CANONICAL TEXTS:

THE ONLY MEANS TO RELEASE!?
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

CANONICAL TEXTS:
THE ONLY MEANS TO RELEASE!?

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“Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho’ they come from the ends of the earth!”

— Rudyard Kipling, *Ballad of East and West*
1 Introduction

1.1 The Subject of Investigation
In many religions canonical texts, also often called ‘holy scriptures’, play an important role. These texts are in many cases accorded almost absolute authority. A few years ago a conference in Leiden, the Netherlands, was devoted to this theme of the relationship between canonical texts and religious authority. J.G. Platvoet contributed a paper on the task of the contemporary study of religion, especially in relation to the theme of canonisation, i.e. the attribution of authority to canonical texts. In this paper he developed a tool for the comparative study of canonisation and de-canonisation in the history of religions.

Platvoet argues that in the historical process of Christian canonisation several aspects and phases of development can be distinguished. These aspects should be abstracted and transformed into an analytical tool that can be used to investigate other religions that do not make use of concepts such as canonisation in the same way as the Christian religion does but have gone through processes that are more or less similar. Such a comparative investigation could be useful, because general knowledge about the process in which people ascribe absolute authority to these texts could be abstracted and used to deepen our understanding of the process of canonisation and the dynamics during one specific phase in this process.

In his paper Platvoet states that the analysis of those religions in which canonical texts play a crucial role has at least areas of interest for the comparative study of religions. The first is the relation of adherents of different canonical religions to the texts or text corpora to which they ascribe absolute authority. The second is the comparison of several aspects of these canonical texts themselves – for example, the ways in which distribution of the texts took place.

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1 Cf. W.C. Smith, What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), IX. Although one could use the latter term instead of the former, we prefer the term ‘canonical texts,’ since this includes oral traditions as well.


In a comparative investigation of the relation of adherents to texts which, to them, signify the standard for right faith, analytical questions can be used to trace the similarities and differences between religions with ‘canonical’ traditions. One of the most important questions within this framework is: How did people attribute authority to canonical texts?\footnote{Platvoet, 1998, 103.}

The answer to this question is the cornerstone of a description of the process of canonisation. Canonical texts are said to be and are regarded as authoritative. However, if this claim is not accepted and if adherents no longer regard these texts as authoritative and meaningful for their faith, the role of canonical texts in religious traditions will be restricted to a minimum.

The question itself of why people ascribe authority to canonical texts evokes a whole new field of investigation and many other questions. One such issue is how and on the basis of which arguments the authority of canonical texts is defended and the extent and limits of this authority.

In this context we can mention R. Fernhout’s \textit{Canonical Texts: Bearers of Absolute Authority}.\footnote{R. Fernhout, \textit{Canonical Texts: Bearers of Absolute Authority. Bible, Koran, Veda, Tipitaka} (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994).} Fernhout compares several aspects of the process of canonisation in various traditions. He also investigates the development of the ascription of authority to canonical texts in order to track down analogies in the development of four canons. To demonstrate this, he introduces the concept ‘entelechy.’\footnote{Fernhout, 1994, 9.} This concept, drawn from the metaphor of the development from a seed into plant and then into fruit, entails that an earlier phase contains the potential that is actualized in a later phase, which again contains a further potential that is actualized in the succeeding phase.
Fernhout discusses the important role of salvific knowledge that can be acquired from canonical texts and should effectuate release from suffering and evil. Means other than canonical texts were presented as providing knowledge of a transcendental reality and were also regarded as effective, e.g. experiences of this reality in dreams, rituals, meditation or prayer. Some thinkers claimed that all ways and means of knowledge are more or less of equal value. Others claimed that only by means of this special kind of knowledge derived from canonical texts could one be released. This latter claim is the starting point of the present investigation.

1.2 The Question of this Study
The present study is a comparative investigation of the claim that canonical texts are the only source from which salvific knowledge of a transcendent reality can be derived in order to obtain release. The central question here is how the claim can be made that human beings can obtain release only by means of the canonical texts as a source of salvific knowledge.

This question leads to other questions that will also be discussed: What basis was given for the authority of canonical texts and what limits were encountered? How was this authority defended? How is a canonical text able to effect release? Is it possible that everyone who reads or hears a canonical text that contains specific knowledge is released under all circumstances? It may be claimed that release is possible only by means of the canonical texts, but does this not put too much stress on the effectivity of the texts? How do those thinkers who defend the authority of canonical texts regard other means (such as sacrifices, meditation, living according to certain rules) that might also play a role in acquiring release? To what extent could the exclusivity of canonical texts as a means to release be maintained? What problems arise in the discussion between the defenders of the exclusivity of canonical texts and their opponents?

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8 We understand that the term ‘salvific’ may, for some, have too much of a Western, Christian feel. However, we have chosen this term, for lack of a better one, to indicate the proper depth of the liberation or salvation in question. We stipulate here that the ‘salvific’ is also to be read in a Hindu sense with reference to ‘liberation’ or ‘release’ and not merely the Christian term ‘salvation.’
We are often inclined to search for the answers to the questions mentioned above by analysing the theory of one thinker or of one religion. It is, however, much more challenging and interesting to investigate two different thinkers or religions. It may be that the solutions and problems with which one of the thinkers had to deal with regard to the texts cast light on the arguments of the other thinker. In this way certain aspects might emerge that could be overlooked if only one thinker had been studied. As Christa Anbeek has stated, exactly because the two religious traditions are so different the analysis of the thesis can be much more deepened. Thus, being different is rather an advantage than a disadvantage. Because two different ways of thinking are confronted with each other, omissions and problems of a thesis can be analysed more carefully. Thus, an important condition has been met in science of religions, i.e. not taking one’s own religion and cultural background as the standard. The question is whether both the advantages and the pitfalls of the strong emphasis on canonical texts as the only means to release will become clearer by investigating the same thesis in two different religions with different views of release and the role of canonical texts in obtaining release.

Comparative research often provokes either negative or positive reactions. Results are often regarded as ‘stating the obvious.’ However, one should ask whether such an opinion does not bring about a blind spot during the comparative research. The same applies for a more positive attitude. Indeed, only after a meticulous analysis of the several elements in their own specific context it is possible to compare these elements with each other.

However, an integral, that is, an understanding science of religion cannot simply end with the determination of similarities or differences. Rather, it will, in its research of religious data, seek that which does correspond, that is, that which speaks at the same time not only for a single datum but for others, that which at the same time enlightens and clarifies the statements of other data. In other words, by comparing some of the representative texts we should keep the question in mind whether the comparison is analogue or homologue.10

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10 Cf. H. Frick: “analogy designates the same function with non-identical origin (Herkunft), homology designates identical origin and different function” (Frick, H.,
From the central question it can be determined that three concepts play a key role in our investigation: ‘canonical texts’, ‘release’ and ‘knowledge.’ Canonical texts provide human persons with salvific knowledge and this specific knowledge is said to be the only means for acquiring release. Canonical texts, salvific knowledge and release thus seem to be inextricably connected with one another. The relation between them could be characterised as functional – after all, the search for release starts with the canonical texts, which function as a source of knowledge. The function of this knowledge is to effectuate release.

Of course, it is almost impossible to define these concepts in such a way that all the aspects that they entail in the religious traditions are included. Moreover, many definitions contain elements that are not relevant to a specific study. Thus, the definitions should be regarded as ‘working definitions’ of these concepts.

The term ‘canonical texts’ has come to designate texts accepted by a religious community as authoritative or divinely inspired. The canon, the collection of canonical texts, is used as the rule of faith (regula fidei) with regard to right doctrine or as the rule of truth (regula veritatis) with regard to a list of texts that can be read in worship services. Authority does not only arise from the texts themselves but is also attributed to them by a community.

The term ‘release’ designates the act of being freed from the misery of human life, oppression and evil. Once release has taken place, in the present life or beyond, a state of bliss or the highest state of well-being is experienced. In several religious traditions different words and different translations are used, such as liberation, salvation and release. In this study we will refer to the term release as the general covering both traditions, but in our discussion of the thinkers themselves we will use the terms they used.

The term ‘knowledge’ in this study often designates a special kind of salvific knowledge. This is special knowledge of a transcendental reality. One should keep in mind that canonical texts contain not only salvific knowledge but also general knowledge of a transcendental reality. The difference between general and salvific

\textit{Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft}, Berlin: 1928, 16). E.g. the concept ‘god’ in Christianity and in Buddhism is only homologue. However, the concept ‘nirvana’ is analogue to the Christian concept of God. Both refer to a transcendental reality.

\footnote{Cf. Platvoet, 1998, 94.}
knowledge is that the latter is a special kind of knowledge that is regarded as the only possible source for the release of human persons.

In order to investigate the role and significance of canonical texts with regard to release as well as the role and significance of salvific knowledge in this process, we chose four questions as a basis for analysing texts from different religions written by defenders of the authority of canonical texts as well as by those who criticize this authority. These four questions are explicitly concerned with the relation between the three most important elements in our central question of investigation, i.e. canonical texts, release and knowledge.

1) In what way is the concept of release defined in the texts and how is release connected with knowledge and with whatever impedes this knowledge?

2) What is the relation between canonical texts and release?

3) What role do both reason as well as rational argumentation play in the general acquirement of knowledge in the process of obtaining release?

4) What are the conditions for being released and what factors prevent human beings from being released?

The answers to these four questions are the starting point for answering the central question in this study: How can the claim be maintained that human being can be released only by means of the canonical texts as a source of salvific knowledge?

With regard to both the Vedas and the Bible, we hope, in this study, to discover the extent and limits of the authority of canonical texts as the exclusive means to release. The most intriguing question is whether the claim of the exclusive role of canonical texts is actually tenable.

Precisely because the function of canonical texts as the exclusive source of knowledge that effectuates release is under discussion in different religious traditions, it will be fascinating to discover whether the arguments used by both proponents and opponents have a logic or plausible rationale in themselves. It might be that the answers to the questions are so diverging from each other that one eventually might conclude that there is no correlation at all.
1.3 Śaṅkara and Gerhard

In order to answer this question we will analyse the texts of two thinkers who represent completely different religious traditions by means of the four questions mentioned in the previous section. The first thinker is Śaṅkara (probably the middle of the eighth century CE) and the second is Johann Gerhard (1582-1637 CE). The texts that Śaṅkara and Gerhard wrote not only contain their own development of their theories regarding their view of the role of canonical texts concerning release but also describe several parts of the discussion in which they defend themselves against their respective opponents Maṇḍana and Rahtmann. These reports will enable us to analyse the arguments and the way in which they respond to other theories. Thus the motives and reasons for defending each position will be explained, but we will also look at the limits as well as the dilemmas that emerge if one accepts this claim that canonical texts are the only means by which one can find release.

1.3.1 Śaṅkara

In dealing with Indian philosophy one should distinguish six orthodox philosophical schools (darśana): the Mīmāṃsā, the Vedānta, the Sāmkhya, the Yoga, the Vaiśeṣika and the Nyāya. They are called ‘orthodox’ because they all accept the authority of the Vedas. The radical Advaita of the Vedānta, a monistic tradition,

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12 It is impossible to determine the exact period in which Śaṅkara lived. According to T.E. Vetter (Studien zur Lehre und Entwicklung Śaṅkaras, (Vienna: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, Sammlung De Nobili, 1979), 1) Śaṅkara lived between 650 CE and 800 CE. By the recent proposal that Śaṅkara’s commentary on the Brahma-sūtras (BS-Bh) was written between 756 and 772 this period can be narrowed down (cf. K. Harimoto, ‘The Date of Śaṅkara: Between the Cālukyas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas’, in Journal of Indological Studies, no. 18, (2006): 85-111). The date of Śaṅkara’s life is related to that of Maṇḍana, whose influence was at its apex around 700 CE and who was probably familiar with Śaṅkara’s works, such as Upadeśasāhasrī Padyabandha (USP) XVIII.

13 In this book many Sanskrit and Latin words will be used throughout the text. Generally, the translation of the term will be given with the Sanskrit or Latin word in brackets.

taught the complete identity of Brahman and the self (âtman). They argued that there is only one reality in which Brahman and the self are identical. However, due to ignorance, this one reality is falsely perceived as dual.

Śaṅkara is one of the most well-known representatives of this radical Advaita. His central thesis is that only the Vedas can give us knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the self. This knowledge leads to release (mokṣa). One of the most important texts is ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asi; Chāndogya Upaniṣad (CtU) VI, 8, 7). ‘You’ (tvam) refers to one’s self (âtman), whereas ‘that’ (tat) refers to Brahman. The understanding that these two are identical can be reached only by recourse to the Vedas: hearing them (sravana), reflecting on them (manana) and contemplating them (niṣidhyāsana).

To discover the arguments Śaṅkara used to defend the Vedas as the only way to attain salvific knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the self, we will analyse texts in which the development of Śaṅkara’s ideas concerning this identity is expressed: [1] Upadeśasāhasrī Padyabandha (USP VII and XVIII) and [2] Upadeśasāhasrī Gadyabandha (USG I) and to Brahmāsūtrakṛtābhāṣya (BSûBh) [3] the introduction of BSûBh plus BSûBh I, 1, 1 - 4 and [4] BSûBh IV, 1, 1 – 2). Of course, in the framework of the present study it is not possible to determine exactly the development of Śaṅkara’s ideas to a full extent. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that Śaṅkara expressed his statements concerning release in different ways: although some thoughts might seem to be contradictory, actually they merely represent several stages. His ideas are neither invariable nor rocklike.

Śaṅkara’s students developed his view further in a far more radical way and opposed philosophers who chose other ways to solve the different problems raised by Śaṅkara’s doctrine of the Vedas regarding release. One of Śaṅkara’s opponents was his contemporary Maṇḍana (circa 700 CE), also an Advaita Vedānta philosopher. In the latter’s book Brahmasiddhi (BSî), part I, he rejects Śaṅkara’s arguments that the Vedas are the only possibility for acquiring knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the self. Maṇḍana argues that ritual acts and continuous meditation (upāsana) are required to acknowledge the identity of the self with Brahman – the Vedas can give us only general knowledge about Brahman. In this way he casts light on the pitfalls of the radical nature of Śaṅkara’s doctrine of the Vedas as the only means by which one becomes aware of the identity between the
self and Brahman and shows that there are other means by which release can be effected.

1.3.2 Johann Gerhard

Johann Gerhard is a representative of so-called Lutheran orthodoxy, the third generation after the sixteenth-century Reformation. In earlier times this period was referred to as Old Protestant Orthodoxy. He assumed that the Holy Scripture, which he regarded as God’s Word, was the only way to salvation. Gerhard defended the Reformation’s motto ‘by Scripture alone’ (sola scriptura). He argued that reading the Scripture and contemplating on its contents were of the utmost importance in obtaining salvation.

His view was criticized by his contemporary Hermann Rahtmann (1585-1628 CE), a Lutheran minister in Danzig. Rahtmann’s books, which concentrated on the question concerning the relation between Scripture and the Spirit, emphasized the importance of the Spirit with regard to salvation. He viewed Scripture not as the real Word of God but only as a written testimony of the Word that God once spoke to people. Without the illumination of the Spirit one could not obtain salvation.

With regard to the development in the thinking of Gerhard we will concentrate on his Loci Theologici (LT), especially on the tractate Tractatus de legitima scripturae sacrae interpretatione (Tr) from the first part of the LT. In this tractate Gerhard describes the place Scripture has in theology and religious life. With regard to the dispute with Rahtmann we will analyse especially his two books Gnadenreich and Wolgegründetes Bedencken as well as Gerhard’s Thesauri consiliorum appendix nova (THESAPP). In this tractate Gerhard gives a thorough treatment of all the arguments used by Rahtmann to defend his views.

1.4 The Structure of the Book

In order to answer the question of how canonical texts are the only source from which salvific knowledge of a transcendent reality can be derived in order to obtain release, we will examine in Part I (Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana) and Part II (Gerhard and

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Rahtmann) the arguments Śaṅkara and Gerhard used in order to defend the claim of the exclusive role of the texts concerning release.

Both parts have a parallel structure. In the first chapter of each part we will introduce philosophical/theological currents contemporary with each thinker, in order to pay more attention to their own philosophical background. In the second chapters we will describe the texts by means of which we will trace the several arguments they have developed to defend the exclusive relation between the respective canonical texts and release. Next, in each third chapter we will analyse the texts by means of the four questions related to the three concepts of knowledge, release and canonical texts as mentioned above. The analysis will provide the building blocks of an overview of the thoughts of Śaṅkara and Gerhard on basis of which the comparison between them may be possible (Part III). The fourth chapter of each part is dedicated to an opponent (Maṇḍana and Rahtmann, respectively) who criticizes the radicality of the solutions chosen by Śaṅkara and Gerhard but who also introduces alternative views with regard to the means of release. The fifth chapter of each part summarizes the argumentation. The heart of Part III is the comparison between the arguments used by Śaṅkara and Gerhard, on the one hand, to defend the exclusive role of canonical texts with regard to release and the arguments of Maṇḍana and Rahtmann, on the other, to deny this role. The comparison of the answers to the four questions that will be used to analyse several texts in Parts I and II will enable us to understand how it was maintained in these two specific situations that canonical texts are the only source from which salvific knowledge can be derived in order to obtain release.

In Part III we also answer the questions related to this aim: What kind of knowledge do canonical texts give us that other means apparently do not? How should one argue for the claim of exclusivity? To which extent can the exclusivity be maintained? What dilemmas emerge in discussions with opponents who deny that release can be obtained only by means of canonical texts? Are the arguments that are used in different religious traditions to defend the exclusive role of canonical texts correspondent? The final chapter will be our ultimate conclusion.
Part I: Śaṅkara

The first part of this study deals with Śaṅkara’s thinking regarding the relation between the Vedas (the canonical texts in Hinduism) and release (mokṣa) on the one hand and the role played by true, valid knowledge (vidyā or jñāna) in this relation on the other. According to Śaṅkara, ‘release’ means ‘being aware of one’s identity with Brahman and the self.’ In Śaṅkara’s commentaries the relation between the Vedas and release is a central theme. By analysing the texts in which Śaṅkara deals with this relation, we will trace the arguments that Śaṅkara introduced to defend the uniqueness of this relation.

The present part contains five chapters. In chapter two we explore the general tenets concerning the epistemology of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Mīmāṁsā and the Yoga to show their influence on Śaṅkara. In chapter three we will take a closer look at some of Śaṅkara’s most important texts that deal with the question of whether the Vedas contain valid knowledge that might lead to release. We have made a representative choice of texts that indicate clearly his view of the relation between release and the Vedas. In chapter four we will analyse the texts that we presented in the second. Chapter five examines Maṇḍanamiśra’s view regarding the question of whether the Vedas are the only means for acquiring knowledge of Brahman. Maṇḍana was also an adherent of Advaita Vedānta but went in a different direction on some issues. By looking at Maṇḍana, we will have a better understanding of Śaṅkara’s argumentation and the consequences of his points of view regarding the Vedas. Chapter six will be the conclusion to Part I.
2 Epistemological Systems in Indian Philosophy

2.1 An Introduction to Epistemology in Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Yoga

The relation between the Vedas, valid knowledge (vidyā) and release (mokṣa) is one of the most important themes in Śaṅkara’s thinking. The texts concerning this relation often give the impression that the only road to release is the possession of valid knowledge, which must be attained through the Vedas. With respect to this relation, Śaṅkara’s philosophy was built on important elements of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Mīmāṃsā and the Yoga. Therefore, it is necessary to look more closely at these three philosophical schools (darśana) with respect to their views on valid knowledge and the way to acquire this on the one hand and their conception of the Vedas as a means for acquiring knowledge about the transcendental reality on the other.

The term ‘philosophical school’ (darśana) appears almost immediately in every book dealing with Indian philosophy. This term denotes the various orthodox philosophical schools, of which the following six are the most well known: the Mīmāṃsā,1 the Vedānta, the Sāmkhya, the Yoga, the Vaiśeṣika and the Nyāya. They are called ‘orthodox’, because they all accept the authority of the Vedas, although each substantiates that in a different way.

Philosophical ‘views’ or ‘systems’ should not be interpreted as purely theoretical systems in the European sense.2 The ultimate purpose of most Indian philosophical systems is final release from the cycle of rebirth and its inherent deficiency and distress. Knowledge is considered of utmost importance for release in nearly all systems. Consequently, Indian philosophical systems generally demonstrate great concern about the nature, validity and the means of knowledge. Knowledge itself as well as the way in which valid knowledge could be attained are central themes. Thus epistemology, indicating the whole complex of questions regarding valid knowledge, plays an important role, knowledge being considered as the key to the right view of reality and therefore to release (mokṣa). The characteristics of valid knowledge are considered to be relevant with regard not only

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1 The term Mīmāṃsā here refers to the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā. This school is concerned with the inquiry into and the performance of rituals, being the subject of the former (pūrva) part of the Vedas. The term Vedānta is used when we deal with investigation into the Vedānta (the latter part of the Vedas, i.e. the upaniṣads).

to epistemological questions but also to metaphysical ones, e.g. those regarding Brahman and the identification of the self.

Each school has its own series of aphorisms (sūtras) and commentaries (bhāsyas) on these aphorisms. These are attributed to a teacher, who is very often untraceable historically. In the next part of this chapter we will deal with parts of the sūtras of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the Mīmāṃsā and the Yoga, insofar they existed before Śaṅkara. This will be done by a brief investigation into, respectively, the NyāyaSūtra (NS) and its Bhāsyā (NSBh) in the second section, the MīmāṃsāSūtra (MS) of Jaimini and its Bhāṣya (MSBh) of Śabara in the third and the YogaSūtra (YS) and its Bhāṣya (YSBh) in the fourth.

2.2 The Epistemology of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika

The Nyāya concerns the technique of ‘reasoning’, i.e. rational argumentation. Over time this philosophical school merged with the probably somewhat older Vaiśeṣika, which advocated an atomistic ‘natural philosophy.’ This accounts for the frequent appearance of the term Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.

The NyāyaSūtra (NS), which is ascribed to Gautama, an author who is historically not traceable, is composed of two parts: debates on rules (tarkaśāstra) and metaphysics (adhyātmavidyā). Thus, the NyāyaSūtra, famous for its acute analysis of discursive thought, also has substantial sections on suffering, the self, and release. Reason is practised here for the sake of release.

In our investigation we will deal briefly with the epistemology of the NyāyaSūtra, especially with the aphorisms (sūtras) regarding valid means of knowledge and the position of the Vedas as such a means. The NyāyaSūtra contains five chapters (adhyāya), each of which is subdivided into two parts (āhnika). The first chapter enumerates and defines the sixteen main topics of Nyāya philosophy. The remaining four chapters with their eight parts are devoted to the ‘critical examination’ (parīkṣā) of some of the main topics.
The first aphorism enumerates the sixteen categories of means that lead to true knowledge.3

From the true knowledge of the means of valid knowledge, [i.e.] object of knowledge (prameya), doubt, purpose, example, established tenet, components of syllogism (avayava), hypothetical argument (tarka), ascertainment (nirnaya), discussion (vāda), disputation (jalpa), fallacious controversy (vitaṇḍā), fallacious [logical] reasons (hetvābhāsa), deceitful disputation (chala), self-confuting reply based on similarity or dissimilarity (jāti), and occasion for refutation (nigrāhasthāna), [there is] attainment of the supreme good.4

These sixteen categories are elaborated in the other four chapters of the NS. It is remarkable that fifteen of the categories in NS I, 1, 1 bear an epistemological character. Only one category, namely the object of valid knowledge (prameya), refers to metaphysical objects.

The second aphorism deals with the way in which one can stop transmigration: ‘Suffering, birth, activity, faults, and false knowledge – when each previous one is removed as consequence of the removal of the one immediately following it exemption from further transmigration (apavarga) is attained.’5 This aphorism shows the connection between valid knowledge and release. Valid knowledge can only be based on a means of knowledge. Since false knowledge indirectly causes suffering, it follows that valid knowledge, being the contrary of false knowledge, ultimately ends all suffering. False knowledge can be removed by true knowledge

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3 The following edition will be used here: Nyāyadarśanam, With Vātsyāyana’s Bhāṣya, Uddyotakara’s Vārttika, Vācaspati Miśra’s Tātparyaṭīkā and Viśvanātha’s Vṛtti, vol. I-II, ed. by T. Nyaya-Tarkatirtha and A. Tarkatirtha, Rinsen Sanskrit Text Series, vol I, 1-2, (Tokyo: Rinsen, 1982). Translations and commentaries that are used are mentioned in the bibliography.

4 ‘pramāṇaprameyasārayaprayojanadṛśṭāntasiddhāntavatarkanirṇayaavāda-jalpavitaṇḍāhetvābhāsaacchalajātinigrāhasthānaṁ tattvajñanāṁ niḥśreyasaādhigamaḥ’, (NS I, 1, 1).

5 ‘duḥkhajanmapravṛttidosamithyājñānāṁ uttarottarāpāye tadanantarāpāyād apavargaḥ’, (NS I, 1, 2).
and the removal of false knowledge leads to the removal of faults. Once faults are removed, activity stops, and the lack of activity leads to the cessation of rebirth. If one is not reborn, one has escaped suffering and is consequently freed from transmigration.

The third aphorism lists the four means of valid knowledge, in consequence of the categories of valid knowledge: ‘[Sense] perception, inference, comparison [based on analogy] and verbal testimony are the means of valid knowledge.’

One might expect that this aphorism would have been preceded by a definition of the concept ‘means of valid knowledge’ (pramāṇa). Paksilasvāmin Vātsyāyana, the first known commentator on the NS, deals with the definition of a means of valid knowledge in the opening phrase of the commentary on the NS. He states: ‘a means of valid cognition possesses the object, because of the appropriateness of [human] activity [with regard to the object] when the object is cognized through a means of valid cognition.’ V.A. van Bijnert notes that ‘the correct knowledge brought forth by a means of valid cognition enables the cognizer to act with regard to objects, and enables him (or her) to make the appropriate choices concerning these objects.’

