generated by an act is one of the four kinds - origination (utpatti), attainment (prūpti), modification (vikāra) and purification (saṃskāra)\. Of these, origination, attainment and modification are not possible in respect of the

---

1. ibid, p.703.  
2. ibid, p.387.
eternally attained unchanging Brahman. Nor may we suspect the possibility of purification consisting in the removal of impurities like ignorance, uprighteousness etc., for Brahman is ever pure. In reaching a place say a village not attained before and in removing a disease, not already remedied, there is required action in the form of movement, taking in medicine etc. But in the case of Brahman, what need is there for activity? What should be done is to remove the ignorance and for the removal of the nescience what is potent is knowledge. A person not knowing what is already attained like the gold ornament round the neck, desires to attain it and not knowing that there is no snake in the rope, desires to avoid it. But what he desires, is accomplished not by any act, but by mere knowledge. Similarly in the attainment of the eternally attained Brahman and in the remedying of the eternally remedied transmigration, what is the cause is the knowledge of the truth.

That, the attainment of Brahman is figurative, is evident from scriptural texts like 'And being (already) released, he is released.' Being (already) Brahman, he attains Brahman.

1. 'Knowledge also cannot be attained as we attain a village by an act of our going there. Liberation is not related with going to any particular place.'

Com. on Brh. Up., IV.iv.7.

2. VPS, p.768.
Release has neither beginning nor end. If release had a beginning, there would be an end also to it. And if it has an end, it is a misnomer to call it release. Further, if release be accomplishable by an act, then its relation to body, senses etc. would have to be predicated and there would be for it the capacity to increase and decrease. And that which is subject to growth and decay is not imperishable. There is no embodiedness for the self in release. Release is the natural and eternal state of the self. It comes to be clouded by nescience and as a consequence the non-embodied appears as if embodied, the pure appears as if impure, the eternally attained appears as if unattained. When ignorance is removed by knowledge, Brahman is attained as it were.

Karma, which is a product of ignorance cannot destroy its parent. The delusive cognition of the rope-snake is not removed by darkness which is its cause. Pain is the result of being embodied, the body has its root in the previously acquired merit and demerit, merit and demerit are the fruit of prescribed and prohibited acts. These acts are dependent on

1. Naiśkarmyasiddhi, I.24.
appetition and aversion; appetition and aversion are conditioned by attractiveness and unattractiveness which are superimposed on sense objects, superimposition is caused by the world of duality which appears to be real on account of non-inquiry; the world of duality, however is illusory like nacre silver and it is the result of the ignorance which obscures the non-dual self. Hence ignorance of the self is the sole cause of all evil, and it is only knowledge that can remove ignorance. Delusion which is brought about by nescience is dispelled by the cognition of the true. Darkness is destroyed by light alone. The removal of nescience could be by knowledge alone, not by any act.

Vidyārāṇya argues that the objection that knowledge also, like meditation is a mental act, is groundless since knowledge and action are different from each other as to their causes and results. The manifestation of an object is the result of knowledge. The Ātman being the object of knowledge, it cannot be produced. No result of knowledge is produced. The nature of Ātman is manifested by a mode of the internal organ (antahkaraṇa), which is the adjunct of the

1. Ibid, I.i.
The existence of an object is not the cause of meditation but it is a volition of a person preceded by a desire under the direction of a superior person or a scripture. A person meditates on a non-existent fire of a woman. But knowledge is produced by a means of valid knowledge and an object of valid knowledge, but not produced by a desire and a volition of a person. A foul odour is smelt by one against one's will. Inferential knowledge and verbal knowledge of a past object or of a future object are produced by a probans and a statement of a reliable person, respectively because a past object and a future object are non-existent. But these cognitions are not produced by a person's desire and volition. An act of meditation depends upon a person's desire and volition. The contention that knowledge is a mental act, because it is a modification of the internal organ, is invalid, since knowledge is different from an action, which executes a command and since

1. ननु सत्यमपि ध्यायमनस्स्मिस्योऽवतृतं न ।
न फलम । करणतवम ज्ञानारुक्तेष्वन्यायः। जान न एसोर ठित्ता मीति तिगानी विताष्मैति ।