Correct knowledge has practical value inasmuch as it permits us to choose between what gives happiness and what will cause grief. What is to be abandoned is that which gives us pain and misery. With true knowledge we can get to know the causes of pain and remove them.

The fourth, the fifth, the sixth and the seventh aphorism define the four means of knowledge, which are mentioned in the third aphorism. ‘Knowledge, which arises

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6 ‘pratyakṣānumānopamānaśabdāḥ pramāṇāni’, (NS I, 1, 3).
7 ‘pramāṇato ’rthapratipattau pravṛttisāmarthyād arthavat pramāṇam’, (NS I, 1, 5); cf. also the explanation of this definition by V.A. van Bijlert, Epistemology and Spiritual Authority: The Development of Epistemology and Logic in the Old Nyāya and the Buddhist School of Epistemology, with an Annotated Translation of Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavārttika II (Pramāṇasiddhi) vv. 1-7, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 20, ed. by E. Steinkellner, (Vienna: Universität, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien), 1989, 4.
from the contact of a sense with its object is perception, [it] cannot be described [by words], is non-erratic and has a definite character."\(^{10}\) The first part of the definition (indriyārthasannikarṣotpannam jñānam) distinguishes perception from indirect knowledge. Sensory perception is primarily defined as knowledge that emanates from the senses and their objects. The second part of the definition mentions three characteristics of valid knowledge. The first characteristic, avyapadeśya, signifies that the knowledge of an object derived from perception has no connection with the name of a thing. The second characteristic, avyavabhicāri, is that knowledge should be non-erratic or unfailing, which can be best explained by an example: in summer the sun’s rays, when coming into contact with the heat of the earth, quiver and to the human eye appear to be like water. But the knowledge of water derived in this way is not an unfailing perception: the sun’s rays seem to be like water, but have nothing to do with ‘real water’. A non-erratic perception is the perception of an object as it actually is. The third characteristic, vyavasāyātmaka, implies that definitive knowledge is attained only after one sees the object with the eyes. Just as the object perceived by the senses is eventually perceived by the mind, so also an object is definitively apprehended by the mind after being definitively apprehended by the senses.

‘After that inference, which is preceded by [perception], and is threefold: [inference] having the antecedent as the probans, [inference] having the consequent as the probans, and [inference] based on common observation.’\(^{11}\) Inference (knowledge of something that is not acquired by sense perception) has three forms. The first kind of inference is the knowledge of effect derived from the perception of

\(^{10}\) ‘indriyārthasannikarṣotpannam jñānam avyapadeśyam avyabhicāri vyavasāyātmakaṃ prayāksam’, (NS I, 1, 4).

its cause (from clouds building up [the cause] the coming rain [effect] can be inferred). If perception does not take place, there is nothing to be inferred. The second kind is knowledge in which the cause is inferred from the effect (the stream is fuller and the current swifter [effect] which means that there has been rain [cause]). The third is the perception of an object somewhere that was previously seen elsewhere due to its movement. For example, seeing that the sun has changed position, one infers on that basis that the sun also possesses motion [albeit] not immediately perceived. If objects are always seen to be in motion when they change place, it is possible to infer the motion of the sun because it changes its position in the sky during the day.

‘Comparison is the means of [valid] knowledge of an object [derived] from its similarity to another well-known object.’\(^{12}\) Comparison indicates the association of a thing previously unknown by name through its similarity with some other known thing. For example, if one who, having seen a cow at home, goes into the woods and sees a wild cow, he will not immediately recognize it as a wild cow. Yet, because he knows the characteristics of the cow at home, he will notice certain resemblances between the two. From the experience of the first cow he gains the additional knowledge that his cow at home is like the wild cow. Comparison is the means by which the judgment of the cow’s similarity to the wild cow is formed from the perception of the resemblances.

‘Verbal testimony is the instruction by a reliable person.’\(^{13}\) Only those statements that consist of instructions are to be regarded as containing valid knowledge. The immediate experience of a thing or fact constitutes the expertise of the expert.\(^{14}\) However, a reliable statement provides not only practical information but also information with regard to objects that are not manifest to the senses.\(^{15}\) Such statements cannot be verified by sense perception. Instead, we must infer their validity by the trustworthiness of the speaker. A reliable person, thus, must have

\(^{12}\) ‘prasiddhasādharmyāt sādhyasādhanam upamānām’, (NS I, 1, 6).
\(^{13}\) ‘āptopadeśaḥ śabdāḥ’, (NS I, 1, 7).
\(^{14}\) Van Bijlert, 1989, 17.
\(^{15}\) Van Bijlert, 1989, 18.
direct knowledge of an object and be motivated by the desire to communicate to others the object as known directly by him. In his commentary Vātsyāyana regarded the seers as reliable sources of knowledge concerning Dharma. Since Vācaspati and Udayana Īśvara has been regarded as a seer.

In consequence, the objects of knowledge are determined as follows: ‘Self, body, sense, objects of senses, intellect, mind, actions, evil, rebirth (or: future life), result, suffering and release are the objects of valid knowledge.’

We turn, finally, to NS II, 1, which deals with the concept of verbal testimony. According to an opponent, ‘verbal testimony is but inference, because the objects denoted by the words being unperceived are inferentially known.’ The opponent claims that inference gives knowledge of an unperceived object through the knowledge of an object that is perceived. Similarly, verbal testimony enables us to acquire the knowledge of an unperceived object through the knowledge of a word that is perceived.

‘[Verbal testimony is but inference] because there is no duality between the cognitions’ and ‘... there is [the same] connection.’ In opposition to the Nyāya, the opponent argues that in inference as well as in verbal testimony we pass to an unperceived object through a perceived object. With respect to the perceptibility of the object through which we pass, inference does not differ from verbal testimony. Had the two means of knowledge (pramāṇas) been different, the resulting knowledge would also have been different. In the opponent’s view, there is a

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16 Cf. also Van Bijlert, 1989, 30-34 regarding the trustworthiness of the speaker.
17 It is said that seers are able to observe the Dharma directly. They transmit the texts, mantras, via oral instruction to those of a later period who are not in such a position. The sanskrit word for ‘seer’ is rṣi.
18 In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Īśvara is the ‘Lord’ who created the cosmos.
19 ‘ātmaśaṅkṛitṛthabuddhimanahpravṛttidosapretyahbhāvaphaladuhkhāpavargās tu prameyam’, (NS I, 1, 9).
20 ‘śabdo'numānam arthasyānupalabdher anumeyatvāt’, (NS II, 1, 49).
21 ‘upalabdher advipraṃvṛttitvāt’, (NS II, 1, 50).
22 ‘sambandhāc ca’, (NS II, 1, 51).
difference between inference and comparison but not one between inference and verbal testimony.

In reply to these arguments, the Nyāya states: ‘There is agreement of the object denoted by a word in consequence of the power of the instruction of trustworthy person.’ We rely on unseen matter not only because it is signified by words but also because they are spoken by a reliable person. Hence, verbal testimony is not inference. In the case of verbal testimony one needs to decide whether the sign (word) comes from a reliable person.

Before we turn to the MīmāṃsāSūtra (MS) in the next section, we will summarize the most important elements of the aphorisms we examined above.

The Nyāya argues that the relation between a word and its meaning forms the basis on which the reliability of the word rests. However, a statement is not to be trusted simply because of the conventional relation between word and meaning. The validity of the word also depends necessarily on an external (paratah) means of knowledge, e.g. a reliable person. The word does not possess authority ‘of itself’ (svatah). Only the word of an expert and a reliable source can yield true knowledge and only then can one speak of verbal testimony.

With regard to the Vedas, this implies that, if the Vedas are reliable and valid, their words should be traced back to a reliable person (āpta), who functions as an external means of knowledge. Such a reliable person has to be acquainted with the content of the Vedas, he should have compassion for people and must be willing to share his knowledge with other people. Vedic seers were considered to be reliable sources of knowledge concerning Dharma. Since Udayana Īśvara has been regarded as such. However, this change does not alter the fact that the reliability of the knowledge with regard to Dharma still depends on an external means of knowledge.

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23 ‘āptopadeśasāmarthyāc chabdād arthasampratyayāḥ’, (NS II, 1, 52).
24 The term svatah-prāmānya signifies that the authority of a means of knowledge (e.g. the Vedas) is intrinsic. This means that the authority does not depend on other objects or words.
2.3 The Epistemology of the Mīmāṃsā

With regard to the opinion of the Mīmāṃsā concerning the way in which one could acquire knowledge of Dharma, we will investigate the first chapter (adhyāya) of the Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra (MS). The aphorisms are divided into twelve chapters (adhyāyas), and each chapter is made up of sections (pādas) that are subdivided into smaller sections (adhikaranaś). Each smaller section deals with one point of discussion and arrives at a conclusion by means of several arguments. Of the thirty-two aphorisms that make up the first chapter, the first five concentrate on the Vedas as a means of knowledge (vedaprāmāṇya) of Dharma, aphorisms 6-23 treat the eternity of the Vedas (śabdaniityata) and aphorisms 27-32 deal with the impersonal origin of the Vedas (vedāpauruseyatva). In our present investigation we will deal especially with the question of whether the Vedas are a valid means of knowledge. Most attention will therefore be paid to the first five aphorisms.

The first aphorism (sūtra) states: ‘After that therefore an inquiry after [the nature of] Dharma.’ In his commentary (bhāṣya), Śabara deals with the question of whether one should first learn the Vedas and then inquire into Dharma or that the inquiry into Dharma can also take place before. Śabara defends the first option. The word ‘after’ means that the Vedas are the basis of the investigation into Dharma. Someone who is not acquainted with the text of the Vedas cannot start to inquire into Dharma.

The second aphorism is connected with the first and defines Dharma: ‘Dharma is something useful that has an injunction as its token.’ Śabara explains this as follows: an injunction provides knowledge that is not accessible by the sense organs; it makes known something that cannot be perceived. A human injunction given by people could turn out to be false. But in the case of the Vedas falsification is not possible, and thus [Vedic] injunctions should considered to be true. This thesis presupposes the authority of the Vedas. People are guided to release by [Vedic] injunctions. The opponent asks why one should then not investigate the means that

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25 We will use the following editions: Śabara-bhāṣya, Vol. 1, Adhyāyas I - III, Gaekwad’s Oriental Series, vol LXVI, translated into English by Gaṅgānātha Jhā (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1933) and U. Miśra, Index to the English Translation of Śabara-bhāṣya, Gaekwad’s Oriental Series, vol. CIII, (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1945).
26 ‘āthāto dharmajijñāsā’, (MS I, 1, 1).
27 ‘cudanālakṣaṇo artho dharmaḥ’, (MS I, 1, 2).
lead to release. Śabara’s reply is that those means that provide release fall under the word ‘Dharma.’

Since Dharma is beyond this world and does not have distinctive features, it cannot be defined. Moreover, Dharma cannot be perceived by the senses, and what is absolutely beyond the senses cannot be grasped by inference. But how is it possible then to know Dharma? These questions are answered in the aphorisms 3-5. The third aphorism introduces the answer to the above question: ‘[Now] an inquiry into the means (of knowledge of Dharma).’

In the fourth aphorism a definition of sense perception is given first. Subsequently, it is considered whether sense perception could be a valid means of knowledge of Dharma: ‘The origin of the knowledge of a person, when there is contact of the sense-organs, that is sense-perception; and this is not the cause [of knowledge of Dharma] because it apprehends what [already] exist.’ Because Dharma is beyond perception, sense perception can never be a means of knowledge of Dharma. If sense perception is not a valid means of knowledge, this implies that any other means that is based on sense perception (such as inference, presumptive reasoning and negation) is also to be rejected.

The fifth aphorism deals with the means by which knowledge of Dharma can be acquired:

But the inborn relation of a word with an object is the [cause of] knowledge [of Dharma]; and it is instruction, and not failing with regard to an object which is not perceived (by other means of knowledge); it is authoritative, according to Bādarāyaṇa, because it is independent.

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28 ‘tasya nimittaparīśṭh’, (MS I, 1, 3).
29 ‘satsamprayoge puruṣasyendriyāṇāṃ buddhijanma tatpratyakṣam animittam vidya-mānopalambhanatvāt’, (MS I, 1, 4).
30 ‘autpattikas tu śabdasyārthena saṃbandhaḥ / tasya jñānam upadesaḥ avyatirekaś cārtheṇuupalabdhe / tatpramāṇaṃ bādarāyaṇasyānapekṣatvāt’, (MS I, 1, 5). Bādarāyaṇa is regarded as the author of the Vedāntasūtras.
The connection between a word and its meaning are inborn or natural. Consequently, this connection is not a human work: it is not created but eternal. Moreover, it implies that a word and its meaning are not separable.

The discussion in this aphorism regarding the connection between a word and its meaning is important. The word provides us with knowledge, but why – the opponent asks – does the word not lead to knowledge when it is heard the first time? The reply is that human experience shows that the meaning of a word that is heard is understood only after hearing it repeatedly, for only then can the listener determine what the word is that refers to the object (*samjñā*) and what the object is that is expressed by the word (*samjñī*). Thus, if one hears a word, the object to which the word refers is known.

However, if something or someone (for example a god, Dharma) cannot be perceived, it is useless to define it; it cannot be given a meaning. For a definition can be given and the meaning of a word make sense only if it refers to something special and if it makes that special thing known. Therefore, things which cannot be known cannot be defined. The relation between a word and the object to which it refers is not made by humans (*apauruṣeya*). Due to its being independent of another person (*puruṣāntaram*) or of other knowledge (*pratyayāntaram*), it is a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). The conclusion, then, is that Dharma has only the (Vedic) injunctions (*codana*) as its sign (*lakṣaṇāḥ*) and nothing else.

The means by which something can be known is called a means of knowledge. Consequently, both perception and a word can be means of knowledge. It was proven previously in the commentary on the fourth aphorism that perception

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31 E. Frauwallner, *Materialien zur ältesten Erkenntnislehre der Karmamīmāṃsā,* Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften; Philosophisch-Historische Klasse; Sitzungsberichte 259, vol. 2, Abhandlung; Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Süd- und Ostasiens, Heft 6, (Vienna: Verlag der Oesterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1968), 36-37. The following discussion was not held between Śabara and an opponent but between the Vṛttikāra (the author of a commentary on an aphoristic rule) and an opponent who was probably a Buddhist. Cf. also the text (Frauwallner, 1968, 24, 16), Frauwallner’s translation (at 25) and his commentary (at 107-113).

33 Frauwallner, 1968, 48-49.
34 Frauwallner, 1968, 48 - 49.
and all other means that are based on perception are not able to function as valid means of knowledge concerning Dharma. Therefore, the only means that remains to acquire knowledge of Dharma is the word.

Another important topic mentioned in this commentary is that by means of negation it is possible to make known something that cannot be perceived.35 The self (ātman) can only be known by the person who ‘owns’ the self. This person, however, cannot make his self known to another person. He can only describe it by means of negation, by stating that the self is different from other things which he (i.e. the person contrary to the self) knows indeed. The fact that the self can only be known by negation does not mean that the self does not exist at all. It could be compared to someone who can see is not able to indicate colour to a blind man. Despite the fact that the blind man cannot see the colour described to him, this does not mean that the colour does not exist.

The authenticity of the aphorisms 6-23 is disputed: it is questioned whether they originally belonged to the first chapter.36 These aphorisms deal with the eternity of the Vedic words in reply to an opponent who assumes, on the basis of six reasons, that the word is brought into existence by the uttering of it (6-11). The reply given in the aphorisms 12-23 introduces arguments to convince the opponent that ‘in fact (the word) must be regarded as eternal, because the word is for another purpose.’37 The meaning of a sentence is nothing more than the meaning of the words linked together.

Aphorisms 27-32, which make up the last part of the first chapter, deal with the origin of the Vedas. Are the Vedas the work of a personal author or not? ‘According to some people the Vedas are the work of human authors, because they are named

37 ‘nityas tu syāt, darśanasya parārthatvāt’, (MS I, 1, 18).
after men (27) and also because [in them] we find many non-eternal things (28)." If the opponent is able to defend the thesis that the Vedas have a human author, they would not be a trustworthy means for inquiring into Dharma. Words spoken by people are not eternal and are liable to discrepancies. Moreover, if the Vedas are not eternal, this implies that the injunctions they contain are not eternal either. But if the Vedas are eternal, they are not affected by the discrepancies to which human words are liable.

Before we turn to the YogaSūtra in the next section, we will mention the four most important elements in the five aphorisms we examined.

The first element is that, in the Mīmāṃsāist view, knowledge of Dharma cannot be generated by the senses but only by means of Vedic injunctions. Dharma is not perceptible and is unverifiable. Consequently, it is not possible to attain Dharma by means of knowledge that are based on sense perception.

The second element is the validity of knowledge. All knowledge is self-validating (svatah-pramāṇa). It depends neither on any other extraneous condition nor on any other knowledge for its validity. The authority of the Vedas in such matters is self-evident and all the more so because the Vedas are eternal (nitya), uncreated and not traceable to a person.

The relation between a word and its meaning is the third element that also plays an important role. The meaning of words are known to us, because the relation between the significance of a word and the word itself is considered to be eternal. The relation between a word and its meaning, therefore, is inherent. Due to this inherence, the word provides true information in and of itself. If words are put together in a sentence, there is no essential change: the meaning of a sentence as a whole consists in the sum of the meaning of the words.

The fourth element is the Mīmāṃsāist view of verbal testimony (śabda-pramāṇa): we acquire knowledge about things by understanding the meaning of the words. The connection between a word and its meaning is inherent and the meaning

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38 ‘vedāṃś caike sannikarṣaṃ puruṣākhyāḥ’, (MS I, 1, 27); ‘anityadarśanāc ca’, (MS I, 1, 28).
39 This means in Mīmāṃsā that the Vedas have no beginning nor end in time. The original meaning was ‘permanent.’
of sentences is the compilation of the meaning of the words of that sentence. This element is related to the theory of self-validating character of knowledge. Just as knowledge is self-validating, words and groups of words (from which we acquire knowledge) are self-validating as well, if they are not falsified by people, for the source of unreliability lies with the person who combines the words in a sentence. Because the Vedas are not indebted to a person they are reliable, according to the Mīmāṃśā.

2.4 The Epistemology of the Yoga

Within Sāmkhya two schools can be distinguished: first, the actual philosophical school that dealt with logical, theoretical knowledge and, secondly, the school that focussed on different kinds of spiritual exercises to achieve (a) states of suppression (niruddha), (b) release from rebirth and (c) supernatural powers. The most well-known representatives of these schools are, respectively, Vṛṣagana and Patañjali. Only much later did Yoga become an independent school with a few specific theories, some of which show dependence on Buddhist theories.

The YogaSūtra (YS) is a compilation of different parts that are only loosely connected to one another. In any case, we should distinguish between the niruddha-yoga dealt with in the first chapter and the eightfold path of yoga in the second and third chapters.

YS I, 2 states that Yoga consists in the suppression of (all) processes of the mind (cittavṛtti-niruddha). YS I, 3 says that in such a state the soul appears in its true


41 Patañjalayogadarśanam. Vācaspatimiśra-viracita-tattvavaiśaradī-vijñānabhikṣu-krta-yogavārtika-vibhūṣita-vyāsabha-syasametam ... Śrīnāraṇānyaśmiśreṇa ṭīpāṇī-pariśiṣṭādibhiḥ saha sampūditam - dvitiya sanskaraṇa (Vārāṇasi, Bhāratīya vidyā Prakāṣana, 1981) is the edition that is used. Secondary literature that was also consulted is mentioned in the bibliography.

form. YS I, 6-11 describe the five processes that should be suppressed; among them is right knowledge of an object by means of three means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

YS II-III describe the Yoga that consists of eight parts (*aṅgāni*). These parts are the fivefold (self-)restraint (*yama*), the fivefold control (*niyama*), sitting (*āsanam*), the breathing exercise (*prāṇyāma*), withdrawal of the sense organs (*pratyāhāra*), fixation of the spirit on one point (*dhāraṇā*), consideration (*dhyānam*), and concentration (*samādhi*) (II, 29). Through the first five, external, parts one withdraws the sense organs from external objects. As a result of this withdrawal, the senses are totally subjugated. The last three, internal, parts guide one immediately to concentration and then to knowledge. Through knowledge one realizes the distinction between the soul and (the most subtle parts of) matter and will no longer be reborn. This path is preceded by preparative exercises, the work-yoga (*kṛīyayoga*): ascesis (*tapas*), the study of the Vēdas (*svādhyāya*) and contemplation of God (*Īśvarapraṇidhānam*). The exercises serve to weaken one’s defilements and promote concentration.

The difference between the two forms is clear. In the eightfold path practitioners aim at release from ‘matter’ and rebirth by acquiring the highest knowledge through yoga. In *nirodha-yoga* one tries to attain a mystical experience by temporarily eliminating all activity of the mind and thus dissolving the connection between mind and soul. In the eightfold path the capacity for knowledge is elevated as high as possible. In *nirodha-yoga* every activity of the mind is suppressed by yoga and all knowledge put aside.

In the eightfold path the goal is to be released from transmigration and rebirth. Consequently, it is important to know the factors that cause transmigration. In YS II, 24 ignorance is mentioned as a cause of bondage to transmigration. Ignorance and passion form together a group of psychological evils, defilements (*kleśa*; e.g. in YS II, 3). There are five defilements: ignorance (*avidyā*), consciousness of existence (*asmitā*), desire (*rāga*), hate (*dveṣa*) and the desire to live (*abhiniveṣa*). Ignorance, listed first, is the root of the other four defilements. The defilements cause actions (*karma*) that are considered to be the direct cause of rebirth, life span and experiences (YS II, 12 - 13). As long as these defilements exist, these actions continue to bear fruit. However, the eightfold path does not concentrate on the
immediate suppression of either the actions or the other defilements. The goal is to eliminate ignorance, which is regarded as the basis of all other defilements and of actions.

Now we will discuss some details in the first book of the YS that might contribute to understanding Śaṅkara’s epistemological arguments. The YS had its own tradition of commentaries that tried to present the YS as a unity. We will disregard these attempts but refer to the most important commentary, Vyāsa’s bhāṣya, to explain the meaning of words in the Śūtra, referring sometimes in the footnotes to another subcommentary (vivaraṇa), traditionally ascribed to Śaṅkara. One should, however, note that Śaṅkara's authorship of this subcommentary is disputed at the present time.43 We will examine YS I, 7 (regarding the means of valid knowledge), YS I, 28-29 (the OM sound) and YS I, 48 (the relation between yoga and knowledge).

YS I, 7 gives an enumeration of the means of knowledge: ‘A means of knowledge (pramāṇa) is either direct perception, inference or verbal authority (āgama).’44 Three remarks should be made with regard to this aphorism. First, the context in which this enumeration is given is negative: in the end one does not need any means of knowledge (pramāṇa) to attain yoga. Secondly, one should note that pramāṇa here signifies the result of the means of knowledge, i.e. valid knowledge itself. This meaning differs from the usual one, i.e. a means of knowledge. Thirdly, the word āgama is derived from the root āgam, which in this context signifies ‘to know.’ The substantive, then, means ‘originating from what is heard from a reliable person.’

Vyāsa regards perception as ‘that right knowledge which arises as a modification of the inner organ when the mind has been affected by some external thing through the channel of the sense-organs. It is chiefly concerned with the ascertainment of individual aspects of a thing.’45 The result of perception is an

44 ‘pratyākṣānumāṇāgamaḥ pramāṇāni’, (YS I, 7).
45 Cf. J.H. Woods, The Yoga-System of Patañjali or the Ancient Hindu Doctrine of Concentration of Mind, Embracing Mnemonic Rules, Called YogaSūtras, of Patañjali and the Comment, Called YogaBhāṣya, Attributed to Veda-Vyāsa and the Explanation, Called
illumination ‘by the self’ (pauruṣeya) of a fluctuation that belongs to the mind. This illumination is not distinguished from the [fluctuation] (aviśiṣṭa).

Inference is [that] fluctuation [of the mind] which refers to that relation (sambandha) which is present in things belonging to the same class as the subject that should be inferred (anumeya) and absent from things belonging to classes different [from that of the subject that should be inferred].

Finally, Vyāsa relates verbal authority to the person who speaks:

A thing which has been seen or inferred by a reliable person is mentioned by word in order that his knowledge [thereof] may pass over to some other person. The fluctuation [in the mind] of the hearer which arises from that word and which relates to the object intended by that [word] is [knowledge] that comes from [verbal authority] (āgama) .... But if the original utterer has himself seen or inferred the thing, [then the verbal communication] would be unwavering.

In short, a person who can be regarded as a reliable and trustworthy speaker can be recognized by two characteristics: he is an expert and he does not have bad intentions.

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48 The subcommentary (vivrāṇa; Viv.) states that if an original speaker has seen or inferred an object, if it derives from the Lord (Īśvara) as the first speaker, there is no reason to doubt, for his authority as a speaker of truth is unquestionable; cf. T. Leggett, The Complete Commentary by Śaṅkara on the Yoga Sūtra’s: A Full Translation of the Newly Discovered Text, (London/New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1990), 84; Viv., 33, 1.
YS I, 23-29 deal with the devotion ofĪśvara⁴⁹ (Īśvarapraṇidhāna⁵⁰) as a means to attain yoga. In her dissertation A. Nugteren elaborates the role of Īśvarapraṇidhāna as it is used by the commentators on the YS. These aphorisms deal first with the nature and characteristics of Īśvara. Subsequently, it is assumed that by continuously repeating the syllable OM, which expresses Īśvara (I, 27) the yogin is made ready for the final access to interior consciousness. Through repetition the meaning of OM will be realised and actualised.⁵¹

YS I, 28 pays attention to the relation between meditation and verbal testimony: ‘Murmuring [of the OM-sound and] meditation on that account [should be made].’⁵² This aphorism is important, because it implicitly states that through murmuring the OM sound the Lord is verbally communicated in knowledge.⁵³Vyāsa

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⁴⁹Īśvara is a special kind of the Self, who is untouched by defilements or karma; he is at all times liberated (YS I, 24). In Īśvara the seed of the omniscient is present par excellence (YS I, 25), which implies that Īśvara is regarded as omniscient. Other yogins can catch up with him, but Īśvara has always been omniscient.

⁵⁰We do not translate Īśvara in the compound Īśvarapraṇidhāna. Praṇidhāna can be translated as devotion (to indicate the respectful approach), as surrender (to indicate the element of renunciation or abandonment) and generally as reflection or meditation (to indicate Īśvara as the object of one’s concentration). Īśvarapraṇidhāna is presented as one of the methods for attain final insight and release. The vision of one’s own real self is essential for the progress towards the state in which all mental fluctuations have come to a standstill (sarvanirodha) and the mind is empty of all final traces. Cf. A. Nugteren, God as an Alternative? The Meditative Process of Īśvarapraṇidhāna in the Yogasūtras of Patañjali and the Commentaries on Them, (Louvain/Apeldoorn: Garant, 1991), 32 and 107.

⁵¹In the subcommentary Īśvarapraṇidhāna has three stages, i.e. instruction, reasoning and meditative practice, which are parallel to the three classical stages of hearing, reflecting and contemplating (śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana); cf. Nugteren, 1991, 107-11 and 117.

⁵²‘tajjapas tadarthabhāvanam’, (YS I, 28).

argues that in the case of a yogin who thus repeats the mystic syllable and reflects upon its meaning, the mind attains directedness at one point.\textsuperscript{54}

YS I, 29 describes what happens after the repetition of the OM sound: ‘From that also realization of the internal consciousness and absence of obstacles.’\textsuperscript{55} The complete worship of Īśvara is not only valuable in itself but also guides one to a manifestation of the unique nature of the seer (YS I, 3), here called the realization of the internal consciousness, and to the absence of obstacles. In his commentary Vyāsa pays attention to the way in which the yogin comes to right knowledge:

Whatever obstacles there be, disease and the rest, all these are removed by devotion to the Īśvara, and [the yogin] comes to a sight of his own real self. He has the right knowledge which sees that as the Īśvara is a Self and is undefiled and undisturbed [by hindrances] and isolated and exempt from accidents, so he also is a self, conscious [by reflection] of its thinking-substance.\textsuperscript{56}

YS I, 48 is an aphorism of which the comment is interesting: ‘In this, the knowledge contains truth in itself.’\textsuperscript{57} Vyāsa’s commentary deals with the ways in which one can attain the highest yoga:

The knowledge which appears in that clearness of the mind in concentration (samādhi) has the special name of truth-bearing, in the literal sense that it brings truth alone and there is no trace of erroneous knowledge in it. So it is said: by scriptural authority, by inference, and by zest for meditation practice – in these three ways perfecting his knowledge, he attains the highest yoga.\textsuperscript{58}

In these aphorisms and in Vyāsa’s commentary on them, three elements are important with regard to our investigation. First, the means of valid knowledge, namely direct perception, inference or verbal authority (YS I, 7) remind us of

\textsuperscript{54} Cf. Woods, 1966, 61.
\textsuperscript{55} ‘tataḥ pratyakṣetanādhigamo 'py antarāyābhāvaś ca.’
\textsuperscript{56} Cf. Woods, 1996, 62.
\textsuperscript{57} ‘ṛtambhara tatra prajñā’, (YS I, 48).
\textsuperscript{58} Cf. Leggett, 1990, 168. These three elements remind us of the three ways of Īśvarapraṇidhāna, mentioned in YS I, 28, and of the classical sequence of hearing, reflecting and contemplating (śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana).
Śaṅkara’s epistemology, although verbal authority is mentioned there as the most important means to valid knowledge regarding Brahman. In YS I, 7 no preference is made.

Secondly, Vyāsa states in his commentary on YS I, 7 that if the speaker is reliable, the word he speaks is authoritative. The relation between the authority of the words and the reliability of the speaker (āpta) that is stated here is a point of view that was also adopted by the Nyāya. Śaṅkara, however, had to find another way to ground the authority of the [Vedic] words, for he did not accept Brahman as the personal author of the Vedas.

Finally, the three ways to reach the highest yoga (YS I, 48), i.e. scriptural authority, inference and zeal for meditative practice return in Śaṅkara’s thinking. Although ‘later’ in Śaṅkara’s theory the first way is emphasized and the last way is regarded as only preparative, an evaluative judgment as to which way should be regarded as most important is not given in this subcommentary.
3 Summary of Relevant Texts

In chapter two we discussed three philosophical schools, each of which displayed elements that will return in Śaṅkara’s thinking concerning release (mokṣa) and the role of valid knowledge in attaining release. We chose five (parts of) texts that deal with the relation between the Vedas and release. This topic and contain important aspects of Śaṅkara’s development and view on release through time and also reflect his reactions on adversaries. These texts are USP XVII and XVIII; USG I; BSŪBH introduction and I, 1, 1 to 4 and finally BSŪBH IV, 1, parts 1 and 2. By way of introduction to a summary of the texts, we will briefly describe their literary background so as to create a framework for understanding the texts. The main focus of the present chapter is on the texts themselves. The analysis of the texts will be given in chapter four.

3.1 UPADEŚASĀHASRĪ (US)

Both Upadeśasāhasrī Padyabandha (USP) and Upadeśasāhasrī Gadyabandha (USG) are part of the Upadeśasāhasrī (a thousand [verses of] teaching), a collection of independent tracts by Śaṅkara. USP is a collection containing metrical tracts and USG contains prose tracts. Śaṅkara is generally considered to be the author.

3.1.1 USP XVII

The metrical part of the Upadeśasāhasrī (USP) consists of nineteen tracts that are considered to be independent of one another. The focus of USP XVII is the right way of perception with respect to ignorance. First, it is emphasized that one needs to know Brahma, which is the highest Self (Ātman). Secondly, the way in which knowledge of the Self can be acquired is explained: ‘And as the Self is by nature self-attained, attainment of it does not depend upon anything else. But any

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3 Cf. the discussion concerning Śaṅkara’s authorship in Mayeda, 1973, 22-64.
4 The Self (Ātman) is described here as the highest entity, beside which nothing else exists; cf. USP XVII, v 1b.
attainment which depends upon something else arises from seeing another [thing or person than the Self/Brahman].

V 4 states that knowledge of Brahman can, to a certain extent, be acquired by the words of the Vedas, by tradition and acts. In vv 7 to 9 the relation between knowledge, the Vedas and the identity of Brahman and the Self is elaborated:

Seeing another [thing/person] is nescience. The cessation [of nescience] is called final release. And this cessation can arise not through action but through knowledge alone, since [that] is incompatible [with nescience].

As a result of action [release] would be impermanent, [it would then be] caused by nescience and desire. It is said that the Vedas alone are the right means to acquire knowledge with regard [to the self]. As [the Veda] is devoted to one object [only], i.e. the knowledge [of Brahman], [the wise] know that it [consists of] one sentence [only]. The oneness of the Self should indeed be known through the understanding of the meaning of [this one] sentence.

In vv 10-25 these concepts are used again but this time by means of the metaphors of a dreaming and a waking state as well as deep sleep. In vv 24 and 25 the metaphors are explained: ‘sense-perception should be known as the waking state, the same as memory is the dreaming state, the absence of both is the state of deep sleep, and one’s own Self is the highest state.’

The darkness called deep sleep is

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5 ‘svayaṃlabdhasvabhāvatvālābhas tasya na cānyaataḥ | anyāpeksas tu yo lābhaḥ so

nyadrṣṭisamudbhavaḥ’ (USP XVII, 6).

6 ‘anyadrṣṭis tv avidyā syāt tannāśo mokṣa ucyate | jñānenaiva tu so ‘pi syād

virodhitvān na karmanā’ (USP XVII, 7). Mayeda (A Thousand Teachings: the

Upadeśasāhasrī of Śankara. Translation with introduction and notes by Sengaku Mayeda.

Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1979) translates avidyā by ‘nescience’ and ajñāna by

‘ignorance’ (e.g. in USP XVII, 25). When citing USP and USG, we will adopt Mayeda’s

translation or modify it only slightly.

7 ‘karmakāryas tv anityaḥ syād avidyākāmakāraṇaḥ | pramāṇam veda evātra

jñānasvaḍhīgame smṛtaḥ’ (USP XVII, 8).

8 ‘jñānaikārthapratipadatā tām vākyam ekaṁ tato viduḥ | ekatvam hy ātmano jñeyaṁ

vākyārthapratipattitaḥ’ (USP XVII, 9).

9 ‘drṣṭaṁ jāgaraṁ vidyāṁ śrītāṁ svapnaṁ tad eva tu | suṣuptaṁ tadabhāvaṁ ca svam

ātmānaṁ param param padam’ (USP XVII, 24).
Ignorance and [it is] the seed of the dreaming and waking states. If it is burned up by the knowledge of one’s own Self, like a seed that has been scorched it has no power of germinating.\(^{10}\) Only the Self itself is considered to be truly existent. If sense perception and memory (the waking and the dreaming states respectively) are absent, ignorance is not actually abolished, because its cause (deep sleep, to use Gauḍapāda’s metaphor) still exists. The only way to stop ignorance is to acquire knowledge of the Self.

Ignorance is the only factor that continues the state of transmigratory existence: ‘Everything comes from ignorance. This world is unreal, for it is seen by one who has ignorance and is not perceived in the state of deep sleep.’\(^{11}\) The Vedas, however, show the oneness of Brahman and the Self, because they contain the right knowledge: ‘It is indeed declared to us in the scriptures that knowledge is the notion of the oneness [of ourselves and the Self] and ignorance of the difference\(^{12}\) [of ourselves from the Self]. Therefore knowledge is affirmed in the scripture with all vigor.’\(^{13}\) The Self should be directly known according to the scriptures, which indicate that the Self is directly present.\(^{14}\) One of the important verses in USP XVII about the way release is attained is v 43:

There is action only until injunction [to attain the Self] – since notions of belonging to a caste, etc. is [then] removed; its removal results from the conclusion ‘you are that’ (ChU VI, 8, 7 etc.) [made accessible] by the

\(^{10}\) ‘suṣuptākhyāṇaṁ tamo jñānāṁ bijaṁ svapnaprabodhayoh svātmabodhapradagdham syād bijaṁ dagdhaṁ yathābhavam’ (USP XVII, 25). Cf. also USP XVI, 18.

\(^{11}\) ‘avidyāprabhaṇaṁ sarvam asat tasmād idaṁ jagat tadvatā dṛṣyaṁ yasmāt suṣupte na ca gṛhyate’ (USP XVII, 20). Here ‘deep sleep’ means something else than in the preceding verses, which depend on Gauḍapāda’s Kārika (GK) I. Gauḍapāda is a commentator on several upaniṣads.

\(^{12}\) The Sanskrit word employed here is anya. This ‘difference’ is apparently not the same ‘difference’ as denoted by bheda at USG I, 42. However, in this text we will use Mayeda’s translation. Mayeda, 1973, 163.

\(^{13}\) ‘vidyāvidyā śrutiprote ekatvānyadhiyau hi naḥ tasmāt sarvaprayatnena śāstre vidyā vidyāyate’ (USP XVII, 21).

\(^{14}\) ‘sākṣad eva sa vijñeyah sākṣad ātmeti ca śruteḥ’ (USP XVII, 31a).
scriptural teaching ‘[It is] neither gross [nor subtle]’ (Bṛhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad (BṛU) III, 8, 8) and the like.\(^{15}\)

Vv 44ff. show the way to release and the obstacles that impede this goal. Release can be attained by means of knowing the self. Ignorance is defined in several ways, such as: ‘therefore, the notions of “mine” and “I” applied to the non-self such as body, etc. is nescience’\(^{16}\) and

the Self which exists in the body (is identified with it; T.B.) sees the other [Selves]. By ignorance he is namely of the [same] size [as the body] is. One can imagine It as comparable to the moon [mirrored] in the water etc. and [thus] as having the characteristics of the body.\(^{17}\)

The injunction [to attain] the nature of the Self has no other aim than the cessation of actions and the like. ‘The Self is neither an object to be accomplished nor a means of accomplishment; It is held to be eternally content [i.e. needing nothing] as the scripture says (48).’\(^{18}\) ‘Actions result in things being produced, obtained, changed or purified. Something else cannot be accomplished by acting. Therefore one should abandon [actions] together with [their] requisites (49).’\(^{19}\) This implies that the Self cannot be accomplished by actions of any kind, because their temporary results contradict the eternal nature of the Self. Such a statement can be considered as directed against the Mīmāṃsā, which emphasized the necessity of actions for attaining release.

The tract is concluded by a great number of statements that underline the fact that release can be attained only if ‘one should know one’s self to be the highest Self which is devoid of merit and demerit, free from past and future, free from cause and

\(^{15}\) ‘prāg evaitadvidheḥ karma varṇitvāder apohanāt | tad asthūlādiśāstrebyhas tat tvam eveti niścayāt’ (USP XVII, 43); ‘It’ is the Self.

\(^{16}\) ‘māmāham cety ato ‘vidyā śařṝādiśv anātmasu’ (USP XVII, 45a); this refers to the superimposition of attributes of the Self on the object.

\(^{17}\) ‘anyadrṣṭīḥ śařṝasthas tāvanmātro hy avidyayā | jalendvādyupamābhīs tu taddharmā ca vibhāvyate’ (USP XVII, 55).

\(^{18}\) ‘ātmārupavidheḥ kāryaṃ kriyādibhyo nivartanam | na sādhyaṃ sādhanaṃ vātmā nityatṛptaḥ śrutera mataḥ’ (USP XVII, 48).

\(^{19}\) ‘utpādyāpyavikāryāni sāṃskāryam ca kriyāphalam | nātō ‘nyat karnaṇaḥ kāryam tyajet tasmāt sādhanam’ (USP XVII, 49).
effect and free from all bondage.’\(^{20}\) V 81, which has a different metre, can be considered as a summary of USP XVII:

having properly known bondage, final release, and the only, pure, and highest Truth\(^{21}\) which transcends the knowable and the unknowable, which has been studied and which is spoken of by the scriptures and the sages, – [having known all this] one would become a brāhmaṇa\(^{22}\) who has transcended sorrow and delusion, who is all-knowing, all-doing, free from the fear of existence, and who has completed all that has to be done.\(^{23}\)

### 3.1.2 USP XVIII

The eighteenth tract is the longest of the metrical texts of the Upadeśasāhasrī. It contains 230 verses, of which the main topic is the great sentence ‘you are that’ (\textit{tat tvam asi}). It is considered to be the culmination of the doctrine of release and the most important ‘defense’ of the so-called positive way to release.\(^{24}\)

In short, it is often assumed that two ways of release can be distinguished in Śaṅkara’s teaching. The first way is the negative way, which means that by negating the attributes that are falsely superimposed on the self the true nature of the Self is shown (for example, ‘the self is not thus, the self is not so’: \textit{neti, neti} BRU II, 3, 6). The second way is the positive way, which shows the self’s true nature by

\(^{20}\) ‘\textit{dharmādharmavinirmuktām bhūtabhavyāti kṛtākṛśāti | svam ātmānāṃ paraṃ vidyād vimuktaṃ sarvabandhanaś}’ (USP XVII, 77).

\(^{21}\) The words ‘\textit{sarvaṃ yata idam ubhayaṃ heyam ekaṃ dvayaṃ ca}’ can be regarded as a subordinate clause that clarifies the highest entity. It can be translated as follows: ‘from which all this and both [bondage and final release], the one and the two which are to be rejected], result.’ According to Mayeda ‘the one’ means the state of deep sleep, ‘the two’ refers to the dreaming and waking states.

\(^{22}\) A \textit{brāhmaṇa} in USG I, 45 is someone who is grounded in Brahman (\textit{brahma-niṣṭha}); cf. USP XVII, 2, 10, 13, 15, 20.

\(^{23}\) ‘\textit{bandhām mokṣaṃ ca sarvaṃ yata idam ubhayaṃ heyam ekaṃ dvayaṃ ca | jñeyājñeyābhyaṭṭaṃ paramaṃ adhitamā tattvam ekaṃ viśuddham | vijnāyaitad yathāvac chrutimunigaditaṃ śokamohāv aṭītaḥ | sarvajñāḥ sarvakṛṣ syād bhavabhaharahito brāhmaṇo ‘vāptakṛṣṭyaḥ}’ (USP XVII, 81).

\(^{24}\) Cf. also Vetter, 1979, 95.
emphasizing the real characteristics of the self. One should, however, be aware of the danger of such a schematic distinction being imposed on Śaṅkara’s texts without paying attention to how the texts ‘deviate’ from such a scheme. For example, in BSūBh IV, 1, 2 the same kind of way to release is described but more briefly than in USP XVIII. Although the positive way is described fully, the negative way has still a function in revealing the true nature of the Self.25

In the first verses the importance of the Vedic statements as the right means of knowledge for understanding the nature of the Self is stressed. For example, in vv 4 and 5 it is said that ‘from this [self-]established [Self which is indicated by the word] “I” the attribute “you” is excluded – just as the notion of a serpent [is excluded] in application to a rope – by means of reasoning [and] such teachings as “you are that” and so forth.’26 ‘Just as the existence of merit, etc., is to be known on the evidence of the scriptures, [so is the existence of the self]. Just as poison is counteracted through meditation, evil will be destroyed [through the scriptural sentence].’27 This quotation points out the wrong perception of duality: if someone distinguishes between himself and another, this distinction presupposes a difference and, therefore, a duality that does not exist because there actually is no duality at all. In v 8 it is emphasized again that the notion ‘I am the Existent’ arises from the scripture. Here, ‘the Existent’ (sat) is a synonym for the Self. Vv 9-18 record the objections of an opponent. It seems impossible to him that the meaning of the sentence can be grasped from a single utterance. He claims that, even if this is possible, something besides the scripture, like meditation and reasoning, is needed. Furthermore, the injunction to perform [Vedic] actions does not impede release. The opponent’s conclusion is that

25 For a more detailed description of the themes and influences on later texts of USP XVIII I refer the reader to Vetter, 1979, 93-102.

26 ‘siddhād evāham ity asmād yuṣmadharmo niṣidhyate | rajjvām ivāhidhīr yuktyā tat tvam ityādiśāsanaih’ (USP XVIII, 4). Again, Mayeda’s translation and commentary are followed as far as possible. The image of the rope and the snake is used as a typical example of illusion; the story is that someone who sees a rope in the darkness can mistake the rope for a snake and, frightened by this false sight, run away.

27 ‘śāstraprāmāṇyato jāeyā dharmaṭer astitā yathā | viṣāpoho yathā dhyānād hnutiḥ syāt pāpmanas tathā’ (USP XVIII, 5).
... it is the \textit{prasamkhyāna} meditation\textsuperscript{28} that is the means, and nothing else; the object of [the meditation] is taken here to be the well-established [self].\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, for the sake of apprehending [the self] one should perform \textit{prasamkhyāna} meditation diligently, being endowed with tranquility, etc., and abandoning anything incompatible with [this] means and its object.\textsuperscript{30}

Vv 19ff. demonstrate, in reply to this view, the negative way of revealing the real character of the Self by means of the words ‘not thus, not so’ (\textit{neti, neti}; BRŪ II, 3, 6) which remove each false superimposition upon the Self. People mistakenly think that there is a difference between the bearer of the ‘I’ and the Self, and thus, mistakenly, think that reality is dual. The reason for this wrong idea is also explained: ‘The creator of misconception [about the Self] (is the intellect), [because] it is always near to the Self, appears to be the Self. From this arise the two [notions] “oneself” and “one’s own” to which [the words] “I” and “my” are related.’\textsuperscript{31} Wat exactly it is that transmigrates is the topic of discussion until v 36.

Vv 37ff. deal with the nature of resemblance (\textit{ābhāsa}) in general. In vv 38-40 an imaginary discussion with an opponent is described: the opponent assumes that the resemblance of the face is an attribute of the face, since it is given the same name as the face, and that the resemblance is an attribute of both the face and the mirror. This view implies a difference between the face itself and its attributes. To this objection it is answered that the resemblance of the face conforms to the mirror and because even when the face is there, no resemblance of it exists, unless there is a mirror. The conclusion is that ‘the Self, [its] resemblance and [its] locus (= the intellect) are comparable to the face, [its] resemblance, and [its] locus (= the mirror).

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{prasamkhyāna} (USP XVIII, 12, 17) or \textit{prasamecaśā} (USP XVIII, 9) is defined by an opponent in a work by Sureśvara as ‘mentally going over the meaning of such \textit{śruti}-passages such as \textit{tat tvam asi} and the reasoning based on the method of agreement and contrariety (\textit{anvayavatireka}).’ Both Śaṅkara and Sureśvara reject this kind of meditation, according to Mayeda. Cf. Mayeda, 1979, 196-97, nt 13.

\textsuperscript{29} ‘na tad anyat prasamkhyānāt prasiddhārthah iheṣyate’ (USP XVIII, 17b).

\textsuperscript{30} ‘tasmād anubhāvāyaiva prasamecaśita yatnataḥ ṭyajan sādhanatatsādhyaviruddhaḥ śamanādīmaṁ’ (USP XVIII, 18).

\textsuperscript{31} ‘saṁnīdhau sarvadā tasya syāt tadābhoh ‘bhimānākṛt | ātmātmīyaṃ dvayaṃ cātāḥ syād ahaṁmamagocaraḥ’ (USP XVIII, 27).
And the non-existence of the resemblance is understood by means of scripture and reasoning.\(^{32}\)

In vv 45 and 46 it is clearly stated that ‘transmigratory existence’ is ‘nothing but nescience due to the absence of discriminating knowledge. Because of [the existence of] the immovable Self, transmigratory existence is always existent in the Self as it were.’\(^{33}\)

Just as a snake, [although not real], exists in a rope because of [the existence of] the rope until [the two] are discriminated, so it is because of [the existence of] the immovable self that [transmigratory existence], although not real, [exists in it, but only until the two are discriminated].\(^{34}\)

The connection that exists between transmigratory existence and the lack of discriminating knowledge is repeated in v 49.

Vv 90-101 are very important with regard to our investigation. This part could be summarized by the words of v 90: ‘If there were no notion “I am the Existent”, [the sentence] “you are that” would be meaningless. To him who knows the distinction between “you” and “I” this sentence will be meaningful.’\(^{35}\) ‘The logical means by which to ascertain [the meanings of] “this” [and] “I” should indeed be the method of agreement and difference of the words and of the meanings of the words.’\(^{36}\)

When one has thus come to know from the śruti and from universally accepted usage, the meaning of the sentences, the śruti says ‘you are that’

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32 ‘ātmabhāśāśrayāś caivaṃ mukhābhāśāśrayā yathā | gamyate śāstrayuktibhyām ābhāsāsattvam eva ca’ (USP XVIII, 43).
33 ‘avidyāmātra evātāḥ sāṃsāro 'stv avivekataḥ | kūṭaṣṭhaṇātmanā nityam ātmavān ātmānīva saḥ’ (USP XVIII, 45).
34 ‘rajjusarpo yathā rajjvā sātmakāḥ prāg vivekataḥ | avastusann api hy eṣa kūṭaṣṭhaṇātmanā tathā’ (USP XVIII, 46).
35 ‘sad asmīti dhiyo 'bhāve vyartham syāt tat tvam asy api | yuṣmadasmadvivekajñe syād arthavad idaṃ vacaḥ.’ (USP XVIII, 90).
in order to remove the delusion of a hearer, just as Brahmā removed the
ignorance of Daśaratha’s son (=Rāma) merely by means of the
declaration [‘You are the God Nārāyaṇa’, and] did not mention any other
effort whereby he was to know that he was Viṣṇu.37

‘If the result should not arise by merely hearing [the sentence], then there would
necessarily be some duty to be fulfilled.’38 Right knowledge (pramā) arises at the
moment of hearing. ‘If [one understands, “I am] the Existent”, the principal meaning
of the word “I” should be regarded as being “the Existent”’.39 ‘If the principal
meaning is grasped, there is therefore no obstacle to the realization here.’40 In v 110
the way of release is described again: ‘This is the way of realization that “[I] am the
Existent”. And [if] it were not so [i.e. if there were no reflection of the Self], it
would not be [realized]. Moreover, if [it] were no means, the teaching “you are that”
would be meaningless.’41

Vv 124ff discusses the way the Self should be known: ‘should one let the man,
ignorant [of It], grasp [the Self] by some accepted means of knowledge, or [should it be]
by negating [non-Self] so that [only] the other [= the Self] remains, without [using]
any [of the accepted] means of knowledge?’42 In other words, is it possible to
acquire knowledge of the Self by means of perception, inference, scripture (śruti)
etc. or should the negative method, as it is declared in BRU II, 3, 6, be used?

37 ‘evam viṣṇātavākyārthe śrutilokaprasiddhitah | śritis tat tvam asīty āha śrotur
mohāpanuttaye = brahmā dāsarather yadvad uktyāivāpāndudat tamaḥ | tasya viṣṇutva-
sambodhe na yatnāntaram ācīvān’ (USP XVIII, 99-100). The mythical person Nārāyaṇa is
here identified with Viṣṇu.
38 ‘śrutamātre na cet tat syāt kāryaṃ tatra bhaved dhruvam’ (USP XVIII, 102a).
39 ‘sad eva ced ahaṃśabdaḥ satā mukhyārtha iṣyatām’ (USP XVIII, 105b).
40 ‘tasmān mukhyagṛhe nāsti vāraṇāvagater iha’ (USP XVIII, 106b).
41 ‘ity evam pratipattiḥ syāt sad asmīti ca nānyathā | tat tvam ity upadeśo ‘pi
dvārābhāvān anarthakahā’ (USP XVIII, 110).
42 ‘kim ajñaṃ grāhayet kaścit pramaṇena tu kenacit | vinaiva tu pramaṇena
nivṛttyānyasya sēṣataḥ’ (USP XVIII, 124). In this sentence ‘It’ refers to the Self. Śaṅkara is
concerned with the inner Self and uses sentences from the upaniṣads that express the
identity of a person (‘I’, ‘you’) with the highest Entity in order to show the one Self. Cf.
also USP XVIII, 171.
By 'inner Self' is meant the Self that is the testimony of all psychological notions, even though it has nothing to do with these notions; the inner Self can be 'internally' known by everyone; cf. USP XVIII, 174d.