WPS, p.813.
knowledge does not depend upon a person's desire and volition, like an act of meditation. A person can meditate on an existent or a non-existent fire according to his volition or meditate on an existent fire as something else or non-existent. But a person can not but perceive a fire in intercourse with his visual organ. He can not make it, unmake it or make it otherwise as an object of perception. He turns towards it in order to perceive it. He turns away from it in order not to perceive it. These acts are the causes of perception and non-perception respectively. He is free to do or not to do these acts. But his knowledge or absence of knowledge does not depend upon his free will but upon the object of knowledge.\textsuperscript{1} If knowledge were produced by a person's volition, the second cognition, the third cognition and the like in a series of cognitions would not be produced because the first cognition alone is immediately preceded by a person's volition. In a series of cognitions the first cognition does not produce a residual impression, which produces the second cognition and so on. If it did so, the

\textsuperscript{1} तत्त्वज्ञानानन्द तथा निर्माणार्थ युक्तार्थ भवानन्तर्यां, न ज्ञानान्तर्यां: \textsuperscript{1} ibid. \textsuperscript{1} 819.
second cognition and the succeeding cognitions would be recollections. If they were recollections, they would not depend upon sense-object-intercourse. But a series of perceptual cognitions depends upon sense-object-intercourse. So the second and the third cognitions and the like in a series of perceptual cognitions are produced by their objects in intercourse with the sense organs and not upon a person's volition. Similarly recollection also does not depend upon a person's volition but upon the revival of a residual impression. A person is found to remember an undesired object without an effort of volition on the revival of a residual impression which produces recollection. So volition is not the direct cause of recollection. Hence knowledge is not an action.

Now, what we are particularly concerned with in this connection is to examine if the liberation of the self, as this theory conceives, can be attained by the practice of Vedic sacrifices or righteous deeds. Liberation is the realisation of perfect consciousness and blissfulness by the self in itself in some supra-mundane plane of existence. If this liberation is the produce of virtuous actions, this consciousness and blissfulness cannot be

---

1. रत्नं शृंगारमयं लक्ष्मीरोहिष्यायतं न पुत्स्या पुत्रायां।
   ibid. p.821.

2. VPS, p.251.
regarded as pertaining to the eternal nature of the self and they must be regarded as attributes or elements produced in the self. In that case, either these elements, being produced, should be somehow related to the self without affecting its essential nature or they should transform the very nature of the self. If the former alternative be true then the self cannot be regarded as being perfectly and permanently liberated from the mundane existence, because like all other agreeable and disagreeable experiences obtained by the self as the results of various kinds of actions, the experience of this blissful consciousness is attained by it as a result of some particular type of actions and like all other results of actions this result also must be exhausted through enjoyment. There would be no ground for holding that this particular product of a particular type of actions should not participate in the nature of the other products of the other types of virtuous actions. If the other alternative be accepted i.e. if the production of these consequences be supposed to transform the nature of the self, then the self is to be regarded as a transformable substance. In that
case, the fundamental conception of the nature of the self would be contradicted and liberation also being one of the transformations of the self produced by actions, must like the other transformations be transitory. Thus liberation can not be consistently conceived as the product of virtuous actions. What the systematic performance of virtuous actions can accomplish is only to remove the hindrances in the way of the realisation of the perfect consciousness and blissfulness which are eternally inherent in the nature of the self. If this interpretation be accepted, then the immediate cause of liberation is not virtuous action, but the knowledge of the identity of the self with Brahman. Virtuous action is then only a subsidiary cause, preparing the mind for the attainment of fitness to acquire the knowledge.
Refutation of the Theory of 'Jñānakarmacすることさま Speedwaya'.

Many advocates of Karma-Sādhanā admit that karma alone, cannot give liberation, but the combination of true knowledge and virtuous actions (jñāna-karma-samuccaya) is necessary for it. The term 'virtuous' has been included, because this whole discussion is permeated by the ambiguous usage of the word 'karma'. If 'karma' means activity undertaken by an individual, for the fulfilment of this or that private end, it is inconsistent with spiritual insight. Impersonal virtuous action, on the other hand, does not bind the doer. If jñāna and karma are said to be opposed to each other like light and darkness, it is karma in the sense of selfish activity and jnana in the sense of unselfish wisdom. Lokmānya Tilak points out - "... though there may be an opposition between knowledge and desireful action, no kind of opposition can exist between knowledge and desireless action. It is not activity which we ordinarily call karma for karma is based on egoism (kāma). Karma is the name for all activity which leads to continuance of existence in Samsāra. The other kind of activity is not to be called karma, since it is not due to kāma or selfish desire. In short, it is the kāma and not the karma, which is the cause of embodiment. External activity is not as much important in ethics as the spirit behind the activity. There are

1. W:\S, p.556.
2. Hindu Sādhanā, p. 103.
many Sruti passages which suggest the activity of the liberated. If it is held that the activity itself is the cause of bondage, how shall we be able to explain those Sruti passages which declare the pleasant activities of the atman and even of the Brahman. We are left with no alternative except to admit that it is only the desire, the urge for doing the action (kāma) and not the action itself, which is the cause of bondage.