One of a group of ten boys who had swam across a river counted how many had made it across. Failing to include himself as the tenth, he counted only nine boys and thought that one was missing. When he was told 'you are the tenth' he realised immediately that he was the tenth. The goal of the story is to illustrate that one is to know one's own (true) Self, which is Brahman (cf. also with BSûBhI, 1, 1 + 4 and IV, 1, 2). According to Šāṅkara, only the experience of the real Self is strong enough for one to be released once and for all. This story and a comment on it can be found, for example, in Šāṅkara's commentaries on BṛU I, 4, 7, in Sureśvara’s Taittirīya Upaniṣad (TāttU) II, 1 and his Naiśkarmya-siddhi (NāIṣ) III, 64-71. Cf. Mayeda, 1979, 131, nt. 2.

Vv 170-75 explain the meaning of the sentence ‘you are that.’ Likewise, since the word ‘that’ is [used] in connection with [the word which] denotes the [it refers to the inner Self]. Just like the sentence ‘you are the tenth’ the sentence ['you are that’] means the inner Self. Without abandoning their own meanings [the words ‘you’ and ‘that’] convey a special meaning and result in the realization of the inner Self. Therefore, there is no other meaning contradictory to this meaning. Because he is seized by the notion of nine, he does not see himself as [the person] who makes up the number ten and [in fact] wishes to know [only himself]. Similarly people [wish to know their own Self]. Because their eyes are bound by nescience those people whose intellect is seized by desire do not clearly realize themselves to be the Seeing, just as [the tenth boy] does not realize himself to be the tenth. [Just as the boy knew himself to be the tenth through the sentence] ‘you are the tenth’, so through such sentences as ‘you are that’ one knows one’s own Self, the witness of all the internal organs.

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45 ‘praḥtayātmābhidhānena tacchabdasya yutes tathā daśamas tvam aṣṭīy evam vākyam syāt praḥtayātmāni svārthasāy hy aprahāṇena viśiṣṭārthaśāmarpakau praḥtayātmavagatyañtau nānyo 'rtho 'rthād virodhy atāh navabuddhyapahārād dhi svātmānam daśāprāṇām apaśya nāṁ jñātum evecchet svam ātmānam janas tathā avidyābaddhacaksūṭvāt kāmāpahṛtagād sadā viviktam drśim ātmānam nekṣate daśāmaṁ yathā daśamas tvam aṣṭīy evam tattvamasyādīvākyataḥ svam ātmānam vijānāti kṛtsnāntahkaraṇekṣaṇam’ (USP XVIII, 170-74).
In connection with this, the relation between a word and its meaning is discussed: the syntactical relation of words is based on their meanings; from this it follows that the meaning of a sentence can not be grasped without knowing the meaning of all words (resp. USP XVIII, 175b and 176b).

V 187 says that ‘if one knows that the (sublime) internal Self is the own self by removing the idea “I am someone who suffers”, then he is like the tenth boy who sublated the knowledge that he was among the nine others.’ In this way the identity is determined, although the aim of the text is the experience itself. The sentence ‘you are that’ does not lead to the conclusion that one should perform an action. From this sentence, namely, arises perception (anubhava) rather than knowledge, which should be changed into a kind of perception by means of repetition (190-204).

In v 195 it is explained that combining two words, which invoke certain ideas if they are isolated from each other, adds a different meaning. For example, by itself ‘you’ refers to the suffering subject and, by itself, ‘that’ refers to the internal Self. However, if those two words are combined, these different notions disappear and show another meaning in the sentence ‘you are that.’ V 217 begins another important section. According to the author, ‘the [sacred] word of the [Veda] brings about the realization that one’s self is [always] released. It should be said that [this sacred word] has this meaning, since there is no evidence to the contrary.’ 46 ‘When the meaning of the sentence, viz. that all is Self, has become known to one through the right means of knowledge, how can any injunction enjoin him to perform [any action], since the other means of knowledge are untrue?’ 47 ‘Therefore, after the knowledge of the meaning of the sentence [has been realized], there cannot be any injunction to action, since two contradictory notions, “I am Brahman” and “I am an agent” do not [co-]exist.’ 48 The tract is concluded with the final remark that nobody strives after something in which he has no interest. Any seeker of final release who makes any kind of attempt is like someone who knowingly wants to eat poison after

\[46 \text{ ‘(tasmād) ātmavimuktatvaṁ pratīyayati tadvacāḥ | vaktavyaṁ tu tathārthaṁ syād virodhe ‘sati kenacīt’ (USP XVIII, 217).}\]

\[47 \text{ ‘sarvam ātmeti vākyārthī vijñāte 'sya pramāṇataḥ | asattve hy anyamānasya vidhis taṁ yojayet katham’ (USP XVIII, 221).}\]

\[48 \text{ ‘tasmād vākyārthavijñānān nordhvaṁ karmanvidhir bhavet | na hi brahmāsmi kartetī viruddhe bhavato dhiyau’ (USP XVIII, 222).}\]
having eaten his fill with good food. He is therefore a fool (USP XVIII, 228 and 229).

3.1.3 **USG I**
The prose part of the Upadeśasāhasrī, of which only the first tract will be summarized, consists of three tracts. The question is whether these three tracts form a unity. It could be assumed that these three tracts correspond to the three stages in the attainment of final release: hearing (śravaṇa), reflecting (manana) and contemplating⁴⁹ (nididhyāsana).⁵⁰ According to this view, in the first tract the teacher expounds to a pupil the purpose of the scriptures, using numerous quotations from both the revealed texts (the śruti) and the traditional texts (smṛti). In the second tract the pupil reflects on the purport of the scriptures over and over again by means of his own reasoning and by discussing with the teacher such fundamental themes as ignorance, i.e. superimposition, as well as the way by which the Self can be known. The third tract describes the parisamkhyāna meditation. In short, these three tracts describe how to teach a pupil about release.

Viewed in this way, the first tract should deal with hearing, the second with reflection and the third with contemplation. This, however, looks more like a scheme forcing the texts into a certain conception than careful textual analysis and should thus be regarded as suspicious. It is more likely that the three chapters of USG are three separate (i.e. belonging to different periods) descriptions of the process of release and are not to be considered as complementary.⁵¹

USG I consists of forty-four small parts. The theme of the first part is already given in the first passage: ‘Now we shall explain how to teach the means to final release to

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⁴⁹ The literal translation of manana is reflection; the literal translation of nididhyāsana is contemplation.


⁵¹ Cf. Vetter, 1979, 75-78.
the seekers thereafter with faith and desire." In the next passage the kernel of this so-called instruction is given:

The means to final release is knowledge [of Brahman]. It should be repeatedly instructed to a pupil who is indifferent toward all things non-eternal which are attained by means [other than knowledge]; who has abandoned the desire for sons, wealth and worlds and reached the state of a paramahamsa waving ascetic; who is endowed with tranquillity, self-control, compassion; who is possessed of the qualities of a pupil which are well known from the scriptures; who is pure; who is a Brāhmin; who approaches his teacher according to the rules; who has been examined as to birth, profession, behaviour, knowledge and family-relations, until it is firmly grasped.

All these qualities are supported by quotations from scripture.

Someone with such qualities may and should go to a teacher who has knowledge of Brahman. It is the task of the teacher to remove those things that prevent the pupil from grasping knowledge by the means opposite to those causes and enjoined by the śrutis and the smṛti (śrutismrṭivihitair) and the observances which do not contradict knowledge.

First, the śrutis should be taught, since they are concerned primarily with the oneness of the Self (ātmaikatvā). Consequently, to grasp the marks indicative of Brahman, i.e. the characteristics of Brahman, instruction takes place by means of the śrutis. In USG I, 7 some quotations from the śrutis are mentioned that show that

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52 'atha mokṣasādhanopadeśavidhiṃ vyākhyāsyāmo mumukṣūṇāṃ śraddadhrānām arthinām arthāya’ (USG I, 1). Again, Mayeda’s translation and commentary are followed here as far as possible.

53 A paramahamsa is an ascetic from the highest caste.

54 'tad idam mokṣasaṣṭhanaṃ jñānaṃ sādhanasādhyād anityāt sarvasmād viraktāya tyaktaprutavrīttalokaiṣṭhāya pratipannaparamahamsapārivrājyāya śamadāmadādayādiyuktāya śāstrapisiddhāśisyayugunāsampannāya śucaye brāhmaṇaṃ vidhivad upasannāya śisyāya jātikarmavṛttavidyābhijanaḥ parīkṣitāya brūyāt punah punar yāvad grahaṇāṃ drḍhībhavati’ (USG I, 2). If one interprets this passage literally, it means that only someone who is a Brahman (and not a member of another caste) is allowed to go to a teacher.

55 USG I, 6. This is demonstrated by means of statements as ChU III, 14, 1; ChU VI, 2, 1; ChU VII, 24, 1 and 25, 2; BrU II, 5, 1.
The marks, or characteristics, of Brahman that are mentioned in USG I, 7 are taken from BRU II - IV, Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad (MĀNDU) II, TAITTI II and ČHU VIII. Most of the texts mentioned in USG I, 8 are cited from the BhagavadGītā (BHG).

Although this kind of description to demonstrate the unity of the world with the Self is often used in tradition, it is not generally found in Śaṅkara’s texts. As a rule, Śaṅkara presents the Self not as something that evolves but rather as something that is untouched by and elevated above all change.

And thousands [of śruti passages] reveal that final release results from the realizing that one is not different [from the Self or Brahman]. [For example, by the statement] ‘that is the Self, you are that’ [the śruti] establish that [the empirical person in fact] is the highest Self (=Brahman).

The theme of USG I, 30-39 is the consequence of this knowledge with regard to, for example, action and the perception of pain by the body. Once one has realized that one is not different from the Self, one no longer has any need of ritual acts and

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59 ‘abhedapratipatteś ca mokṣaṃ dārśayanti sahasraśaḥ – “sa ātmā tat tvam asī” iti paramātmabhāvaṃ vidhāya’ (USG I, 28).
their requisites, since such acts work contrary to this realization. It is also impossible for the body to perceive pain or to suffer from hunger, for these are all attributes of transmigratory existence. Such experiences have their place in the intellect as do volition, passion and aversion. This is made clear by the teacher in answering the questions of the pupil. The answers consist, first, of many quotations from the *upaniṣads* (the śruti) and, second, of quotations from the BhagavadGīta (BHG) (smṛti) mainly. The teacher summarizes this in v 40:

it is the result of nescience that this is [either actually] experienced or learned [from the śrutiś]; but from the standpoint of the highest truth the Self is one and [only] appears as [being] many by the perception [affected] by nescience just as the moon [appears] as many to sight [affected] by timira eye-disease.\(^6^0\)

The statements in this text demonstrate that duality is the effect of nescience and that the passages from the śruti establish the oneness of the Self.

USG I, 42-44 conclude this tract, of which USG I, 42 can be regarded as a kind of summary. Here the teacher underlines the importance of the scripture:

The scripture gradually removes his [the pupil’s] ignorance concerning this matter, but it does not establish the difference (*bheda*)\(^6^1\) in what has to be effected (*sādhyā*), the means to it (*sādhanā*), etc., since the difference [constitutes] transmigratory existence which is undesirable by nature. Thus [the scriptures] destroy nescience, [namely] the seeing of difference (*bheda*), which is the root of transmigratory existence, by showing the evidence of the oneness of origin, destruction, etc. [of the world].\(^6^2\)

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\(^6^0\) ‘... avidyākṛtam etad yad idaṁ drṣṭya śrūyate vā, paramārthatas tv eka evātmā avidyādṛśte anekavad avabhāsate, timiradṛṣṭyānekacandraravat ...’ (USG I, 40).

\(^6^1\) *Bheda* means the difference between *sādhyā* and *sādhanā*, but it also refers to all differences that are established by the (apparent) evolvement of the Self/Brahman, or by nescience.

\(^6^2\) ‘... śanaś tadviśayam ajñānaṁ nivartayati śāstraṁ na sādhyasādhanādibhedam vidhatte ś anīṣṭaruṇaḥ saṃsārō hi sa iti tad bhedaḍṣṭim evāvidyāṁ saṃsāramūlam unmūlayati utpattipralayādyekatvopapatipradarśanena’ (USG I, 42).
3.2 BrahmasūtraBhāṣya (BSūBh)\(^63\)

In looking at this very important commentary (bhāṣya) on the Brahmasūtra generally ascribed to Śankara, we will concentrate on the Introduction and parts of BSūBh I and IV. The way of release that is described in both parts is in many ways the same as in USP XVIII. It seems that these parts originated after USP XVIII.\(^64\)

3.2.1 BSūBh Introduction and I, 1, 1-4

In the introduction the focus is the concept of superimposition (adhyāsa). Someone who has false knowledge superimposes the object\(^65\) (viṣaya) and the subject (viṣayin) mutually on each other. All means and objects of right knowledge such as direct perception (pratyakṣa), etc., and the scriptures are part of ignorance, they depend on this mental superimposition (adhyāsa) of Self and non-Self.\(^66\) However, the scriptures are that part of ignorance that leads people away from ignorance. With regard to superimposition there is no difference between human beings and animals, because both lack the ability to discriminate (aviveka).\(^67\) The process of superimposition is without beginning and end and is the source of all evil.

In the commentary on the Brahmasūtra (BSūBh I, 1, 1) the question is raised as to the meaning of the words ‘and now’, ‘and further’ (atha) and ‘desire to know

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\(^63\) With regard to the texts of BSūBh the introduction, I, 1, 1-4 and IV, 1, 1-2 The Brahmasūtra Śaṅkara Bhāṣya, ed. with notes etc. by Anantakṛṣṇa Śāstrī, 2\(^{nd}\) ed., (Bombay: Nīrṇaya Sāgar Press, 1938) is used here.

\(^64\) Cf. Vetter, 1979, 117-29, passim.

\(^65\) ‘yuṣmat-asmatpratyayogacarayor viṣayaviṣayinośa’ (Ed. 1938, 6\(^1\)). Cf. Mayeda’s translation of USP XVIII, 4. Yuṣmat refers to everything that is not the subject (viṣayin) existing of cit. With regard to cit, cf. also pratyayagocare viṣayini cidātmake (Ed. 1938, 7\(^1\)-10\(^1\)) in the first sentence of BSūBh and pratyagātmany avisaye (Ed. 1938, 34\(^1\); V.M. Apte, Brahmasūtrakṛishkankaraḥbhāṣya, (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1960), 2\(^9\)-10.

\(^66\) ‘tam etam avidyākhyam ātmānātmom itareṣādhyāsaṃ puraskṛtya sarve pramāṇaprameyavayavahāraḥ laukikā vaidikāś ca pravṛttāḥ, sarvāṇi ca śāstraṇi vidhipratisedhamokṣaparāṇi’ (Ed. 1938, 40\(^3\)-26). In the next sentence ‘katham punar avidyavadiṣayāṇi pratyakṣādīni pramāṇāṇi śāstraṇi ceti’ (Ed. 1938, 40\(^4\)) avidyavatviṣayam means that ‘[all] means of knowledge have a useful purpose only to those who are [still] possessed by ignorance.’ Cf. also the use of viṣaya- in BSūBh 255, 4 and Śaṅkara’s comments on Brū II, 4, 1 - 5 and III, 5, 1.

\(^67\) Aviveka literally means ‘absence of discrimination.’
[Brahman]’ (jijñāsa). The words ‘and now’ (atha) presuppose that a certain condition should be fulfilled before another step can be taken. In this text these words are used regarding the problem as to whether there are requirements for the desire for the knowledge of Brahman (brahmajijñāsa). According to Śaṅkara, this knowledge merely instructs a person about Brahman. It does not presuppose another act (i.e. other than knowledge) (na cānuṣṭāṇāntarāpeśam), it does not depend upon any action by human beings (na puruṣavyāpāratantram), nor does it enjoin one to any act of acquiring knowledge. In contrast to this, the knowledge of dharma leads to the performance of certain ritual acts such as sacrifices. The only requirements for the desire for knowledge of Brahman and the actual realization of this knowledge are the discrimination between eternal and transitory objects, distaste for the enjoyment of things here in this world as well as in the world beyond, equipment with tranquillity, self-restraint and similar means and the desire for final release. The scriptures themselves disclose the transitory nature of the fruit of the means for acquiring secular prosperity. Similarly, they show that the highest human goal is attained by realizing the nature of Brahman. Knowledge is the only means of realizing Brahman and is attained through the destruction of the evils of nescience etc. in which all transmigratory existence is rooted. Emphasizing the difference between the way of knowledge of Brahman and the way of sacrifices and ritual acts demonstrates the distance between Vedānta and Mīmāṃsā. For, according to this

68 Ed. 1938, 69².
69 Ed. 1938, 69³.
70 ‘avabodhasya codanājanyatvān na puruṣo ‘vabodhe niyujyate’ (Ed. 1938, 70; Apte, 1960, 6²⁰-3¹).
71 With regard to avagati cf. USP XVIII and USG II, not USG I. Knowledge (jñāna) should lead to the right realization (avagati); cf. Ed. 1938, 77²: ‘avagatiparyantaṁ jñānaṁ.’
72 ‘jñānena hi pramāṇenāvagantam iṣṭaṁ brahma. brahmāvagatīr hi puruṣārthah; niḥśeṣasamsārājīvādyādyantarhanibharanat’ (Ed. 1938, 7⁷⁻¹⁸; Apte, 1960, 8²⁰⁻²⁴). Avidyādi refers to the factors that are held to be responsible for transmigration. It might be possible that Śaṅkara’s view of avidyādi is influenced by YS II, 3ff., which deals with defilements (klesas); regarding klesas cf. § 2.4. Cf. P. Hacker, ‘Eigentümlichkeiten der Lehre und Terminologie Śankaras: avidyā, nāmarūpa, māyah, Īśvara’, ZDMG 100 (1950): 248-54 and 272-76 and P. Hacker, ‘Śaṅkara der Yogin und Śaṅkara der Advaitin: Einige Beobachtungen’, in WZKSO 12 (1968): 140-41.
introduction, the human will and human acts are only requirements or conditions for final release. They are not, however, in contrast to the means of knowledge, the necessary cause of release.

BSÛBH I, 1, 2 is principally concerned with proving Brahman to be the origin and creator of the world. Although this is of less importance for our study, this section does contain a passage on knowledge acquired by the scripture. It is stated that ‘the realization (avagati) of Brahman is effected by the efforts (adhyavasāna) to reflect on the meaning of Vedānta-passages and not by the other means of right knowledge such as inference etc.’ Some of the means of knowledge, although they might be influenced by ignorance, may assist in destroying ignorance. For example, scriptures are that part of ignorance that leads people away from ignorance.

Inference also, which is not antagonistic (to such Vedānta-passages) and furnishes a means of right knowledge, for the strengthening of the understanding of the meaning of these passages, is not rejected, because the scriptures themselves accept the aid of logic as auxiliary.

In BSÛBH I, 1, 3 (the second interpretation) and 4 it is shown that Brahman can be known only through the scriptures, which is a valid authority with regard to this knowledge. Some objections to this assertion are refuted. Brahman is not an object of sense perception. Instruction of actions with regard to Brahman is useless inasmuch as such are neither to be accepted nor rejected. An opponent assumes that, although Brahman is known from scriptures alone, action is still presented as a factor involved in the injunction about meditation. As a reply, a quotation from the NyāyaSūtra follows: “Suffering, birth, activity, faults and false knowledge – when each previous one is removed as consequence of the removal of the one immediately following it, exemption from further transmigration (apavarga) is attained” (NS I, 1, 2). This means that ignorance should be removed first; ignorance removes faults,

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73 ‘vākyārthavicāraṇādhyavasānanirvṛttā hi bhramāvagatiḥ, nānumānādipramāṇāṇ-tara-nirvṛttā’ (Ed. 1938, 89^1; Apte, 1960, 11^6-9).

74 ‘... tadarthagrahaṇādārdhyāya anumānam api vedāntavākyavirodhi pramāṇaṁ bhavan, na nivāryate, śṛutyaiva ca sahāyatvena tarkasyāpy abhyupetavāt’ (Ed. 1938, 89^2-3; Apte, 1960, 11^10-16).

75 ‘duḥkhajanamapraṃpravṛttīdosaḥniśyājñānānāṁ uttarottaratāpāye tadanantarāpāyād apa-vargaḥ’ (Ed. 1938, 123^1; Apte, 1960, 22^9-13).
the removal of ignorance and faults effectuates the removal of activity, etc. Pain is also the last thing that is removed. The removal of erroneous ignorance (mithyājñānā) is caused by the knowledge of the unity of one’s own self with Brahman (brahmātmāikatvavijñāna). If final release is considered something to be obtained, it is clear that no kind of action is at all necessary.

In a long discussion with the opponent it is stated over and over again that a relation between release and action is absolutely impossible. In this discussion the position of meditation plays a role too. The opponent states that meditation is a right means to release. This is, however, denied:

though meditation [or] reflection is mental, it is yet possible for a man to do it or not to do it, or to do it in some other way (optionally) .... But knowledge ... depends on the existing thing itself, and not upon any injunction or upon a man. Therefore, although knowledge is mental, it is greatly dissimilar to meditation.\(^\text{76}\)

All duties come to an end when the realization that one is Brahman (brahmātmāvagatī) occurs. A man who has realized that he is Brahman has no further transmigratory life as before. It is clear, therefore, that he who continues to have such transmigratory existence has not realized that he is Brahman.\(^\text{77}\) For if one thinks release is to be expected from the performance of a prescription, this expectation shows that one still accepts a causal chain: by doing A B will result.

At the end of this part the subject of meditation is dealt with again. This is due to the opponent who claims that ‘because [in BrU II, 4, 5]\(^\text{78}\) it is observed that further reflection\(^\text{79}\) and contemplation should follow the hearing [of the Self]
Brahman is merely complementary to an injunction and [its knowledge] does not end [in the realization] of one’s own nature.” 80 The reply is that ‘reflection and contemplation have the same purpose as hearing, namely realizing oneself [being Brahman] [so they add nothing new which shall be done].” 81

All injunctions and all other means of knowledge end with [the realization] ‘I am Brahman.’ 82 For when one has realized (avagati) the one Self from which nothing can be discarded and to which nothing can be added, the right means of knowledge no longer having an object or a subject, cannot continue to exist. 83

As long as the knowledge of the Self, which [the scriptures] want us to endeavor after, has not arisen, [so long the Self is a knowing agent, but] the same knowing agent becomes that which is searched after, viz. the highest Self, which is free from all evil and blemish, [when the real nature of the Self is realized]. 84 Just as the idea of the Self being the body is assumed as valid (in ordinary life), so also all the worldly means of knowledge (pramāṇa) are valid, but only until the [one and the only] Self is properly realized. 85

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80 ‘śravaṇāt parācīnayor manananidhyāsanyayor darśanād vidhiśeṣatvaḥ brahmaṇaḥ, na svarūpaparyavasāyitvam iti’ (Ed. 1938, 153; Apte, 1960, 34.3–6).
81 ‘manananidhyāsanayo ‘pi śravaṇavad avagatyarthatvāt’ (Ed. 1938, 153, 3–4; Apte, 1960, 34.7–8).
82 ‘tasmāt aham brahmaśmīty etadavasānā eva sarvevidhayaḥ sarvāni cetarāṇī pramāṇāṇī’ (Ed. 1938, 154.5–6; Apte, 1960, 34.35–37).
83 ‘na hy aheyyānupādeyādvaitātmāvagatau, nirviṣayāṇyo apramātrkāṇi ca pramāṇāṇi bhavitum arhanīti’ (Ed. 1938, 154; Apte, 1960, 34.37–41).
84 ‘anveṣṭavyātmavijñānānāt prāk pramāṭṛtvam ātmanaḥ; anviṣṭāḥ syāt pramāṭaiva pāṃmadośādiyarjitaḥ’ (Ed. 1938, 154.8–155, 1; Apte, 1960, 35.6–11).
85 ‘dehiḥmapratyayo yadvat pramāṇavatena kalpitaḥ; laukikaḥ tadvad evedaṃ pramāṇaṃ tu-ā-ātmanīscayāt’ (Ed. 1938, 155.1–2; Apte, 1960, 35.11–15).
3.2.2 BSŪBh IV, 1, 1 - 2

From other texts it is clear that Śaṅkara does not think that a view derived from the act of hearing can only become integrated into one’s thought through repeated reflection and contemplation. But here an opponent, or rather the tradition represented by the BSŪ, is allowed to speak, and this enables Śaṅkara to explain exactly what his own view regarding repetition is.

In BSŪBh IV, 1, 1 the central theme is the role of repetition (āvṛtti) of hearing (śravana), reflecting (manana) and contemplating (nididhyāsana) of the Self (BRU II, 4, 5). Repetition (which is also the theme of BSū VI, 1, 1) has certain limitations and is not useful in every situation.

The instruction of the knowledge of Brahman and the Self ought to be repeated until it is grasped. Mental acts are meant to culminate ultimately in the intuitive understanding (of Brahman). It is only when they culminate in the right understanding of Brahman by such repeated hearing, etc. that they bear tangible fruit, just as the threshing of rice has its culmination in the dehusking of the rice grains.

In BSŪBh IV, 1, 2 the ‘opponent’ assumes that ‘if the passage “you are that” heard only once does not create such realization, what hope is there that even a repetition of such a passage would create such a knowledge’? According to the ‘opponent’, ‘whether a special or only a general realization is sought to be propounded by means of the scriptures and reasoning, in either case, inasmuch as they would accomplish their work by one such operation of themselves, repetition would have no use.’

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86 Darśana, the act of seeing, is part of this series in BRU II, 4, 5. In BSūBh IV, 1, 1-2 darśana appears as a result of the three other activities. Cf. Vetter, 1979, 116 ff, and 118.

87 ‘darśanaparyavasānāni hi śravaṇādīṅy āvartyamānāni dṛṣṭārthāh bhavantī; yathā vagḥātādīṁa taṇḍulādinispattiparyavasānāni hi, tadvat’ (Ed. 1938, 929–9; Apte, 1960, 77716–20).

88 ‘yadi hi “tat tvam asī” ity evamjaṭāyakaṁ vākyam sakṛc chrūyamāṇaṁ brahmaṁmatvatvāpratītiṁ notpādayet, tatas tad eva āvartyamāṇaṁ utpādayiṣyaṭīti kā pratyaśā syāt’? (Ed. 1938, 930–9311; Apte, 1960, 77838–41).

89 ‘tasmāt yadi śāstrayuktiḥbhīṁ viśeṣaṁ pratipādyeta, yadi vā sāmānyam eva, ubhayathāpi sakṛṭpravrtytte eva te svakāryaṁ kuruta iti āvṛṭtyanupayogah’ (Ed. 1938, 9319–10; Apte, 1960, 77924–29).
In short, the discussion here concerns the question of whether repetition is useful or not. The ‘opponent’ assumes that repetition is useful only if someone thus becomes more aware of the self being identical with Brahman. If general knowledge is derived from scripture (śāstra) and reason (yukti), repetition is useless, for such knowledge could also be acquired in another way. Only if such knowledge refers to something special (viśeṣa), which can be acquired only after being heard once, will repetition be useful.

Śaṅkara replies that it is said ‘that repetition may well be purposeless in the case of one, who, when the passage “you are that” is addressed to him only once, is able to realize that Brahman is the self. But to one who is not so able to realize, repetition is useful.’ For instance, in ChU VI, 8, 7, where the sentence ‘you are that’ is explained, repetition takes place, too. ‘It is indeed seen, that those who are able to understand the meaning of a sentence but vaguely by hearing it once only, are able to understand its meaning correctly, by a progressive removal of misconceptions (as to its meaning), by repetition.

In the case of those whose comprehension of the meaning of those two terms is obstructed by ignorance, doubt and confusion, the sentence ‘you are that’ is unable to generate appropriate knowledge of what these words mean, because, the knowledge of the meaning of all words is a prerequisite for the knowledge of the meaning of such a sentence, and hence in their case, the repetition of the study of scriptural passages and reasoning, which results in the proper discrimination of the words, is necessary.

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91 ‘atrocyate – bhaved āvṛttyānarthakyaṁ taṁ prati, yas tat tvam asīti sakṛtat uktam eva brahmātmatvam anubhavitum śaknuyāt. yas tu na śaknoti taṁ praty upayujyata eva āvṛtīḥ’ (Ed. 1938, 932⁴-933¹; Apte, 1960, 780⁴-⁷).
92 ‘dṛṣyante hi sakṛcchṛtāṁ vākyāṁ mandaprafītaṁ vākyārthaṁ āvartantaḥ tattadābhāsaavyudāsena samyakpratipadyamānāḥ’ (Ed. 1938, 933⁶-934¹; Apte, 1960, 780²¹-²⁷).
93 ‘tatra yeśāṁ etau padārthāv ajñānasamśayaviparyayapratibaddhau ... padārthajñānapārvakatvād vākyārthajñānasya – ity atāḥ, tān praty eśāvayāḥ padārthaviveka-prayojanaḥ śāstrayuktabyāśaḥ’ (Ed. 1938, 935⁴-⁷; Apte, 1960, 781⁹-¹⁹).
Thus, Śaṅkara introduces a new element in his reply: it might be possible that someone who does not grasp quickly the meaning of sentences such as ‘you are that’ needs repetition in order to remove doubt. Moreover, if one does not understand the meaning of the words of which the sentence is made up, it will be impossible to grasp the meaning of the whole sentence. Thus, repetition is needed.
4 Analysis of the Texts

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the texts we discussed in the previous chapter. We will analyse these texts by means of four questions listed in the introduction in order to discover the several elements of the relation between the Vedas and release. These questions are: 1) In what way is the concept of release defined and how is release connected with knowledge and ignorance? 2) What is the relation between the scriptures and release? 3) What role does rational argumentation play in the process of attaining release? 4) What are the conditions for reaching release and what factors prevent us from being released? After having answered these questions, we will summarize Śaṅkara’s view on the role of the Vedas with regard to release.

4.1 The Definition of Release

The first question that arises when dealing with release is that of the meaning of this concept. How is release defined? Does Śaṅkara employ only one definition of release or does he define ‘release’ in different ways, depending on the context? Is there a relation between the definition of release and that of its opposite, transmigration?

In USP XVII neither release nor transmigration or bondage is explicitly defined. However, the text is clear with respect to when release has been attained. In the first verses Śaṅkara argues that the cessation of ignorance is called [final] release. ‘Ignorance’ entails that one sees a difference between the Self and Brahman and this ignorance can be stopped only by knowledge, since knowledge and ignorance are contradictory and mutually exclusive. Final release is thus related to knowledge and ignorance.

Knowledge effectuates final release; ‘knowledge’ means the understanding that one’s self is the highest Self or Brahman (21). This implies that there is no actual difference between the self, the Self and Brahman. The Self is directly present (31a); It is not an object to be accomplished nor a means of accomplishment; It is considered to be eternally self-sufficient (i.e. It does not need anything; 48); It is devoid of merit and demerit, free from past and future, free from cause and effect...
and free from all bondage (77). The Self cannot be accomplished by actions of any kind, for its nature is eternal. Part of ignorance is, therefore, the assumption that the Self can be accomplished by actions.

USP XVIII is known as the tract in which the nature of the Self is described in the positive way, which is characterized by the sentence ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asi; CHU VI, 8, 7). Thus, the real nature of the Self is revealed by emphasizing that there is no difference between oneself and the Self. However, the negative way is mentioned too. The ‘negative’ way is characterized by the sentence ‘not thus, not so’ (‘neti, neti’; BRU II, 3, 6), which removes false superimpositions from the Self.

The wrong notion that there is a difference between our self and the Self causes a wrong perception of reality. Such a difference implies a dual reality (the reality of our self and the reality of the Self), whereas there is actually only one reality.

Śaṅkara’s view of release is closely connected with the perception of reality. ‘Release’ means knowing that there is no difference between one’s self and the Self (i.e. Brahmān) as well as having the right perception of reality. In this tract, just as in USP XVII, he relates release to knowledge and ignorance. Release depends on knowledge of the Self and the awareness that there is only one reality instead of two.

Transmigration, which is the opposite of release in this tract, is nothing but ignorance, due to the absence of discriminating knowledge (vss. 45-46, 49). If one is bound by ignorance, one will not realize that one’s self is also the Self. Transmigration is based on the supposition of a dual reality, i.e. the factual, present reality on the one hand and an ultimate reality in which one’s self and the Self are united on the other.

If the Self is wrongly perceived and if reality is not dual at all, this implies that the notion of transmigration should be rejected. And if there is no transmigration, then no one actually transmigrates. In short, the definition of release could be amplified by the awareness that one is already released. Consequently, ignorance in this context is the wrong idea of believing oneself to be caught in transmigration.

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1 Cf. USP XVIII, 4-5.
2 Cf. USP XVIII, 19ff.
3 This statement is demonstrated by the story of the ten boys. Cf. USP XVIII, 170-74.
USG I emphasizes the oneness of the Self (ātmaikatva) and thus of one’s own self and Brahman (6). The highest Self is not subject to transmigration and is identical with everything. It is wrong to identify the Self with the body (15), because the Self is not afflicted by any attributes of transmigration (18). From the standpoint of the highest truth the Self is one, but it appears as multiple in the perception affected by nescience (40).

Final release results from realizing that one is not different from the Self (28). This realization can be derived from statements such as ‘that is the self, you are that.’ However, the word avagati, which refers in USP XVIII and USG II to the realization of the self, does not occur here. Transmigration is no longer an issue, if one understands that one is not different from the Self. Once one has realized the non-difference of self and Self, one no longer has any need of ritual actions. The perception of pain in the body, the suffering of hunger, etc. then appear to be attributes of transmigration, maintained by ignorance (30-39).

In USG I, as well as in USP XVII and XVIII, release and transmigration are related to knowledge and ignorance. Ignorance results in a dual perception of reality. Knowledge of Brahman and the understanding that one’s self is identical with Brahman is the means to release. This knowledge can be acquired from a teacher’s instruction. In this way false perceptions of reality will also be removed. Ignorance is the view that the self is different from Brahman and this belief is the root of transmigration.

The introduction of BSūBH is focused on the concept of superimposition (adhyāsa). If one has false knowledge, the object and the subject are mutually superimposed on each other. Superimposition is the cause of all evil.

In BSūBH I, 1, 1-4, which may have been influenced by USP XVIII, knowledge is regarded as the only means to the realization that one’s self has always been of the same nature as Brahman. The highest human aim is reached by the realization (avagati) of the nature of Brahman, i.e. by understanding the identity of the self with Brahman (brahmātmaikatvavijñā; BSūBH I, 123, 2-7). Knowledge is the only means of realizing the nature of Brahman and, therefore, the only means to release. Once one has realized that one is Brahman (brahmātmāvagati) already, there is no longer any transmigration (BSūBH I, 130, 8).
Such knowledge must be acquired by destroying the evils of ignorance (avidyā) etc., which are the roots of transmigration. The illusion that one participates in transmigration is caused by ignorance. Being ignorant means not being able to discriminate properly between eternal and temporal things, enjoying worldly wealth and viewing the fruit of the means for acquiring secular prosperity as eternal. Ignorance also includes the false expectation that release can be attained by performing actions or following prescribed rules.

BSŪBh IV, 1, 1-2 contains no definition of release. This may be due to the theme of the commentary on these two sūtras, namely the usefulness of the repetition of great words such as ‘you are that.’ Such a discussion presupposes that it is already known what release means and the means to attain it. From the text of the sūtras, however, it can be concluded that the statement ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asi, CHU VI, 8, 7) is the key to the knowledge of Brahman. If one attains the knowledge that Brahman is the self, one attains release. Ignorance, then, is the false assumption that one is different from Brahman.

From the texts we have studied we can draw three conclusions for now. First, release is either defined or referred to as the knowledge that the self is identical with Brahman. Knowledge, then, is apparently an important concept with regard to release. The knowledge of Brahman entails that any suffering and the need to escape it have disappeared.

Second, the way in which release is defined influences the definition of transmigration. Often, both terms are defined as each other’s opposite. Two examples will serve to demonstrate this. The first is the definition of transmigration in USP XVII and XVIII. There transmigration is characterized as the absence of discriminating knowledge. One superimposes subject and object on each other and falsely assumes that ritual acts are a means to realize the Self. Release, on the other hand, is the absence of ignorance, i.e. the possession of discriminating knowledge (vijñāna). The second example can be found in BSŪBh I, 1, 1 + 4 where transmigration is described as the continuous process of the performance of actions (karma) and the experience of their fruits. Humans, then, are considered to possess passion and aversion, to act under their influence, to produce merit by ritual acts
(krīya) and demerit by natural behaviour, to be connected with a body and to experience pleasure and pain. The opposite of transmigration, release, is described here not only as being aware that one is already liberated but also as the absence of action (such as sacrifices, rituals, meditation). Śaṅkara's injunction is to refrain from actions of any kind. This injunction is directed against the Mīmāṃsā which, in contrast to Śaṅkara, stressed the necessity of actions (dharma) in order to attain release.

The third conclusion is that release and transmigration are both defined in terms of knowledge and ignorance. One should note, however, that the concept of knowledge itself is used in two different ways. First, knowledge is the rational knowledge that can be acquired by intellectual acts. The realization (avagati) of Brahman is effected by the attempts to reflect on the meaning of Vedānta passages. Scripture itself uses rational argumentation in order to make clear the meaning of words and sentences. In this way it is regarded as the means to the realization of the nature of Brahman. Second, knowledge is defined as the realization (avagati) or awareness of the identity of the Self and Brahman. This realization cannot be grasped by the intellect. Rather, there is a sudden breakthrough (an ‘Aha-Erlebnis’), a special kind of experience in which the final truth breaks through, i.e. one is already released. When knowledge causes release, this implies that ignorance is regarded as the root of (the false idea of) transmigration. Ignorance causes superimposition of non-self upon Self and a dual perception of reality.

In conclusion, we can say that the concept of release (mokṣa) is defined in different ways by Śaṅkara, dependent upon the adversaries that he addresses and the particular goal and context of a text. The characteristics of ‘release’ in a certain text cannot simply be projected onto ‘release’ in another text. However, in the texts we studied knowledge and release are always closely linked together. For Śaṅkara, knowledge of Brahman brings about release.

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4 Cf. BSØBh I, 1 and 2; Ed. 1938, 777-8 and 89ff.
4.2 The Role of the Vedas
If knowledge is important with regard to release, the question immediately arises as to the way in which knowledge can be attained. Is it possible that the source of this knowledge is also related to release?

USP XVII, 4 and 7 mention the Vedas as the right means for acquiring knowledge of Brahman. The Vedas are devoted to one object, i.e. the oneness of Brahman and the Self (9). The Vedas contain the right knowledge of the Self, by describing the characteristics of the Self. The most important sentence in the scriptures is ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asi; ChU VI, 8, 7) (USP XVII, 24 + 25). We can know the nature of the Self by understanding the meaning of this sentence.

USP XVIII emphasizes the importance of the Vedas regarding release already in the first verses, because it states that the nature of the Self can be known through statements in the Vedas (4, 5, 8). The sentences ‘you are that’ and ‘not [thus], not [so]’ (neti, neti; BrU II, 3, 6) are both repeatedly regarded as leading to release, for they are the means by which the Self should be known. The wrong perception of reality as dual can be removed only by means of scripture and reasoning (43). Right knowledge can be derived from the Vedic statements and arises at the moment of hearing (103). The Vedas lead more to a certain perception (avagati) than to a right knowledge of words (106). From the sentence ‘you are that’ one becomes aware (anubhavati) of one’s own Self. Any means of knowledge, except for the Vedas, is not important with regard to the awareness of the Self (7, 183, 216 - 217). The word of the Vedas leads to the realization that one’s self is always released (217).

USG I emphasizes the necessity of the repetition of instruction. The teacher should repeat the Vedic statements until the pupil is able to grasp their meaning. The nature of Brahman is described by means of quotations from the śruti and also from smṛti (if they do not oppose the śruti). The most important statement from the śruti concerned with the oneness of the Self is ‘you are that.’ This sentence proves the

5 Cf. USP XVIII, 4, 5, 19, 90, 96, 99, 110, 170 - 175.
6 Cf. the next section on the role of reasoning and rational argumentation.
7 Cf. USG I, 6, 7 and 28.
non-difference of oneself and Brahman. The Vedas remove the pupil’s ignorance and destroy nescience, namely the perception of difference (*bheda*), which is the root of transmigration (42). By means of the Vedic statements, one will grasp knowledge of the oneness of the Self. This knowledge will put an end to transmigration and, consequently, lead to release.

In the Introduction of BSŪBH and in BSŪBH I, 1, 1 it is assumed that only by means of the sentences of the *upanisads* does the identity of Brahman and oneself become clear. These sentences show the real nature of the self by removing the false perception of the self as an object. In I, 1, 2 it is stated that knowledge of Brahman is brought about by the meaning of the Vedānta passages and not by other means of knowledge. I, 1, 4 shows that knowledge of Brahman should be derived from the Vedas, for they are the only valid authority. The Vedas have a twofold goal: first, they disclose the transitory nature of the fruit of sacrifices and, second, they show that by understanding Brahman the highest human aim has been attained. Liberating knowledge can be brought about only by understanding the meaning of the several passages.

The Introduction of BSŪBH and I, 1, 1 states that the Vedas themselves disclose the transitory nature of the fruit of the means for acquiring secular prosperity. The scriptures also show that by realizing the nature of Brahman, humans attain their highest aim: release.

BSŪBH I, 1, 2 demonstrates that the realization (*avagati*) of Brahman is effected by the efforts to reflect on the meaning of Vedānta passages and not by other means of right knowledge such as inference etc. Some of the means of right knowledge lead to destruction of ignorance, even though these means might be influenced by ignorance.

In BSŪBH IV, 1, 1-2 the necessity of repeating the most important Vedic passages (such as ‘you are that’) is emphasized. Reading between the lines we can see that it is only by means of the Vedic statements that the nature of Brahman is revealed. The repetition of such statements is necessary to remove, one by one, the doubts and questions of the seeker after release. In this way the meaning of these sentences, which is a prerequisite of release, is shown gradually.

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8 Cf. Ed. 1938, 891.
From the texts that we discussed we can conclude at present that the Vedas are generally regarded as the only valid source of knowledge of the oneness of the Self and the nature of Brahman. The Vedas are described as being an eternal, uncreated and intrinsically authoritative source of knowledge.

In most texts the sentence ‘you are that’ comes to the fore as the core of the Vedas in order to show the oneness of the Self. In relation to this, Śaṅkara even assumes that the Vedas are devoted to only one object: the knowledge of Brahman (e.g. USG XVII, 9). Such a statement presupposes that, to a certain extent, the Vedas can be regarded as coherent and that, despite some contradictions, the Vedas constitute a unity in themselves.

This brings us to the last point. The Vedas contain several levels of truth. Associated with these are several levels of instruction that are to be used by the teacher. Here we find texts, such as USG I and BSûBh IV, 1, 1-2 that emphasize the necessity of the pupil’s repeating important statements, of which probably the most important one is ‘you are that.’ Such statements should be heard (śravaṇa), reflected on (manana) and contemplated on (nīdiḥśaṇa).

4.3 The Role of Rational Argumentation

One could wonder whether knowledge of (the oneness of) the Self is attained only through the Vedas. Are there no other ways, such as rational argumentation, that enable people to grasp this knowledge? What kind of rational argumentation does Śaṅkara use? And to what extent does he use rational argumentation to underscore his own point of view?

In USP XVII Śaṅkara uses metaphorical language as part of rational argumentation to show the impact of knowledge and ignorance. In Indian philosophy, metaphors are often an integral part of argumentation in discussion with opponents, next to types of argumentation such as inference and analogy. Vedic statements are quoted frequently in order to convince the pupil of the author’s ideas and to emphasize

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9 An example can be found in vv 10-25 where the metaphors of a dreaming and waking state and of deep sleep are used to explain what ignorance really is.
certain points of view. This text does not deal, however, with the relation between rational argumentation and arguments based on the scriptures.

In USP XVIII methods of rational argumentation such as that of agreement and difference (anvayavyatireka) and inference are used to show the meaning of the sentences. Rational argumentation as well as quotations from the Vedas are considered to be of help in understanding the oneness of the Self. For example, in order to explain the meaning of the sentence ‘you are that’ both ways are used to make the pupil grasp the meaning of ‘you’ and ‘that.’ However, the use of rational argumentation is mainly preparative. The argumentation by means of Vedic statements is, it seems, more important than rational argumentation.

USG I uses quotations from śruti as well as smṛti to emphasize the instruction to the pupil. In this text it is remarkable that the pupil argues in a rational way to express his doubts and that the teacher generally answers the pupil’s questions by quoting from śruti and smṛti. If rational argumentation is used to show the wrongness of someone’s point of view, it is always supported by statements from the śruti. The extent of rational argumentation is limited, for every argumentation should be ‘compatible’ with the quotations from the śruti.

In the Introduction of BSŪBH the use of reason as a means to reveal the nature of Brahman is not discussed. However, in BSŪBH I, 1, 1-4 it is accepted as important in this connection. For example, BSŪBH I, 1, 2 states that the Vedas themselves use rational argumentation as an auxiliary means in order to explain the meaning of words and sentences. If the meaning of a passage can be (partly) explained by reasoning or reflection (manana), this way of argumentation can be seen as supplemental insofar as it does not contradict other Vedic statements. Reflection (manana) takes from scripture that which is rationally acceptable. Only then the full implication of a sentence such as ‘you are that’ can be grasped. Because the Vedas themselves use rational argumentation, one is allowed to use it to explain one’s own points of view and to convince opponents.

10 Rational argumentation (yukti) is used in vv 43 + 88, inference (anumāna) in vv 14.

11 Cf. USP XVIII, 4, 36, 43.

In BSūBh IV, 1, 1-2 scriptural statements and rational argumentation supplement each other. Because both contribute to the understanding of the meaning of ‘you are that’, they should be used repeatedly. The statements from the śrutis clarify the content of ‘you’, whereas rational argumentation clarifies the meaning of ‘that’.

In short, Śaṅkara uses rational argumentation in various ways in his texts, probably dependent on the context. Means of argumentation such as metaphors, figurative speech and inference are used to reply to an opponent or to underscore his own views. Other ways, such as quotations from śrutis or smṛtis, are often used to supplement rational argumentation and rhetoric.

In some of Śaṅkara’s texts rational argumentation is viewed positively, whereas in others it is considered as almost without any value whatsoever. Rational argumentation is important to let the pupil understand his false perceptions of reality and to grasp the right understanding of Vedic sentences, such as "you are that". Rational argumentation is also important in philosophical discussions with adversaries to show them in which way their argumentation is wrong. Ultimately, rational argumentation is not considered to be as important as argumentation by means of quotations from the Vedas. In the end, the Vedas are always regarded as the most valuable source of knowledge in relation to release because it is the only valid source of knowledge about the identity of the self and Brahman.

4.4 The Conditions for Reaching Release

Many conditions for reaching release have already been mentioned above. However, until now we did not pay much attention to the factors, other than ignorance, that prevent us from being released. In this last paragraph we will distinguish between the positive and the negative factors that lead to release.

USP XVII states that the only way to attain release is to realize that one’s self is the highest Self. This realization can be achieved (only) through the Vedas. Release is impeded by ignorance and ritual acts. Ignorance manifests itself in a false, dual perception of reality and in superimposition. The performance of ritual acts indicates the ignorance of the performer. Ritual acts presuppose an agent and the self is
actually not an agent at all. The performance itself of ritual acts thus impedes release. For example, v 48 states that as long as ritual acts such as sacrifices and meditations are performed, the non-difference between ourselves and the Self will not be realized. For the Self cannot be accomplished, since it is eternal. Thus, one should abandon all [ritual] actions, including the prerequisites for these actions (49); this means that one becomes an ascetic (samnyāsin). Although ignorance cannot be destroyed completely by a reliable teacher (acārya) so that right knowledge can be attained, the greatest misunderstandings can be removed. The teacher instructs his pupil about the oneness of Brahma. Without this instruction a pupil would never be able to stop the transmigratory process.

USP XVIII states that the sentence ‘you are that’ will remove the delusion of the hearer that ‘you’ and ‘that’ are two different notions (99). The word of the Vedas effectuates the realization that one’s self is always released (217). Apart from rational reflection on the meaning of ‘you’ and ‘that’ in the sentence ‘you are that’, nothing else is necessary. In reply to an opponent who assumes that, in addition to the scriptures, other means like meditation and reasoning are necessary for understanding the nature of the self (9-18), the importance of the Vedas is emphasized.

The illusion of transmigration is maintained by ignorance, i.e. the absence of discriminating knowledge (45-46). For there is no one, in fact, who participates in transmigration. Ritual acts, meditation and reasoning can be helpful to reach some other goals but for the rest they impede the process of release and are thus to be rejected as valid means of release. Any action is, therefore, rejected.

USG I already states in the first verses that knowledge of Brahma is the means to final release. This knowledge has to be derived from Vedic statements that should be repeated by those people who do not grasp their meaning at once. The pupil should meet with a whole series of conditions before even becoming a pupil (v 1).

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13 The word ‘realization’ refers to the realization of the knowledge of the identity of ourselves with the Self and not to a realization of the identity itself.

14 Cf. USP XVII, 2, 3, 50, 51, 52, 85, 86, 88.
Ritual acts and their prerequisites should be abandoned once one is released. Refraining from such acts, which impede release, will help one to come to the proper understanding of the nature of the self. Other factors that impede one’s release are merit and demerit (12) and the false perception of one’s self and the Self as being different (27, 28, 29).

The introduction of BSūBh defines the superimposition of self and non-self as the cause of all evil. Superimposition refers to the lack of the ability to discriminate. BSūBh I, 1, 1 and 2 describe knowledge as the only means of realizing Brahman, which can be attained by the destruction of the evils of ignorance (I, 1, 1) or by the efforts to reflect on the meaning of Vedānta passages (I, 1, 2). The only requirements for the knowledge of Brahman are the ability to discriminate between eternal and transitory objects, distaste for the enjoyment of things in this world and the world beyond, practising tranquillity, self-restraint etc. The opposite is the knowledge of Dharma, which leads to the performance of ritual acts (I, 1, 1) and thus impedes release.

BSūBh I, 1, 3-4 state that release and action exclude each other. All duties cease when the realization (avagati) of Brahman takes place. Knowledge is a means to this realization, for it does not depend on any injunction. Meditation or reflection, on the other hand, are optional: one can choose to meditate or not. Meditation clearly belongs to the characteristics of transmigration. The purpose of activities like hearing, reflection and contemplation is that they finally end in the realization that one is Brahman.

BSūBh IV, 1, 1 - 2 does not deal elaborately with means that hasten or impede release. It is only stated that repetition of some important texts, such as ‘you are that’, is necessary for understanding their meaning and impact. Repetition is especially useful to those who have not attained much knowledge yet.