Those who sponsor the jñāna-karma-samuccaya view, quote as evidence such texts as, "Knowledge and non-knowledge, he who knows both together," etc. But this text does not enjoin the combination of karma with knowledge, for in the rest of the text, "crossing over death by non-knowledge, by knowledge, he enjoys immortality," the fruit of rites which are called non-knowledge is declared to be different from the fruit of knowledge. Nor is it possible to establish an injunction of the combination of knowledge and rites in "Perform those invariably, O lovers of the true," for mere rites alone are mentioned here and the word 'true', does not refer to Brahman. Even the text "This self is to be attained by truth, by austerity, by right knowledge." does not prescribe the combination,

1. Chāṇ. Up., VIII XII 3; B.S., II. iii. 31 & 32.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid, III. 1. 5.
for the word "austerity" occurring in the text means contemplation and not rites like agnihotra, etc. It may be said that the traditional code "Through karma alone did Janaka, etc. attain samsiddhi" enjoins karma as the means to release. But the word "Samsiddhi" here connotes the purification of mind which is auxiliary to Brahman - knowledge and not the final release. Far from enjoining the combination of knowledge and rites, scripture directly denies the instrumentality of rites to release in "There is nothing to be done by him who has achieved (knowledge)". "Not by rites, not by children," etc. The Taittiriya declares "The knower of Brahman attains the highest." In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Narada asks Sanat Kumara, "I have heard from men like you that the knower of the self crosses sorrow; and I who am well versed in Scripture, because of lack of that knowledge, am in distress". Therefore O Lord, enable me to cross the bounds of sorrow. And in the traditional code we read "The fire of knowledge reduces all karmas to ashes".

Vidyārānya, criticising the theory, argues that it is wrong to think that the works prescribed for the monks

4. VPS, pp. 165-166; PD, XI.8 & B.G., IV.37.
(meditation etc.) by assisting the emergence of knowledge, lead to liberation. Because, according to Prabhākara, daily obligatory duties do not produce any fruit, whereas Kumārila is of the opinion that they produce heavenly bliss. According to an Advaitin, they produce disposition or potency and inclination towards the inner Self and desire to know it. (Vividīśā). So works can never produce release.

The identity of the Jīva and Brahman is not the effect of the combination of works and knowledge for it is an accomplished reality. Nor is the termination of Avidyā and its effects, the effect of the combination, since it is the effect of knowledge. The effect of knowledge, according to Bhāskara, an advocate of the theory of Jñānakarma-Samuccaya, is the destruction of the adjuncts necessary for works or the destruction of false superimposition or illusion or the destruction of the series of false superimpositions or the destruction of the potencies of false knowledge or the manifestation of the nature of Brahman. The first alternative is not tenable, since the adjuncts necessary for works being real cannot be destroyed by knowledge. The second alternative is not admissible because false illusions being momentary themselves cease to

1. VPS, p. 557.
2. VPS, p. 558.
exist. The third alternative is not valid since a series of false illusions cannot be destroyed, unless a false illusion is destroyed by knowledge. The fourth alternative is inadmissible because the impression of the illusion of silver in a nacre is not found to be destroyed by the knowledge of the nacre. If the impression of the repeated knowledge of a nacre destroyed the impression of the illusion of silver, then the impression of knowledge would be the cause of release and knowledge would not be its cause. This view would contradict the vedic testimony, which asserts knowledge to be the cause of release. The fifth alternative is untenable for Brahman is self-manifest.

Further, if virtuous actions are necessary, as is said earlier, only for paving the way to knowledge by the removal of hindrances, then this cannot be reasonably regarded as samuccaya or combination of knowledge and action. Knowledge alone being the cause of the destruction of ignorance, it must be regarded as the true cause of liberation. Again, the necessity for the performance of virtuous actions, even as a step to and preparation for the culture of true knowledge cannot be established.

1. VPS, p. 558.
2. Shāntināth : Sādhanā, p.54.
3. Compare - "Of all the means to liberation, knowledge is the most direct one".