In conclusion, the texts generally mention two factors that impede release. The first factor is ignorance, or nescience, appearing in a false perception of reality, superimposition of self and non-self, the absence of discriminating knowledge. The second factor that is mentioned quite often is the performance of ritual acts,
including meditation. In opposition to the Mîmâṃsā, which emphasizes the necessity of ritual acts in order to attain release, Śaṅkara rejects such acts. Instead, he regularly emphasizes the knowledge of Brahman as the most important cause of release. Ritual acts are only auxiliary.

4.5 Conclusions

From the textual analysis a few points emerge as important to Śaṅkara. Release is often connected with knowledge and defined as the realization of the Self. Transmigration includes everything that impedes release and hampers people in reaching it. The source of valid knowledge of the Self is the Vedas, which, according to Śaṅkara, are the only means of this liberating knowledge.

The question arises, however, as to why the Vedas are considered to be of such importance with regard to release. Śaṅkara assumes (USG I), that all means of knowledge are valid only as long as transmigration exists. As a means of knowledge, the Vedas are part of a reality that is influenced by ignorance. Despite this fact, their validity is not limited.

It seems that Śaṅkara ascribes the role of the cause of release to the Vedas only if such means as continuous meditation and ritual acts are taken into account. Yet he considers means such as reflection (manana), logical connection and disconnection (anvaya-vyatireka), inference (anumāna) and reasoning (yukti) as also important for grasping the meaning of sentences such as ‘you are that.’ Does this diminish the exclusiveness of the Vedas with regard to release? What exactly is the relation between these means, all of which lead to (a certain) knowledge of Brahman and the Self? Why exactly did Śaṅkara opt for the Vedas and reject ritual acts? In the texts we discussed many elements of Śaṅkara’s argumentation appear. But perhaps we can discover more elements by studying one of his opponents, who was also a representative of Advaita Vedānta: Maṇḍana.
5 A Different View

Both Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara belong to the Advaita Vedānta. In many ways their views agree. On some points, however, they differ – especially regarding their concept of release and the way it should be attained.

First, we will briefly introduce Maṇḍana and then, second, examine the text of the first chapter of his Brahmasiddhi (BSI), which is the most important text for our research. Third, we will analyse this text by means of the same questions we used in analysing Śaṅkara’s texts in chapter four. Finally, we will deal with the similarities and differences between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana.

Maṇḍana lived about 700 CE, although any further specification of this cannot be made with any certainty. It is possible that, being an elder contemporary of Śaṅkara, he was familiar with Śaṅkara’s BSOBH. Maṇḍana also contributed to the development of the Karma-Mīmāṃsā. There are six works of Maṇḍana known to us, four of which belong to the Mīmāṃsa: 1) a summary of the Mīmāṃsā sūtras (called the Mīmāṃsānukramanikā), 2 and 3) two expositions on fundamental Mīmāṃsāist concepts (the Bhāvanā-viveka and the Vidhīviveka), 4) an exposition on error, based on Kumārila (the Vibrahma-viveka), 5) a defense of the sphoṭa theory of the grammarians (the Sphoṭasiddhi), and 6) a defense, independent of Mīmāṃsā, of Brahman as a Vedāntic concept (the Brahmasiddhi). We will analyse the first chapter of the latter work.

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2 Cf. for example BSI 32, 8ff.
5.1 Summary of BSΙ I
In his BSΙ Maṇḍana deals especially with the epistemological problems of the Vedānṭa. He concentrates on questions concerning the authority of the upanisads and their significance in relation to the ritual prescriptions of the Vedas. These are the themes of chapters II to IV. The theme of the first chapter is the question of the nature and knowledge of Brahmaṇ and describes the subject of the upanisads according to the doctrine of the Advaita Vedānṭa or the so-called ‘a-cosmic’ Vedānṭa. Because of the differences between the chapters II to IV on the one hand and chapter I on the other, Vetter is of the opinion that it might be possible that the first chapter was originally was an independent treatise on Brahmaṇ and knowledge of Brahmaṇ.4

BSΙ I can be divided into four parts. The first part (1, 7-15) is an introduction to the whole BSΙ. The second part (verse 1; 1, 16-22, 18) deals with an introductory verse on Brahmaṇ’s characteristics. The third part (vss. 2 and 3; 22, 19-26, 22 and 37, 19-38, 5) refers to the problem of how one should know Brahmaṇ. The fourth (26, 23-37, 18) is an excursus on the relation between ritual acts and the knowledge of Brahmaṇ, for these are the two main themes of the Vedas.

In the first lines (1, 7-12) Maṇḍana describes the epistemological character of BSΙ II to IV. Many, he states, argue about the role of the upanisads, which contain the knowledge of Brahmaṇ. Some doubt that the upanisads are a valid means of such knowledge, because they either repeat what is already known or they teach what is not yet known by other means of knowledge and then the meaning of their words is unclear. Others hold that the upanisads are not a means of knowledge, because they do not teach that the knowledge of the self is something that should either be realized or performed (like ritual acts).5 Still others, finally, argue that the upanisads are to be understood only in a figurative sense, because the literal meaning of the

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5 He replies to this view in BSΙ III. A further elaboration can also be found in BSΟΒΗ I, 1, 4.
sentence would be inconsistent with injunctions to perform ritual acts and with perception. The goal of BS I is to reply to these three groups of opponents.

BS I 1, 12-15 introduce the first chapter by explaining the first verse concerning the characteristics of Brahman: bliss (ānanda), [being] one (eka), not dying (amṛta), unborn (aja), the syllable [OM], perception, not all, all, without fear. When commenting on bliss (1, 16-6, 6) Maṇḍana emphasizes that bliss is more than just the cessation of suffering, it is the full experience of a situation of happiness in Brahman, even though Brahman is not experienced as an object.

The passage 8, 13-12, 11 discusses several questions that are interrelated. The first is whether texts that contain instructions and injunctions with regard to Brahman are useless. Closely related to this question is the problem of what the relation between Brahman on the one hand and knowledge and ignorance on the other is.

In answering the first question Maṇḍana claims that texts that have release from ignorance as their goal are useful. With regard to the second question he assumes that Brahman is pure knowledge, whereas the individual self (ātman) is defiled by ignorance. To the opponent this seems to be inconsistent with another statement, namely that Brahman and the self are identical. Maṇḍana resolves this discrepancy by referring to the example of the relation between an original image and its mirror image. In this example the original image is a metaphor of Brahman, whereas the mirror image is a metaphor of the self. Although the mirror image (the self) does not differ from the original image (Brahman), it is possible that there is something dissimilar. Such dissimilarity, which should not be, can be caused by several different factors. The defilement of the mirror image, however, does not mean that the original image is spoiled as well. It is the individual self that is defiled by ignorance whereas Brahman is not. To become truly identical with Brahman one’s ignorance should be destroyed.

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6 The assumption concerning the relation between perception and a word is dealt with in BS II, BS I 39, 18ff. and 43, 15ff. discuss the inconsistency with injunctions.
7 Although Maṇḍana here assumes that such texts are useful, they do not, in his view, occupy the most prominent position in attaining release. An important role is played by continuous meditation, as we will discuss later.
It is indeed possible to cease being ignorant. One can do so (12, 11-14) by hearing, reflecting and continuous meditating and practices such as chastity etc., which are mentioned in the books of instruction. Continuous meditation, which presupposes hearing and reflecting and is aimed at the self – of which every single difference is denied by means of “[this is] not thus, [this is] not so” (neti, neti; BRU III, 9, 26) – destroys the perception of differences. Continuous meditation is based on the perception of differences and, thus, this continuous meditation destroys itself, too, because it makes the perception of differences disappear (just as the dust in a cleansing product disappears after it is put into water to purify it). Hearing, reflecting and continuous meditating (in which differences also exist, such as hearing, the object of hearing and the hearer himself) are not directed at the cessation of other differences (outside themselves) as their object but rather at that of all differences (inside and outside themselves). As soon as the perception of all these differences have disappeared, the self appears as something transparent and pure. Maṇḍana compares this whole process of making the self transparent to the way in which polluted water becomes transparent again and, thus, shows its real nature. If the water is polluted by some dust particles, these dust particles should be removed to make the water transparent and pure. This is done by the addition of another substance that itself is dust and not transparent. The added substance brings the polluted water back to its real nature because it dissolves the dust particles that caused the pollution. But in this process of cleansing the water not only the polluting dust disappears but also the substance added to make the dust disappear itself disappears. In the same way the individual self appears in its transparent real nature, as soon as the perception of difference has disappeared through hearing, etc. and the perceivable difference (in the hearing, etc. itself) has disappeared as well, because this has no special position (viśeśābhāvāt).

It is only because of ignorance that the individual self is separated from Brahman. In the cessation of ignorance only the true nature of Brahman remains, just as, when pottery is broken, it becomes clear that the room in the pottery exists only as pure space. Brahman is beyond all differences and is pure knowledge. It is remarkable, however, that this can be known only by means that presuppose differences and thus have a nature opposite to that of Brahman. Brahman can be known only by means that participate in the world of ignorance, such as hearing,
reflection and continuous meditation. It is the same as one fluid (for example, gastric juice) digesting another fluid and is digested itself in the process, just as one poison makes another poison non-toxic and is itself made non-toxic (12, 14-13, 1).

Although knowledge and ignorance are diametrically opposite, their relation is similar to the relation between goal and means: without ignorance (in the form of hearing, reflecting and continuous meditating) knowledge will not arise. Ignorance is not an immediate means of knowledge, but through ignorance that exists in hearing etc., ignorance itself completely disappears. As soon as ignorance has ceased, ‘immortality’, which is characterized by the nature of knowledge, is reached. This means that one finds oneself in one’s own, already existing nature. This is just like a crystal eliminating the colour that originates in something lying under it. As soon as ignorance is removed, one finds oneself in one’s own nature – which is knowledge (13, 2-18). The means to see non-difference (hearing etc.) are in themselves not false, because Brahman itself is their essence. Therefore Brahman itself is, in connection with ignorance, the means for attaining Brahman (13, 18-14, 15).

The rest of the second part of BS1 I explains other characteristics of Brahman. It does not contain much that is important for our investigation. Just a few points should be mentioned here. Release is worth striving for only if it refers to the situation of experiencing the highest possible bliss, without any suffering (16, 14-22). A second point is a discussion concerning the role of the word (18, 1-17). Knowledge by means of the word does not emerge in the same way as knowledge via sight or the other senses emerges. The word through which knowledge emerges can be used only if one is conscious of the word, whereas the use of the senses, such as sight, is generally unconscious (18, 17-19, 4).

The third part of BS1 I deals with the question of how it is possible to attain knowledge of Brahman (22, 19ff). An opponent assumes that Brahman cannot be known by any means. The first five arguments introduced by the opponent, which we will describe below, are based on the thesis that the present world consists of objects (things) that are diverse in nature and are characterized by difference. If
Brahman’s nature is not diverse and if Brahman is not characterized by difference, then what means can we use to know Brahman?

According to the opponent, it is impossible to known Brahman 1) through perception (*pratyakṣa*) because perception has differences as its object and these are opposite to Brahman’s non-difference; 2) through inference (*anumāna*), because this presupposes the perception of differences; 3) through comparison (*upamāna*), because this has similarity as its object, which is based on differences; 4) through presumption (*arthāpatti*), because this too presupposes difference; 5) through non-existence, (*abhāva*) because of its inability to make Brahman known as positive existence or to reveal the non-existence of multiplicity; 6) through canonical tradition (*āgama*). *Āgama* is rejected, for if it has a trustworthy, reliable author, then it only repeats what is given by other means of knowledge. But if it is without an author (existing from eternity) it only reveals prescription and prohibition; where it refers to existing things it only repeats what is already known.

The meaning of words can be discovered from their use in everyday life, according to the same opponent. There words are used only if they give injunctions to do something and in relation to objects that are connected with injunctions; for a sentence that has no relation to something that should be done or should be avoided is not useful (23, 5-6). Sentences that only assert something do not give us any information about an object that is unfamiliar to us. For example, the sentence ‘the coat is beautiful’ contains information about a coat (an unknown object), viz. that it is beautiful. But if we do not know what a coat is, this sentence does not give us any useful information. However, the sentence ‘if you go to your friend, put your coat on, for it is cold’ tells us that the unknown object (the coat) is used as protection against the cold. And from the injunction ‘put your coat on’ we can deduce what is meant by the unknown object (the coat). This example can also be used with regard to the other arguments of the opponent concerning the difference between sentences that only give information and sentences that contain injunctions to act.

Moreover, the opponent assumes that the relation between a word and an object cannot be discovered by a sentence that refers to something that already

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8 The means of knowledge mentioned here are used frequently in Mīmāṃsīṣ philosophy. The first, second and third means of knowledge correspond to three of the four valid means of knowledge in NS.
exists; this relation can be known only from a sentence that incites one to act. One discovers the meaning of a word that refers to a certain object after one has deduced the concept (idea) of the object from an action. Therefore, the meaning of words with regard to objects, to which the relation to an action is missing, will not be known. And one has to rely precisely on such words when one seeking information about Brahman from scripture. But they cannot make this object known (Brahman) (23, 7-10). The opponent assumes, in other words: one learns the meaning of a word by observing the actions of a person who is spoken to and responds in a particular way. For example, when one hears one person say to another ‘bring the cow’ or ‘carry the cow away’ or ‘bring the horse’ or ‘carry the horse away’, one will learn the meaning of these words from the changing and unchanging elements in the response of the other person. The meaning of words is thus inferred from a person’s action following immediately upon an injunction. Sentences that only provide an observation and do not urge one to act are therefore not useful for revealing the meaning of unknown words, according to the opponent. Therefore, the meaning of a word can only be known from a sentence that contains an injunction. This implies that Brahman, too, can only be known through an injunctive sentence.

In his reply (25, 21-26, 10) Maṇḍana points out that one learns the meaning of words not only from injunctions but also from descriptions of a situation. If one does not know the meaning of the word kāṣṭha (piece of wood) one learns it when Devadatta is described as cooking his rice by means of kāṣṭha and observes that he uses wood, instead of cow dung, to keep the fire burning.

Moreover (26, 10-14), even if Brahman cannot be known by another means of knowledge and thus its connection with the signifying word is also unknowable, it can still be described by words, namely by means of the negation of differences; the words for differences and the word ‘not’ are known and can be combined to make Brahman known.

The fourth part of BSṭ I deals with the question of whether the whole scripture teaches the Brahman via dissolution of the manifoldness of differences or only a part of scripture (26, 24-25) does so. Seven different opinions are mentioned as possible answers (26, 13-28, 7), most of which are opposed by Maṇḍana (28, 8-30, 19). We
will deal first with those views with which Maṇḍana disagrees (the sixth and seventh), and then with those that he accepts (the fourth and the fifth).

The sixth view (28, 4-5) states that by purifying the performer the knowledge of the self serves the ritual acts. The whole of the Vedas is aimed only at one goal, that is, at ritual acts instead of knowledge of the self. Maṇḍana does not agree. In the revelation knowledge of the self is neither connected with a ritual act nor is the self always connected with a ritual act (31, 6-7). The claim that knowledge of the self does not have any result without obedience to a sacrificial injunction (31, 8-14) should be contradicted. First, knowledge of the upanisadic self does not contain an injunction to offer sacrifices, and second, knowledge of the self, which is the presupposition of such an act, need not be derived from scripture. Only knowledge of the self that is free from all differences should be derived from scripture. But this self does not take part in ritual acts (31, 14-24).

In 32, 8-36, 3 the seventh view, sometimes strongly reminding one of passages in Śaṅkara’s works, is discussed at length. This view holds that there is no connection at all between the injunctions to perform ritual acts and the knowledge of the self, because ritual acts have duality (i.e. diversity) as their object (viṣaya), in contrast to knowledge that has non-duality (i.e. non-diversity) as its object. This implies that the latter kind of knowledge cannot originate by means of something dual. Maṇḍana’s answer is that the means of knowledge (being dual) and the final goal, knowledge itself (non-dual), do not occur at the same moment. Thus there is no inconsistency at all: at the moment of knowledge of non-duality the duality has disappeared. Because ritual acts are dual as well, the same goes for the connection between ritual acts and knowledge: ritual acts are able to function as means of knowledge. Just as knowledge, even though it presupposes a duality, is a means for grasping the final non-dual knowledge, in the same way ritual acts can allow one to reach non-duality (32, 8-13).

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The argument runs as follows. In 32, 13-34, 23 the opponent again repeats his view: ‘there is no connection between the ritual acts and knowledge of the self. Knowledge does not rely on ritual acts for its origin and it does not have to aim at a goal together with ritual acts. Knowledge originates from the means of knowledge and all its effects arise together with it. The cessation of ignorance occurs at the same moment as the arising of knowledge.’

In 32, 13-17 the opponent says: ‘Neither the Brahman nor the knowledge of Brahman can be produced by ritual acts.’ Maṇḍana replies (32, 17-19): ‘but the [total] destruction of ignorance can be the result of endeavors. Moreover [32, 19-33, 4], ignorance is a positive force which is not totally destroyed when knowledge arises from a means of knowledge other than perception.’ In 33, 4-8 the opponent mentions an example that shows that ‘the idea of silver where there is only mother-of-pearl, no longer leads to action as soon as one knows that it is only mother-of-pearl. Moreover [33, 8-15], the assumption is wrong that not ignorance but works (karmāṇī) are the cause of bondage and that their destruction occurs by knowledge.’ According to the opponent, ‘the distinction of work and result is a pure practical opinion and only exists as long as ignorance exists. Once pure knowledge, devoid of all distinctions, is existing, ignorance will not exist any longer.’

But, according to Maṇḍana (33, 15-18), ‘the knowledge that has arisen from revelatory sentences is not enough. An immediate knowledge (pratyakṣam jñānam), no longer depending on the different elements of a sentence, and devoid of all diversity, is needed. To transform the knowledge from scripture into such an immediate knowledge works, meditation etc. are required.’

The opponent (33, 18-19) states that ‘every knowledge is of the same quality and that a clear appearance of the object is not necessary.’ To this Maṇḍana replies that ‘every knowledge that originates from other means of knowledge than perception has perception as its goal and is accomplished in it.’ Then the opponent asks if ‘other means of knowledge are necessary to understand an object that is already known [namely, by revelation]. Is one means of knowledge not enough?’ Maṇḍana replies that ‘even if the object is already known, it could be possible that another means of knowledge is necessary. There is another means of knowledge, to

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10 The text that follows is only a brief description of the argument and not the literal translation of the Sanskrit text.
This is what Śṅkara states in BSūBHI, 1, 4 (Ed. 1938, 152).

BSū 34, 15 avagatabrahmātmabhāvo is very similar to BSūBHI, Ed. 1938, 1528.9.

11 This is what Śṅkara states in BSūBHI, I, 1, 4 (Ed. 1938, 152).

12 BSū 34, 15 avagatabrahmātmabhāvo is very similar to BSūBHI, Ed. 1938, 1528.9.
false impressions may continue to exist, but by means of knowledge the truth has been determined. This truth should determine, too, the human behavior. However, Maṇḍana replies that ‘even if by means of knowledge truth is determined, the impression of truth is not strong enough and the impression of the false perception is stronger and still determines human behavior. The continuous repetition of the true knowledge is necessary and the only right means to conquer the impression originated by the false perception’ (35, 8-18).

The opponent now says that ‘the knowledge of truth originates from the holy tradition only, if this is supported by means like a state of chastity (brahmacarya) etc.’ Maṇḍana replies that ‘this is not true, because knowledge originates from the pronouncement alone. For the revelation that aims at the knowledge of truth does not need previous [application of] certain means in order to [be able to] communicate [its message] or to effect a definitive idea [about something].' Otherwise one would also not know [these] means which are taught [only] by scripture (35, 18-22). Just as release is not [something] to be created [and therefore something transient] when truth (or reality) has become manifest by a means of knowledge, so too it is [not something to be created] when it is made more (-viṣeṣa) manifest by means (such as a state of chastity [brahmacarya]). The revelatory texts which deal with the knowledge of Brahman, however, either may point to (-viṣaya) a state of perfection [one reaches by] meditatively repeating [a knowledge] or they may [only] refer to knowledge arisen by means of such revelatory sentences, because these are the cause of the completion that follows’ (36, 1-3).

Now we will look at the fourth and fifth views, which Maṇḍana finds acceptable in as far as they indicate how a Vedāntin can make use of ritual acts. The fourth view (27, 20-22) states that ritual acts, although normally leading to another result, can (like pre-sacrifice etc.) help to bring the knowledge of Brahman to perfection, if they are performed with only this aim in mind. The fifth view is very similar, but here consecrations (samskāra) and states (āśrama) of Hindu life are mentioned as aids

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13 The literal translation would be: ‘... the revelation ... neither declares nothing before the use of different means, nor does it not lead to a certain knowledge.’ I have transformed the double negation into a strong positive statement.
instead of Vedic ritual actions (36, 13-17). Both views are defended against objections by means of two images: that of a horse and a crystal.

One can walk to a village, if one wants to go there. However, if one goes by horse, one will get there sooner than by walking. The same obtains for attaining release. By means of sacrifices, consecrations etc., the goal of release is attained sooner than if one only meditates and does not also make sacrifices (36, 18-37, 3).

Brahman and ‘knowledge’ do not differ from each other. In reply to the opponent’s question of how it is possible - if Brahman is eternal and cannot be changed - that it depends on something else, Maṇḍana uses the image of a crystal. A crystal, which is coloured by something reflected in it, can only be seen in its real nature if this thing (e.g. a red cloth) is removed. The original nature of the crystal is neither destroyed nor changed by the reflection. Still the discovery of the crystal’s real nature depends upon the removal of the thing that causes the mirror image. In the same way the discovery of the Self’s real nature is supported by ritual acts (37, 4-18).

5.2 Analysis of BS1 I

In chapter three and four we analysed some of Śaṅkara’s texts by means of four questions. We will use the same questions to analyse to the first chapter of Maṇḍana’s BS1.

The first question dealt with the concept of release (mokṣa) and its relation to knowledge and ignorance. In the first chapter Maṇḍana’s concept of the goal of release is characterized by the emphasis on Brahman’s character as bliss (ānanda) (16, 14-22). One strives for release in order to reach the highest state of bliss. This implies that Maṇḍana does not follow the negative interpretation of release as release from suffering (1, 12-15).

The relation between the individual self and Brahman is complicated. Brahman is pure knowledge, but the self is defiled by ignorance (12, 11-14). Despite this difference, caused by ignorance, the self and Brahman are identical. Maṇḍana explains this apparent paradox by the example of the similarity between an original image and a mirror image. Although the mirror image is not different from the
original image, dissimilarity between the two is possible. To become truly identical with Brahman, ignorance should be destroyed. After the removal of all differences, the self appears in its own nature and release is reached.

Ignorance is without beginning but not endless (32, 17-19). This means that one can cease to be ignorant. The means for destroying ignorance is to deal with the *upaniṣads* and to perform ritual acts and continuous meditation (*upāsanā*). Ignorance can be removed by hearing, reflecting and continuous meditation (12, 11-14). Just as knowledge, even though it presupposes a duality, is a means to understand the non-duality of the self (or: Brahman), ritual acts can also be a means for removing ignorance. Continuous meditation presupposes hearing and reflecting and is aimed at the self. In the end, meditation destroys itself by making the perception of difference disappear.

Release is not realized at the same moment as knowledge is attained. The removal of ignorance does not converge with the starting point of knowledge. Knowledge of Brahman does not imply an immediate release. Time goes by between these two situations, which should be bridged by the repetition of the right perception of Brahman. The more this right perception of Brahman is repeated, the stronger it will be and the weaker the false perception will become. Repetition will, in other words, tip the balance toward release by neutralizing the influence of false perception (35, 3-5).

The second question concerns the relation between the Vedas and release. In the first lines of the first chapter Maṇḍana argues that there are different views about the role of the *upaniṣads* that contain knowledge of Brahman. Generally, texts that have release as their goal are necessary but not sufficient to attain release (8, 3-12, 11). In fact, Brahman is not the object of the knowledge that emerges from the revelatory sentences in the *upaniṣads*. Besides knowledge derived from the word, an immediate knowledge is needed that has Brahman as its object (33, 15-18). To acquire immediate knowledge of Brahman, meditation is required. To acknowledge and prove the knowledge of the Vedas, direct perception is needed, for perception has a direct connection with the object, viz. Brahman, that words do not have. One should add continuous meditation and ritual acts to the knowledge that has been
derived from the revelation; only in this way will the characteristics of transmigration be removed (35, 1-8).

Thus, revelation is not the most important means to know Brahman, despite the fact that the upanisads contain the knowledge of truth. This does not mean that those parts of the upanisads that contain instructions and injunctions with regard to Brahman are useless, for they do help to destroy ignorance.

The third question has to do with the role of reason. In BSı I a conflict between argumentation derived from the Vedas and rational argumentation does not arise. In the third part of the chapter (22, 19ff) there is a discussion about what means are valid for knowing Brahman. In this discussion it is made clear that it is doubtful whether Brahman can be known by the six valid means of knowledge that are accepted by the Mīmāṁsā. Yet, even if Brahman cannot be known by another means of knowledge and if its connection with the signifying word is also unknowable, Brahman can still be described by words, namely by means of the negation of differences (26, 10-14).

The means of knowledge are diverse, whereas the final goal, knowledge itself, is free of diversity.14 However, this does not cause any inconsistency regarding the situation that a diverse means is aimed at something free of diversity, for at the moment of knowledge of non-diversity, diversity has already disappeared (32, 8-13). Because ritual acts are diverse, the same point obtains for the connection between ritual acts and knowledge: ritual acts are able to function as means of knowledge in order to know Brahman.

The fourth question refers to the conditions for reaching release and the factors that prevent it. Maṇḍana finds a connection between ritual acts and knowledge of the self. He assumes that one single means is not enough to know Brahman. Listening to important passages in the upanisads, reflecting on their contents and continuous meditating about the result of such reflections are necessary. These means help to destroy ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed, the self appears in its transparent nature. Also, ritual acts are to be performed with the aim of release in mind. If one

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has known Brahman from the Vedas, this does not mean that release (knowing Brahman, i.e. one’s own nature, as it really is) has been immediately attained.

5.3 Differences Between Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara
In this section we will discuss the differences between Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara. By looking carefully at the answers given by Maṇḍana to the four questions, four points deserve attention: 1) the position of the Vedas, 2) the relation between knowledge and ignorance on one hand and release on the other, 3) the role of repetition, 4) the function of ritual acts.

The first difference is the position of the Vedas. The Upānisadīc part of the Vedas is considered by Śaṅkara as the only source of knowledge of Brahman. Moreover, it is the only means of release. If one reflects on this part of the Vedas, then it has, at a certain moment, an effect that no other means has, namely, immediate release.

This is not how Maṇḍana views the Vedas. For Maṇḍana, the Vedas are only a means of superficial knowledge concerning Brahman, which is not yet liberating. It should be improved by other means, such as continuous meditation. The knowledge that has arisen from revelatory sentences is not enough. It should be transformed into immediate knowledge. To this end ritual acts, meditation etc. are required.

The relation between knowledge and ignorance on the one hand and release on the other is also different. According to Śaṅkara, the moment that (well-prepared) knowledge arises ignorance will cease. There are no degrees in this event. Śaṅkara’s definition of knowledge implies that once ‘knowledge’ is acquired, this does not need to be ameliorated or completed. Once knowledge is grasped, the wrong influence of ignorance stops and release is reached at that very moment.

Maṇḍana assumes that right knowledge and ignorance can exist at the same time. Generally speaking, release does not occur at the very moment of the acquisition of knowledge, for removal of ignorance does not occur similarly with the origin of knowledge.
The third difference between Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara concerns the goal and the function of repetition. Śaṅkara considers repetition by the teacher as something that has a preliminary function in reaching release. This is due to his view that release is reached at the same moment as knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the Self is acquired when listening to an important scriptural passage. Repetition is needed only by those who do not grasp this knowledge at once. The goal of repetition is, thus, to hasten release only for those who are too ignorant to understand the Vedas at once.

In contrast to Śaṅkara, in Maṇḍana’s view it is the pupil instead of the teacher who repeats. In order to hasten release repetition is required, i.e. repetition of the knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the Self, in order to transform it from an abstract concept to a realised one. The pupil has to interiorise the received word, in order to neutralise the influence of wrong perceptions. Repetition is necessary until knowledge is so strong that ignorance is totally removed and release occurs. Repetition, thus, has a structural function and should take place at the moment one already has right knowledge.

The fourth difference regards the role of the ritual acts. According to Śaṅkara, ritual acts have only a preparatory function. They are not essential to release, for they do not add any value to the knowledge of Brahman. The only essential means is listening to the Vedas. Of course, this is in contradiction to what was proclaimed by the Mīmāṃsā who considered exhortation to ritual acts as the only (or at least main) task of the Vedas.

Maṇḍana takes a middle course by regarding ritual acts as helpful in abandoning ignorance, although they are not necessary for ascetics. Maṇḍana neither assumes that ritual acts are as such a way to release nor does he deny them an important function on this way.

A more important position is ascribed to continuous meditation. While ascetics can neglect ritual acts, everyone striving for release has to repeat the knowledge that arises from words in order to make appear what is really meant.
5.4 The Concept of the Word

With regard to our investigation, the differences between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana concerning the role of the Vedas, meditation and ritual acts for acquiring valid knowledge of Brahmān merit attention. In one way, these differences can be traced back to a different view of the question of whether knowledge derived from a word is valid or not. The question could also be rephrased: Can Brahmān be ‘known’ by means of the words of the Vedas? From Maṇḍana’s point of view, this question is, in fact, wrong. Maṇḍana characterizes Brahmān as pure knowledge, as being beyond all differences (12, 14-13, 1). This implies that Brahmān cannot be ‘known’ but is only accessible by means that presuppose differences and thus have a nature opposite to Brahmān. Such means are part of the world of ignorance.

According to Maṇḍana, the word, in the sense of speech, can only supply us with direct knowledge regarding the meaning of the words contained in a sentence. In general, words provide knowledge of an object. Whether they are used in everyday speech or in Vedic speech, they do not necessarily exhort one to any action. The effect of Vedic words is as great as the effect of words in everyday language. Vedic words are effective only because the relation to their objects is already established and because their object is analogous to that of the ‘secular’ domains. In fact, it is the cognitive element that dominates. The word is never able to effect or cause something. It is the object expressed by a word that must contain in itself an exhortation to action.

The Vedic words teach everything that needs to be known; there is nothing more to add. The words of the Vedas are not able to reveal the state of bliss to us – they can only guide us to it. Revelatory sentences do not suffice to make Brahmān ‘known’, for they do not have Brahmān as their object. Such sentences provide only superficial knowledge, which should be transformed into immediate knowledge. This transformation can take place only by means of continuous meditation and ritual acts, except for ascetics. In addition to the knowledge given by the words of the Vedas, we need the direct ‘knowledge’ of Brahmān that cannot be acquired by the word alone (33, 15-17). Therefore, to attain knowledge of bliss an additional act is required, i.e. continuous meditation. ‘Knowledge’ should be gained by continuous
meditation and this ‘knowledge’ is identical with the discovery of Brahman. Meditation that takes ‘knowledge’ derived from the words of the Vedas as its starting point leads to direct perception of bliss. For this reason mere listening can never be sufficient but must be supplemented by meditation.
6 Conclusion Part One

This part of this study has been dedicated to an exploration of Śaṅkara’s view of release (mokṣa) in general and, more specifically, of the relation between release and the Vedas. To that end in chapter two we gave an overview of three philosophical schools (Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Yoga) that may have influenced Śaṅkara’s epistemology, each in a different way. In chapter three we discussed some of Śaṅkara’s texts that deal with release: USP XVII and XVIII; USG I; BSŪBH introduction and I, 1, 1-4 and finally BSŪBH IV, 1 parts 1 and 2. Chapter four analysed these texts by means of four questions. These questions are an elaboration of the investigation of the claim that canonical texts are the only source from which knowledge of a transcendent reality can be derived in order to acquire release. The answers to the four questions provide the building blocks of this claim. The first question was how the concept of release is defined and how release is connected with knowledge and ignorance. The second question concerned the relation between the Vedas and release. The third question investigated the role of rational argumentation in the process of acquiring release. By means of the fourth question we searched for the conditions for attaining release and the factors that prevent us from being liberated. Chapter five focussed on Maṇḍana (ca. 700 CE), who was an Advaitin but also an opponent of Śaṅkara with respect to the function of the Vedas as the only source of valid knowledge that leads to release.

In this chapter we will review the essential points of Śaṅkara’s and Maṇḍana’s views of release. The first concerns the concept of release, the second the role of the central passages of the Vedas that lead to release, whereas the third reveals the problems Śaṅkara had to solve to maintain the supremacy of the Vedas as the only means of knowledge concerning the identity of Brahman and the Self.

6.1 Release
The analysis of Śaṅkara’s texts demonstrated that the texts mirror different aspects of release. The interpretation of release in USP XVII, for example, is different from that in BSŪBH I, 1, 1 and 2 as well as from that in USG II.

First, release is either defined as or refers to the knowledge (vidyā or jñāna) that the Self (Ātman) is identical with Brahman. The term ‘knowledge’ has two
different meanings: it can refer either to rational knowledge, to be acquired by means of reason and rational argumentation, or to experience (anubhava or avagati), which refers more to the realization or awareness of the identity with the Self. In most texts the latter is regarded as the key to escape transmigration (samsāra), whereas the former is only auxiliary. One is, in fact, already released, for the identity of the self with Brahman is a matter of human essence. The problem, however, is that one is not aware of this identity and falsely presumes that one should strive after release.

Secondly, the definition of release influences the way in which ‘transmigration’ is defined. Two examples will demonstrate this. If transmigration is characterised as the absence of discriminating knowledge (aviveka), release is defined as the possession of discriminating knowledge. In this framework, the term ‘superimposition’ (adhyāsa) is often used, for the absence of knowledge is demonstrated by superimposing the Self on non-Self. However, if transmigration is described as the continuous process of the performance of actions (karma) and the experiencing of its fruits, release will be described as the awareness that one is already released and as the complete absence of any action at all. The Self can be neither created nor ameliorated by any acts, such as rituals, sacrifices or meditation. It simply is.

One should keep in mind that these two ways of definition do not indicate a contradiction in Śaṅkara’s thinking. Rather, both can be found in his texts, complementing each other. Which definition is used depends on the context. Śaṅkara’s pupils, however, shift the meaning of release from the cessation of transmigration to the cessation of ignorance. Thus, the meaning of release as the cessation of transmigration gradually moves to the background. Śaṅkara himself provided the initial impetus to this shift through his emphasis on the statement ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asī).

The interpretation of release as the cessation of transmigration is closely connected with the interpretation of release as the cessation of ignorance. Release is related to the possession of knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the Self. In nearly all the texts we discussed, Śaṅkara bases his reflections on a dualism between Self and non-Self. He is a monist only insofar he assumes only one Self (not many). As long
as we do not overcome the false perception of reality that we are one with the body, mental events, etc., we are not released. The false identification with matter can be put aside by understanding the identity of Brahman and the Self, i.e. by acquiring knowledge of the true nature of Brahman.

The connection that some of Śaṅkara’s texts mention between release and knowledge on the one hand and transmigration and ignorance on the other is also mentioned in the NyāyaSūtras (NS) which deal with transmigration in the second aphorism. The cessation of transmigration starts with the removal of false knowledge by means of true knowledge. Release, then, can be defined as the consequence of the removal of false knowledge, faults, activity, birth and suffering. True knowledge, which removes false knowledge first, ultimately ends all suffering.

In contrast to the Mīmāṃsā, neither ritual acts have to be performed nor any other conditions fulfilled in order to reach the ultimate goal, for release has already been attained. Means other than the Vedas, such as ritual acts and meditation which are regarded as necessary by other schools, do not lead to release but are at best preparatory. There is no relation between ritual acts and knowledge of Brahman, for Brahman cannot be ‘accomplished.’

6.2 The Nature of the Vedas As the Only Valid Means of Knowledge of Brahman

According to Śaṅkara, the reason why not all people are released is often to be traced to the people themselves, for they are ignorant and do not understand the meaning of the Vedas. As long as they do not possess the knowledge of the right perception of reality, namely that Brahman is identical with the Self, they will not be released.

Śaṅkara assumes that the central passages of the Vedas that lead to release should be communicated. Only for those who do not immediately understand these passages after having heard them is it necessary to reflect on and contemplate them. In most situations one also needs the assistance of a teacher who can explain the meaning of the Vedas and thus supports the preparation for release. We attain

\[1\] NS I, 1, 2; cf. § 2.2.
release at the very same moment we understand the identity of Brahman and the Self.

Śaṅkara indicates this experience, this sudden ‘perception’, by the terms anubhava and avagati. Anubhava is a kind of eye-opener to the true nature of reality. It is neither a separate means of knowledge nor identical to knowledge. The Vedas remove all obstacles and prepare us for this moment of anubhava, which is the key to release. Anubhava can be caused by words only if these words reveal something that has already existed for a long time, e.g. one’s own self. Avagati goes beyond that: it is the realization that one’s own self is identical with the Self.²

In many texts Śaṅkara strongly emphasizes the function of the Vedas as the only means of knowledge (pramāṇa) of Brahman and the Self. This knowledge causes the removal of the false perception of reality and, thus, of our ignorance. Due to their function as a means of knowledge the Vedas are considered to be the source of release.

The supremacy of the Vedas as the only means to acquire knowledge of Brahman with regard to release is one of the theses that provoked much opposition from Śaṅkara’s opponents. This supremacy rests on the Vedas’ authority as a means of knowledge of Brahman. Unlike the Nyāya, Śaṅkara does not ground the validity of the Vedas in an external factor, such as the trustworthiness of a speaker. The Vedas are self-validating and internally authoritative. Like the Mīmāṁsā, Śaṅkara emphasizes that the Vedas do not contain any contradiction and that no other means of knowledge is able to contradict its contents. Rather, the Vedas are internally coherent and their main subject is the nature of Brahman as described by the sentence ‘you are that.’

6.3 Problems with respect to the Nature of the Vedas

Knowledge is the result of a certain means of acquiring knowledge. It is in itself valid as long as it is not invalidated by another means that proves it to be false. This implies that knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the Self is valid if it is not invalidated by any other means.

Only from the central passages of the Vedas is one able to know that all transmigration is illusory and that Brahman is the Self. If Śaṅkara assumes that only the Vedas are a valid means of knowledge with regard to Brahman’s nature, he has to prove that all other means are either unable to provide such knowledge or are unreliable. The problem that Śaṅkara has to solve is: how can a means of knowledge (including the Vedas) function without the false identification of the Self and non-Self.3

Some opponents, among them Maṇḍana, question whether knowledge of Brahman that is derived from the Vedas can be regarded as valid, for they conclude from what Śaṅkara’s says that the Vedas are part of a reality influenced by ignorance. Śaṅkara himself, for example, assumed that all means of knowledge are valid only insofar as one has not yet been released. But if this is true, how are the Vedas able to communicate true and valid knowledge of Brahman if they are part of a false reality? Is it still possible to regard the Vedas as a valid source of knowledge of Brahman?

If the Vedas are regarded as being too much influenced by ignorance, the question also arises as to whether the knowledge of Brahman, which is acquired by the Vedas, can be regarded as valid. How can the validity of this knowledge be investigated? What are the criteria for the validity of this knowledge that prove it is as valid as knowledge derived by direct sense perception (pratyakṣa)? 4 And there is a final question: Is it not more logical that the knowledge derived from the Vedas should be supplemented by knowledge acquired in other ways, such as meditation?

3 Cf. BSŪBh Introd. page 40.

4 All six orthodox philosophical schools considered knowledge derived by direct sense perception as valid and undoubtable. Sense perception as a means of knowledge (pramāṇa), therefore, was the prevailing standard for all other means of knowledge.
All these questions can be summarized in one question focussed on the reliability of the Vedas: How are the Vedas able to function as a valid means of knowledge regarding the nature of Brahman, if the Vedas are also part of ignorance? Or, to put it as follows: What conditions does a means of knowledge have to fulfil if it is to be trusted as a valid means through which we can acquire knowledge of Brahman?

Śaṅkara’s answer did not satisfy all opponents. Some argued for another solution and assumed that other means in addition to the Vedas were necessary to show us the nature of Brahman. One of the opponents is Maṇḍana, an Advaitin like Śaṅkara (ca. 700 CE). In contrast to the dominant role assigned by Śaṅkara to the Vedas for attaining release, Maṇḍana assumed that other means are necessary as well, in addition to the Vedas such as continuous meditation (upāsana) and ritual acts.

Maṇḍana stresses the character of Brahman as bliss (ānanda). Release is attained once the individual person realizes that he is not an individual at all but identical with Brahman. Yet there is an important difference between the self and Brahman: the individual self is constituted and defiled by ignorance, whereas Brahman is not. This ignorance must be destroyed by knowledge of Brahman’s true nature. In order to acquire such knowledge the prescriptions and injunctions for ritual acts in the upaniṣads are useful, because they can help to destroy ignorance (if their direct aim is set aside).

According to Maṇḍana, the meaning of words can be known not only from injunctions but also from descriptions of a situation. Moreover, even if Brahman cannot be known via an injunction or any other means, he can still be known by the negation of things which we do know. In consequence, Maṇḍana characterises

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5 Cf. BS1, vs. 1 and the explanation of this verse in 1, 12-15 and 1, 16-6, 6.
6 Cf. BS1 1, 8, 13-12, 11.
7 Cf. BS1 1, 12, 11-14.
8 Cf. BS1 1, 25, 21-26, 10.
9 Cf. BS1 1, 26, 10-14.
Brahman, for example, as undying, unborn, not many etc.\textsuperscript{10} The ‘knowledge’ that is acquired in this way does not remove the veil of Brahman; it needs to be repeated.\textsuperscript{11}

Maṇḍana maintains that (superficial) knowledge of Brahman, which is acquired from the Vedas, has to be transformed into immediate knowledge.\textsuperscript{12} For the Vedas, which contain revelatory words concerning the transcendent world, are not able to give us this immediate knowledge. The object of this immediate knowledge is Brahman, and possession of this knowledge means that all influences of transmigration have disappeared. The (superficial) knowledge from the Vedas neither releases one at once nor destroys ignorance by the cessation of the characteristics of transmigration.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, besides the Vedas, continuous meditation and ritual acts are required.

\textbf{6.4 Conclusion}

According to Śaṅkara, release (which means the awareness of the identity between the self and Brahman) should be realized by knowledge. This is the consequence of the statement that release must be understood in the context of and is impeded by ignorance.

Since Brahman cannot be grasped by human senses, Śaṅkara turns to the Vedas as revelation and differentiates them from other means of knowledge. In consequence, he argues that means of knowledge such as perception, reasoning and inference, are applicable in empirical matters but not in the inquiry into Brahman. Thus, he defends the position of the Vedas as the only means that provides us with knowledge of Brahman and of the identity between the Self and Brahman. The only way to achieve knowledge of Brahman, is therefore by means of the central passages of the Vedas that establish the identity between the Self and Brahman.

\textsuperscript{10} Cf. BS\textit{I} 1, vs. 1. Other, more positive, descriptions of Brahman are bliss (ānanda) and one (eka). The negative descriptions indicate a problem regarding the characterisation of Brahman. This is also shown by Maṇḍana’s remark that ānanda is not to be understood as a pure negation of suffering.

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. for example BS\textit{I} 1, 35, 8-18.

\textsuperscript{12} Cf. BS\textit{I} 1, 33, 15-18.

\textsuperscript{13} Cf. BS\textit{I} 1, 35, 1-8.
If simply listening to the Vedas would lead one to the awareness of the identity of the self and Brahman (anubhava), no further problems would arise. Generally, it should be acknowledged that this is not so, for such an awareness does not come into being without any further human activity. Thus, a solution should be sought in which both the authority of the Vedas as well as human activities are maintained.

For those who do not immediately understand the central passages of the Vedas, Śaṅkara often adopts and adapts the old method of hearing, reflecting and contemplating. Continuous meditation as proposed by Maṇḍana, however, is rejected, for, according to Śaṅkara, people always want to achieve a certain good through meditation, even if meditation takes place outside the ritual context. The knowledge derived from such meditation is not new. Meditation and ritual acts on the one hand and release on the other are incompatible: if ignorance means transmigration and thus suffering, then knowledge must be the means of release. Moreover, release is eternal and cannot be accomplished or caused by ritual acts.

Maṇḍana’s approach leaves more room for the karma-kāṇḍa of the Vedas (the part of the Vedas dealing with rituals) to be of help for the aim of the jñāna-kāṇḍa (which is concerned with the inquiry into Brahman). The subject of karma-kāṇḍa is dharma and is aimed at well-being in this and the next life. Jñānakāṇḍa aims at perfect release by means of the knowledge of the identity of Brahman and oneself. From these two kinds of scripture evolved two different systems corresponding to their subject matter. The first understood the practice of Dharma as the centre of the Vedas, making the rest of scripture subsidiary to it. The second tried to understand the Vedas in terms of inquiry into Brahman. Maṇḍana assigns as important a place to human activity as he does to the Vedas in attaining release. In doing so, he seems to be more realistic and at the same time more traditional in dealing with the jñānakāṇḍa of the Vedas than Śaṅkara, who seeks a more ‘logically’ satisfying solution.

Śaṅkara is definitely more radical in his view of the Vedas and his emphasis on the indicative of the central passages of the Vedas than Maṇḍana is. However, by giving scope to meditation and ritual acts as purifying the heart to make it receptive to the message of the central sentences of the Vedas, the radicality of the former is weakened.
The question that finally arises is whether Śaṅkara, by admitting that most people are not immediately released but need to practice the traditional triad of hearing, reflection and contemplation, does not allow back in by the backdoor the human activity that Maṇḍana allows to enter through the front door.
Part II
Johann Gerhard (1582-1637)

In the second part of this book we will investigate Johann Gerhard’s doctrine of Scripture and its role as a means of salvation. In chapter 1 Gerhard was introduced as an important theologian of the school that is often referred to as Lutheran orthodoxy. Its representatives held to the principle ‘Scripture alone’ (sola scriptura). They emphasized the importance of Scripture in all areas of theology and used Aristotelian epistemology as a framework for dogmatics.

Part II contains five chapters. In chapter 7 we will briefly explain those elements of Aristotelian epistemology that influenced Gerhard. In chapter 8 we will examine the texts in which different aspects of his thinking concerning the relation between salvation and Scripture are described: Loci Theologici, the parts I, II, III, VI; the Tractatus de legitima Scripturae sacrae interpretatione and Methodus Studii Theologicci. These texts will be analysed in chapter 9 on the basis of four questions that are concerned with the relation between Scripture and salvation. The first question is how ‘salvation’ is defined and how it can be acquired. The second is the role played by Scripture in Gerhard’s theology and the relation between Scripture and salvation. The third question concerns the role of reason with regard to salvation. The final question concerns the conditions for attaining salvation and the factors that impede it. In chapter 10 we will explore the view of Hermann Rahtmann with regard to the relation between Scripture and salvation. Rahtmann was a minister in Danzig who assumed that the Spirit, instead of Scripture, was the most important factor leading to salvation. He was influenced by both orthodox Lutheranism and pietism, another influential theological wing in the seventeenth century. Chapter 11, finally, gives an overview of what we have discovered in the course of our investigation and ends with some conclusions.

The Loci Theologici (LT) were first published in the period from 1610-1625; we will use the edition J. Gerhard, Loci theologici cum pro adstruenda veritate tum pro destruenda quorumvis contradictientium falsitate ... Opus praeclarissimum novem tomis comprehensum denuo ... curavit ... (Berlin: Preuss, 1863-1885). From the other works mentioned here we will use the following editions: Tractatus de legitima scripturae sacrae interpretatione, (Jenae: Tobias Steinmann, 1610) which was also published as the second section of the edition of LT, (Heldburg 1639) and Methodus studii theologici, publicis praelectionis in Academia Jenensi, Jena: Tobias Steinmann, 1622.
7 Aristotelianism in the Seventeenth Century: 
An Introduction

In the Middle Ages Aristotelianism was introduced to Western Europe through Arabic translations of Aristotle into Latin, which influenced philosophy as well as theology in many ways. Aristotle’s works became the basis of medieval scholasticism; e.g. much of Roman Catholic theology shows, through Thomas Aquinas, Aristotelian influence. In the sixteenth century Aristotelianism enjoyed a revival in academic studies, including theology. Melanchthon, for example, could be mentioned here as the first Lutheran theologian to use some Aristotelian concepts in a dogmatic system. Since his dogmatics every scholar of theology has had to account for the relation between philosophy in general (and Aristotelianism in particular) and theology.

In the seventeenth century a variant of Aristotelianism became important to both philosophy and theology. Orthodox Lutheran theology was strongly influenced by Aristotelian methodology and metaphysics. This obtains also for Gerhard’s theology. Gerhard used the Aristotle’s epistemology but changed it and adapted it to his own goal: the defence of Scripture as the only means to attain salvation. In order to understand the structure of his theology better, we will discuss the most important elements of Aristotelian epistemology.

7.1 Elements of Aristotelian Philosophy
The basis of Aristotelian philosophy is metaphysics, considered as the introduction to and ‘servant’ of all other sciences. Whereas the other sciences deal only with one aspect of reality, metaphysics has as its subject the whole of reality. It describes and explains the general building blocks of existence and provides basic concepts for the other sciences. The main task of metaphysics is to discover the most general forms of things, to bring the general characteristics in the particular subjects to the fore.

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1 Philipp Melanchthon (d. 1560 CE), a friend and student of Luther, was the first theologian who attempted to systematize Luther's theology by using the Aristotelian philosophy. One of his most famous books is *Loci Communes rerum theologicarum seu hypotyposes theologicae Wittembergae*, 1521.
The final goal of metaphysics is to analyse and classify, to provide general concepts that can be used in all sciences.

An important concept is that of ‘substance’ (ens), ‘something that exists.’ This concept includes the transcendental as well as the empirical world and can be applied to all heavenly (or divine) and earthly things.

‘Substance’ is the combination of ‘form’ (forma) and ‘matter’ (mater). Each object has a form, which is the essence or very nature of a thing. It is according to the form that we know all things. ‘Form’ does not refer to the external shape but to an internal principle. The ‘form’ of a thing is not added but belongs intrinsically to the kernel and is the factual reality. ‘Matter’ and ‘form’ are closely connected, for ‘matter’ exists only in the form. ‘Matter’ is the stuff of which a substance is composed, eg the ‘matter’ of the house are the bricks, the timbers or whatever the house is made of. The ‘form’ of the substance is the actual house namely for covering bodies and chattels.

Other important concepts related to ‘form’ and ‘matter’ are ‘potentiality’ (potentia) and ‘actuality’ (actus). ‘Matter’ is that which exists potentially. However, ‘form’ exists in actuality, i.e. exists actually; it is the result of the change from potentiality to actuality. Potentiality is what a thing is capable of doing, or being acted upon, if it is not prevented by something else. For example, the seed of a plant in the soil is potentially plant, and if is not prevented by something, it will become a plant. ‘Actuality’ is everything that can realize potentiality or make it perfect. Actuality is the fulfilment of the goal of the potentiality, e.g. actuality is when the seed of the plant becomes a plant.