Ātma-tattva-viveka, 2.
Knowledge being an intellectual affair, can be cultured independently of the habit of performing actions. There are countless examples of extraordinary intellectual achievements without any notable virtuous karmans.

Although there is not the instrumentality of rituals to release, karma is not without its use. Rites are to be performed until the rise of knowledge. They contribute, though indirectly, to self-realisation. The followers of the Bhāmatī School consider karma to be useful in generating the desire to know, for it is declared by Scripture: "That (Self) the sages desire to know through study of the Veda, through sacrifice, through gifts and through austerities like fasting." According to the Vivaraṇa view, karma is useful in generating knowledge itself. Through the performance of obligatory rites, there is acquired virtue which removes the impurity called sin. A person, thus qualified becomes eligible for Brahman-inquiry. Mere rites may have prosperity as fruit; but when conjoined with hearing, reflection etc., they are useful in the generation of Brahman knowledge.

3. PPV, p. 540.
It is the express claim of the Advaita Vedānta that action does not bring about the positive state of liberation. All works, good as well as evil, demand their retribution in the following existence. Hence no performance of works, of whatever kind it may be, ever leads to liberation. As Vivekānanda says, "By work we cannot attain freedom. Even good works bind us." No doubt, the ethical deeds purify mind, strengthen moral control and discipline an individual for further spiritual advancement. Just as a thorn takes out another thorn pierced in the skin good actions extricate the evil effects of the immoral acts done in the past. But the thorn, which takes out another thorn has also to be thrown off. Likewise one should not be attached to even good actions. On the contrary, knowledge alone, and not combined with action, constitutes the means to liberation. Of all the means to liberation, knowledge is the most direct one, like fire which is the most direct means of cooking. Without knowledge, no emancipation is possible.

As against the Advaitins' view, the Mīmāṃsakas hold that this sort of reasoning cannot prevail as the means other than knowledge i.e. actions are valid and even final, provided they are used without attachment to their results. What is

2. Ātma-tattva-viveka, 2.
incompatible with knowledge is only those actions which have their root in unfulfilled desire and not those actions which are done only for their own sake thinking them to be one's own duty. Action in itself is neither good nor bad. It has no inherent moral qualities. It becomes good or bad, efficacious for freedom or obstacle to freedom only due to purity or impurity of the motive from which it springs. Herein lies the secret of Nīśkāma-karma yoga of the Gītā.

But this exposition is simply absurd. Because an action has its root in desire and the satisfaction of the desire is always the object of every voluntary action. All activities are guided by the motive of attaining some agreeable objects and getting rid of some disagreeable objects. In the absence of attachment and aversion towards any object, there cannot be any impulse to activity. Moreover, no conscious and active individual self can ever be completely free from desire. The desire for self-preservation, self-development and self-enjoyment is inherent in the very nature of its existence. Without this desire, life would be impossible. This desire belongs to the mind or the self and as long as there is the sense of self-hood, desire must remain more or less and express itself in the forms of particular desires.
for particular appropriate objects. So any absolutely disinterested action is not possible.

However, it cannot be said that in the Advaita Philosophy, there is no scope for moral and ethical endeavours. The Advaita Vedānta disputes and discards nothing of human experiences and practical life, on the other hand, it regards ethical and moral discipline as the first rung of the ladder leading ultimately to Brahma-realisation. Whatever may be the ultimate value of the world and its achievements and prosperities, the discharge of Scripture-ordained duties is undeniable before one can claim to be entitled to tread on the path, leading to Brahma-realisation. The Gītā puts forth the two-fold path—(1) the path of knowledge, (2) the path of karma or action. The former is meant for those that have the purity and the tranquility of mental consciousness. The latter is meant for those that are just on the way. They need to submit themselves to a course of discipline to acquire mental calmness necessary to clear vision and reflective analysis. The latter is not strictly a distinct path, but is only a step to the former. Nitya and Naimittika karmas prepare us for knowledge and when we are in possession of it, they are no longer necessary.1

In short, we can say that this advice of the Śruti - "कवर्तु नव हि कमीच निरीविनिवृत्तमर्तं समा : ' ' is for the man of the world, the ajīva, in whose case realisation of the highest knowledge has not been possible. The advice is not for the vidvān. For him, really no action is possible. No doubt, the direct path to perfection or Mokṣa lies in and through the supreme knowledge of Brahman, but rites are to be performed until the rise of knowledge.