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3 Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 31-35.
‘Actuality’ and ‘potentiality’ are closely connected with the concept of ‘cause’ (causa).\(^4\) A cause is the basis of scientific knowledge, for as soon as one knows the cause of a certain thing, one knows the thing itself, its essence. Every kind of knowledge originates from knowledge of the causes. Aristotelianism recognized external causes and internal causes. The external causes were the efficient cause (causa efficiens), the source of motion, generation, or change e.g. the sculptor that made the statue as well as the final cause (causa finalis), the goal or full development of an individual, or the intended function of a construction or invention e.g. the sculpture as a fine work of art. The internal causes were the formal cause, (causa formalis), which is the species, kind, or type e.g. the shape which the sculptor realized as well as the material cause (causa materialis), the matter out of which a thing is made, e.g. the marble from which a statue is carved. Each cause can be divided again into more causes. For instance, an instrumental cause is that by means of which an efficient cause brings about its effect. The sculptor's tools are instruments that an artisan uses to shape a block of marble into a marble statue.

The last concept to discuss is the principle (principium).\(^5\) A principle is something that can be known directly and through which something unknown can be understood. A principle is not based on rational grounds and does not belong to the domain of reason (ratio) but to that of the soul (mens, intellectus). This principle, from which theoretical knowledge is derived, must be true, self-evident and intrinsically certain. All theoretical knowledge originates in learning something new by means of something known. In contrast to a principle, which cannot be proven and is not an object of reason, knowledge acquired in this way should be proven.

In short, we know the essence of a thing if we know its causes and principles. But what is the procedure for acquiring knowledge? How does knowledge arise? According to Aristotelian epistemology, the intellect (voûç) is important in this process: it is the cause of real knowledge. Knowledge originates by means of the intellect. The intellect is able to ‘grasp’ the ‘form’ of things, our senses ‘grasp’ the substance of things, which depend on ‘matter.’ It is the function of the intellect to

\(^4\) Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 33.
\(^5\) ‘primum unde cognoscitur’; cf. Hägglund, 1951, 137.
explain the form of things.\textsuperscript{6} The form of things can be perceived only by the intellect and not by the senses.

True knowledge arises if there is a congruence between the intellect and a thing.\textsuperscript{7} Scientific knowledge is derived by means of induction: from many particular things one attempts to discover the general characteristics that apply to all.

\textbf{7.2 The Adaptation of Aristotelian Epistemology}

Some Lutheran theologians found the use of philosophy in theology repugnant. Luther, for example, generally had rejected such a connection. Conversely, philosophy became more and more important to Lutheran theology because Luther’s friend and student Melanchthon had introduced Aristotelianism in his writings. Moreover, theologians were compelled to use Aristotelian philosophy in order to be able to engage in discussion with other scholars. Thus, in the seventeenth century the influence of Aristotelianism on Lutheran theology at the universities was widespread.

There were a few philosophers who prepared the acceptance of Aristotelianism in Lutheran theology, among whom was Giacomo Zabarella (1532-1589). He was one of the most important logicians of Italy, who revived Aristotelian logic and methodology.\textsuperscript{8} According to Zabarella, logic was a mere methodology that had to do with concepts instead of objects. In this way logic was distinguished from ontology and metaphysics. Logic was not science (\textit{scientia}) but art (\textit{ars}).\textsuperscript{9} It only provided the several disciplines with the means for acquiring knowledge.

Zabarella’s particular influence on theology was his division between the demonstrative and resolutive (or analytical) method. His methodology is based on

\textsuperscript{6} Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 42-43.
\textsuperscript{7} Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 45.
\textsuperscript{8} Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 45-47.
\textsuperscript{9} By arts (\textit{ars}) are meant those disciplines that are defined by Aristotle and Zabarella as \textit{habitus animae}, existing in the soul. \textit{Ars} should be distinguished from \textit{scientia}. Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 47.
Aristotle’s division between necessary and accidental things.\textsuperscript{10} To this division corresponds not only the division of disciplines into theoretical disciplines (\textit{scientiae contemplativae}) and practical disciplines (\textit{disciplinae operatrices}) but also the division of orders (\textit{ordines}; order: the order in which subjects are dealt with) into the compositive order and the resolutive order.\textsuperscript{11}

The compositive order (\textit{ordo compositivus}) can be applied only to the theoretical sciences, that deal with things that either always exist or originate solely from external causes and not by human will. Those are mathematics, physics and metaphysics. This order proceeds from single to composite substances, which means that one proceeds from first principles to conclusions. Such a procedure is analogous to the way in which one acquires knowledge: in order to obtain real knowledge of things, knowledge of the principles is needed first. Thus, the principles are more important than the goal to be reached.

The second order, the resolutive order (\textit{ordo resolutivus}), is suited only to the practical disciplines. These disciplines deal with things that result from human activity and includes all sciences, except for the three mentioned above.\textsuperscript{12} The resolutive order departs from the goal to be reached and subdivides this goal into principles, by which the goal can be realised. Because this goal is reached by human activity, knowledge is generated to execute this activity and, thus, to reach the goal. The difference between the demonstrative and the resolutive order is that in the latter the goal to be reached is put first, instead of the principles.

Referring to the two disciplines and two orders, Zabarella finally describes two methods: the demonstrative and the resolutive (\textit{methodus demonstrativa et resolutiva}).\textsuperscript{13} ‘Method’ is the process through which things that are unknown become known by means of conclusion and deduction. This is how things are proved. According to Zabarella there are only two ways of acquiring knowledge, and, therefore, two methods. The first method proceeds from cause to effect and gives full knowledge of things by knowledge of its causes (\textit{methodus

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\textsuperscript{10} Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 50.
\textsuperscript{11} Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 50-51.
\textsuperscript{13} Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 53.
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The demonstrative method proceeds in the opposite direction, from effect to cause, and looks for knowledge of the causes of which the effects are already known (*methodus resolutiva*). Although, theoretically, the demonstrative method is not limited strictly to the theoretical sciences nor the resolutive method to the practical disciplines, it was practically often the case.

7.3 Lutheran Theology in Relation to Aristotelianism

The dogmatic systems of Lutheran theology in the seventeenth century derived much from Aristotelian epistemology since Melanchthon’s *Loci Communes*. First, the Aristotelian distinction between ‘form’ and ‘matter’ was maintained in the doctrine of Scripture as a unity between the words and their meaning. Secondly, the Aristotelian view of the four causes as the foundation of knowledge had a great influence: in adopting this view it was possible to distinguish God as the principal cause from other causes. Thirdly, Aristotelianism offered the possibility of having theology accepted as a science like any other science. Theology was given the same rational structure, by which one proceeded from one conclusion to the other, with self-evident principles (*principia*) as point of departure. Theology found these principles in Scripture, summarized axiomatically in the articles of the Apostolic Creed. Finally, according to Aristotelian epistemology, a distinction was made between the theoretical and the practical sciences. In the practical disciplines a certain goal had to be reached by knowledge, whereas in the theoretical sciences (among them metaphysics) the goal is knowledge for knowledge’s sake. Theology, having the salvation of humankind as its goal, turned out to be a practical discipline.

However, some problems emerged as well. The greatest problem with regard to theology was that Zabarella’s system of two orders was a general methodology. Theology was not mentioned in Zabarella’s system, for strictly spoken, theology was not a ‘science.’ Because theology’s aim was the goal of salvation, it should be regarded as a practical discipline, which implied that the resolutive method had to be

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14 The first editions of the *Loci* in 1521 and 1522 bear a catechetical stamp rather than a systematic one. The systematic approach appeared in later editions.

followed. However, the combination between this method and theology raised problems. It was inherent to the resolutive order that it dealt with accidental things and considered the goal and effect of things to be dependent on the human will and acts.\(^{16}\) This would have been opposite to the character of theology of which the goal, viz. salvation, was not dependent on human will but on God’s.

Zabarella had not given a place to theology in his system as a science.\(^ {17}\) This was done by Bartholomäus Keckermann,\(^ {18}\) a Reformed theologian. He defined theology\(^ {19}\) as a practical discipline (\textit{disciplina operatrix}) and determined that the analytical or resolutive method should be used. This method first determines the goal (\textit{finis}) that must be reached; the goal structures the order in which topics should be treated. Secondly, the subject (\textit{subiectum}) that must lead to the goal is investigated. Thirdly, the means (\textit{media}) that lead the subject to the goal are examined.

The influence of philosophy can also be measured by the history of the doctrine of Scripture. In the \textit{Schmalkald Articles} (the confession written by Luther, 1537) it is assumed that without the external word inspired by the Spirit, no one attains salvation. The Spirit works by means of Scripture and can be experienced in the heart; she testifies to salvation. The Spirit is also the driving force of the self-interpretation of Scripture. Scripture and Spirit form a dynamic unity; Spirit, gospel and believer coincide objectively and this coinciding takes place in church.

Melanchthon assumed that the Spirit is a principle (or source) of knowledge about God to someone who investigates Scripture, because the Spirit explains the

\(^{16}\) Cf. our brief exposition on the two methods in § 7.2.

\(^{17}\) Cf. Hägglund, 1951, 52.


\(^{19}\) Curiously enough, Keckermann himself had many objections to the word ‘theology’ because it did not suit the subjects that were treated. He preferred the term \textit{Soterologia, disciplina salutis et boni spiritualis} and only used ‘theology’ because it was the usual term in the tradition. Cf. Althaus, 1967, 29-30 and Wallmann, 1961, 28.
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Statements that are necessary for salvation and are written in Scripture. The effects of Scripture and the Spirit, however, are separated. The Spirit is added to the Word in order to effect faith. This way of thinking is also expressed in the Formula of Concord (1577).

The Formula of Concord is the starting point for the development of a doctrine of Scripture. In the Formula Scripture is indicated as the only standard for doctrine and ministry, thus opposing the high estimation of tradition by the Roman Catholics. Seventeenth-century Lutheran orthodoxy takes it a step further: they consider Scripture to be a principle. As a principle it is important and not to be divided; it is true; it is beyond criticism; it has internal authority; there is no internal opposition and it does not need any proof. All the characteristics of an ‘Aristotelian’ principle must belong to Scripture as well.

7.4 A Crisis of Piety?
Orthodox Lutherans generally accepted Aristotelian philosophy as a means to construct their own dogmatic systems. But other Lutheran theological wings, such as pietism, resisted the influence of such a theological rationalization. They considered this influence on piety to be devastating. Religion as a doctrine and as a way of piety were torn apart, which resulted into a general crisis for piety. Some theologians tried to solve this crisis by introducing a new language into devotional books (Erbauungsbücher). One of them was Johann Arndt, generally known as the author of Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum (1605-1610). This book was printed in many editions and was widely read by both Lutherans and Calvinists. It had a strong hold on piety in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The religious interest lay in the way of life one had to lead after being justified by God’s grace. Justification precedes sanctification, rebirth and the pious life. According to Arndt, the pious life was meant to complement the faith of justification. Before him, faith was viewed dogmatically, but his works gave rise to a different view of faith: his piety was an ‘internal’ piety, based on one’s personal experience of God’s love. He argued that God’s kingdom is placed within our hearts. The bond between God and the human being is internalized, the soul is united with God by means of the unio mystica. With Arndt a renaissance of mysticism in Lutheranism began.
8 Summary of Relevant Texts

In this chapter we will take a closer look at some of Gerhard’s texts, in order to analyse them by means of the four questions we stipulated in the introduction to this book. These questions are derived from the central question of our investigation, i.e. how one can defend the proposition that it is only by means of the canonical texts as a source of salvific knowledge that human beings can find release.\(^1\) Guides to finding an answer to our central question, they are as follows:

1) In what way is the concept of release defined in the texts and how is release connected with knowledge and with whatever impedes this knowledge?

2) What is the relation between canonical texts and release?

3) What role do both reason as well as rational argumentation play in the general acquirement of knowledge in the process of obtaining release?

4) What are the conditions for being released and what factors prevent human beings from being released?

The answers to these four questions are the starting point for the discussion of our central question. In order to trace the arguments used by Gerhard to defend the claim that salvation can be attained only via Scripture, we chose the following texts: chapters from *Loci Theologici* (LT) volumes I-III and VI, the *Tractatus de legitima Scripturae sacrae interpretatione* (TR), and *Methodus Studii Theologici* (MST).

8.1 *Loci Theologici* \(^2\)

The general order of the LT, Gerhard's most important dogmatic work, is derived from the order of the confessions that were used in the churches standing in the tradition of the Reformation. Each part (locus) deals with one single topic, for example, the first locus is devoted to Scripture. As we did in the first part of this study, we will quote extensively from a locus and analyse it by means of four

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\(^1\) Cf also the introduction, § 1.2.

\(^2\) The edition of the LT that is used is: J. Gerhard, *Loci theologici cum pro adstruenda veritate tum destruenda quorumvis contradictientium falsitate per theses nervose solide et copiose explicati ... Opus praeclarissimum novem tomis comprehensum denuo ...* Berlin: Preuss, 1863-1885.
questions above. The most important parts (loci) with regard to our investigation are the Preface (Prooemium) and Parts (loci) I, VII, XVI and XXIII.

8.1.1 LT I, Prooemium and loc I: the Nature of Theology and Scripture
The first volume opens with the Preface (Prooemium; LT I, Pr.) in which an exposition on Holy Scripture is given. In the first part (locus) following the Preface, Gerhard deals more extensively with Holy Scripture. We will analyse the relevant chapters in the Preface and the first part.

The effective cause of the ‘supernatural theology’ as described in the Preface is ‘the divine revelation, handed down in the revealed Word. Therefore, the principal effective cause is the revealing God. The instrumental cause is the Word as a means of the divine revelation.’ God’s Word has two sides, just like human words: there is an external and an internal word. The internal word is that which appears in the mind and which is just like progeny of the mind; it is even said to be the Word itself. The external word is revealed externally, either orally or written down. These differences between internal and external words are, however, of minor importance, for finally ‘it is the same Word and counsel of God concerning our salvation that is revealed and communicated to the prophets and apostles by immediate illumination and inspiration; [with regard] to those whom the prophets and apostles, while still living on this earth, instructed it happened by the preaching of the living voice; [with regard] to us, however, it is communicated now by the reading and meditation of Scripture.’

3 ‘Causa efficiens theologiae supernaturalis est divina revelatio in verbo patefacto tradita. Proinde causa efficiens principalis est Deus revelans (Mt. 11:27, 16:17, 1 Cor. 2:10). Causa instrumentalis est verbum divinæ revelationis medium’ (LT I, Pr., §18, 4b). ‘Supernatural theology’ means theology kindled by the light of grace in the revealed word; ‘natural theology’ is theology kindled by the natural light. Note that ‘theology’ here stands for knowledge about God. ‘Natural theology’ means the full knowledge of God, such as people possessed before the fall into sin.

4 ‘Unum enim idemque Dei verbum ac consilium de salute nostra est, quod revelatum et communicatum fuit prophetis et apostolis per immediatam illuminationem et inspirationem; illis, quos prophetae et apostoli in his terris adhuc viventes docuerunt, per vivae vocis praedicationem; nobis per Scripturae lectionem et meditationem hodie communicatur’ (LT I, Pr., §18, 5a).
As we saw in chapter 7, theology is a practical discipline. As in every practical discipline, everything is centred around the subject. In theology this subject is the human being, who has to be led to eternal well-being. The material cause is the human being, whereas the formal cause is the salvation to which one has to be guided. In theology one deals first with human nature and later with the means that are proposed to guide humans to the goal of theology (salvation), which are, for example, a true and salvific knowledge of God and a true faith in Christ.5 ‘The superiority of theology can be concluded [1] from the efficient principal cause, which is God, by whose goodness and wisdom this discipline has appeared; [2] from the instrumental cause which are the prophets and apostles, instructed by God and therefore not subject to error – not even in the smallest detail of God’s Word in preaching and writing; [3] from being consequently a principle, theology is supported by divine revelation, which is true in itself and the most certain of all things; [4] from the authority of the matter, i.e. theology deals with divine mysteries, going beyond every reach of the human intellect – it deals with God as creator, redeemer and sanctifier; [5] from the usefulness of the goal, which informs us about eternal life.’6

After having dealt with the nature of theology in the Proemium, Gerhard discusses extensively several aspects of Scripture in the following chapters of his first volume. ‘The effective cause of Scripture is either principal or instrumental. The principal cause is the eternal God, in essence one, in person three: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That God is the principal cause can be proved by the matter of Scripture. Scripture, materially seen, is nothing else but the Word of God. Scripture is nothing else but the divine revelation, put into holy letters. For the revealed Word of God

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5 Cf. LT I, Pr., §28, 8a.

and the sacred Scripture do not really differ from each other, because people have put these divine revelations of the holy God exactly into Scriptures.’ The instrumental cause of Scripture are the holy men of God, those men who were particularly and immediately called and elected by God to record the divine revelations in writing. The authority of Scripture can be derived from the effective cause as well. This authority is based upon the fact that God is the author of Scripture, through whose immediate inspiration prophets, evangelists and apostles have written it. ‘The authority depends only upon God, not upon the authority of the church.’

The formal cause of Scripture is dual: internal and external or essential and accidental. The internal form is defined as breath of God or inflation, divine inspiration, in which respect Scripture is called divinely inspired. But because this inspiration belongs more to the effective cause, since the holy men of God spoke and wrote being supported by the Holy Spirit, were led and driven by divine inspiration, the internal form of Scripture is the divine authority and majesty of Scripture, which descends from the immediate inspiration of the Spirit (the proper and adequate effective cause) and from the elevation of things, which she exposes (the proper and adequate matter). The fact that the divinity of Scripture is the basis of the form, implies that Scripture must be originally and naturally viewed as holy, divine and canonical. Its nature is determined by its divinity: without inherent

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8 Cf. LT I, Pr., § 18, 18b.

9 ‘Ex causa efficiens principali Scripturae S. quae Deus est, divina Scripturae auctoritas oritur ac dependet. Quia enim Scriptura s. Deum autorem habet, cuius immediate inspiratione prophetae, evangelistae et apostoli scripserunt, inde atque ideo divinam auctoritatem obtiniet’ (LT I, loc I, c III, § 33, 25b).

10 ‘Auctoritas pendens a solo Deo, non pendet ab auctoritate ecclesiae’ (LT I, loc I, c III, § 39, 27a).

11 Cf. LT I, loc I, c XII, § 305 and 306, 132a.
authority there would be no canonical Scripture.' The external form is the Hebrew language in which the Old Testament is written and the Greek language in which the New Testament is written.

The final cause has two parts: the goal with regard to God and a goal with regard to us. ‘With regard to God, the goal of Scripture is the salvific knowledge and glorification of God, for God reveals himself in his Word first preached by a living voice, afterwards put down in written words, so that, according to his being and will, he is known rightly by people and is glorified in this life as well as eternally.’ ‘With regard to us, the goal (of Scripture) is either intermediate or most ultimate. The intermediate goals are exposed by the apostle Paul in [Romans] 15:4 and 2 [Timothy] 3:16, namely instruction, examination, refutation, education and consolation.’ ‘The most ultimate and highest goal of Scripture with regard to us is our salvation and eternal life. For God revealed himself in his Word and instructs people in truth by this his Word, he compels them to do good, He exhorts them to bear adversities, so they will finally partake in eternal salvation.’

There is no real difference between the written and the revealed (or spoken) Word of God. By the act of writing, the Word does not cease to be divine nor does it cease to be an effective organ of conversion and salvation: in Romans 10:17 it is stated that the Word arises from hearing. This should not be understood exclusively as if the hearing of the preached Word is contrasted with the reading of the written Word but rather inclusively, so that not only by the hearing of the Word but also by

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13 ‘Respectu Dei finis Scripturae est salutaris Dei agnito et glorificatio, ideo enim Deus in verbo suo primum viva voce praedicato, postea in literas redacto sese patefacit, ut ab hominibus juxta essentiam et voluntatem suam recte agnitus, in hac et aeterna vita celebretur’ (LT I, loc I, c XVII, § 362, 155b).
14 ‘Respectu nostri finis est vel intermedium, vel ultimus. Intermedii fines exponuntur ab apostolo Rom 15:4, 2 Tim. 3:16, quod sint διδασκαλία, ἔλεγχος, ἐπανόρθωσις, παιδεία ac παράκλησις’ (LT I, loc I, c XVII, § 363, 155b).
15 ‘Ultimus enim ac summus respectu nostri Scripturae finis est nostra salus ac vita aeterna. Ideo enim Deus in verbo suo sese revelavit, ideo per hoc verbum suum homines in veritate instruit, ad bene operandum impellit, ad toleranda adversa hortatur, ut salutis aeternae tandem fiant participes’ (LT I, loc I, c XVII, § 364, 156a).
the reading (of the Word) God is considered to be effective with respect to faith and salvation.\(^{16}\)

From the effective cause and the goal of Scripture (respectively, God and the human writers and human salvation) its perfection and perspicuity results, for God wants to inform people in and through Scripture about his being and will. He also wants to instruct them in the doctrine of faith and morals leading to eternal salvation and, thus, Scripture has to be perfect and perspicuous.\(^ {17}\) ‘God, being the principal author of Scripture, had the power and the will to speak perspicuously to us.’\(^ {18}\) Those things in Scripture that are not perspicuous are not important for our salvation.

One should distinguish between the intellect of those who are not yet reborn and the intellect that is illuminated by the light of grace in those who have been renewed. The spiritual illumination of our intellect must be compared with the production of natural light in the first creation. At that time light was needed to give knowledge about the divine works. In the same way spiritual light is required for the knowledge of the divine mysteries. Before the creation of natural light there was only darkness and before the illumination of the Spirit the human being is nothing but mere darkness. Just as God created the light by speaking, he ignited spiritual light in our intellects by the Word.\(^ {19}\) In itself and by itself Scripture is a very clear light. ‘But with regard to us the illumination of the Spirit is required, because of the innate darkness of our intellect, for the salvific understanding of the divine mysteries that are clearly enough proposed in Scriptures.’\(^ {20}\) Other distinctions to be made are those between the literal and spiritual understanding and the mediate and immediate illumination of the Spirit.\(^ {21}\) ‘Those who are not yet illuminated and enlightened by the Spirit can indeed have knowledge of the external shell of Scripture and historical faith by the external ministry of the Word, but they are not able to have the only and

\(^{16}\) Cf. LT I, loc I, c XVII, § 365, 156a.
\(^{17}\) Cf. LT I, loc I, c XVIII, § 374, 163b.
\(^{18}\) ‘Deus Scripturae sacrae auctor principalis perspicue in ea nobis loqui et potuit et voluit’ (LT I, loc I, c XX, § 416, 183b).
\(^{19}\) Cf. LT I, loc I, c XX, § 433, 191a.
\(^{20}\) ‘Sed respectu nostri propter connatas mentis nostrae tenebras requiritur Spiritus sancti illuminatio ad salutarem divinorum mysteriorum in Scripturis satis clare propositorum intelligentiam’ (LT I, loc I, c XX, § 435, 193a).
\(^{21}\) Cf. LT I, loc I, c XX, § 435, 193a.
salvific conviction of faith that justifies without the Spirit illuminating the interior intellect and bowing the will.’ This implies that the Spirit does not enter the heart before Scripture has been read, proclaimed and thoroughly investigated. God wants to give us salvific knowledge of the divine mysteries by ordinary means, namely by the diligent reading and meditation of the Word. To attain salvation, Scripture as well as the Spirit are needed.

There are some rules for interpretation. ‘First, the meaning of Scripture should be derived from Scripture itself. Second, every interpretation of Scripture should be in accordance with faith. Third, the more obscure and less frequent texts must be explicated by the clearer and more frequent passages. Fourth, in the interpretation of Scripture the original meaning of the words and the common way of speaking phrases must be learned diligently from the original language, namely from the Hebrew language in the Old Testament and from the Greek language in the New. Fifth, every interpretation of Scripture should be appropriate; it should not deviate from the text of the articles of faith, unless Scripture itself shows an impropriety and explains it. Sixth, the interpretation should agree with the scope of each place, with the circumstances of the (several) parts and with their order (in the sentence). Seventh, in the interpretation of Scripture we can and must use gratefully the works of former teachers at one time and more recent teachers of the church at another.’

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22 ‘Possunt quidem nondum illuminati ac collostreti a Spiritu sancto cognitum habere exteriorem Scripturae cortice ac fidei ministerium concipere, sed solidam ac salutarem fidei justificantis absque Spiritu sancto interius mentem collustrante et voluntatem flectente habere nequeunt’ (LT I, loc I, c XX, § 435, 193a).

23 Cf. LT I, loc I, c XX, § 435, 193a.

8.1.2 LT II, loc VII, c VII: Election and Reprobation

This part (locus) deals with the doctrine of election and reprobation, of which the question of the universal character of the merits preserved by Christ and of the vocation of human beings (which is the topic of LT II, loc. VII) is an important part. The chapter (capitum) is built up as a dialogue between opponents who express their objections and Gerhard’s replies to their objections.

Many opponents underscore the doctrine of absolute election and reprobation. Gerhard, however, believes that God’s call is universal, that the gospel should be preached to every creature and that the benefits of Christ are accessible to everyone. God has offered everyone his Word in every situation. To prove this, Gerhard describes the biblical history from Adam to the apostles.25

After this exposition the first opponent objects that, ‘even if the Word is offered to many people, it would still bear fruit in few. The cause cannot be sought in human people. The last refuge is to be found in the absolute decree.’26 In his reply Gerhard refers to the parable of the seed in Matthew 16 and Luke 8. In those texts it is explained why the seed of the Word does not bear fruit in all cases. The Word bears fruit only in the sincere and good hearts of those who hear the Word. Rocks, thorns and birds impede the growing of the fruit of the Word. Another cause can be found in the parable of the head of the family (Luke 14: 15-24): ‘he invites people to a great dinner; the reason why not all enjoyed the benefits offered in the Word lies in the people themselves who are called and not in the head of the family who invites them.’

The second objection refers to the nature of the human heart: ‘But you say that the human heart is naturally neither good nor sincere, so that it could accept the seed of the Word with fruit: man is not able by the natural powers of his free will to follow the God who calls: therefore the difficulty returns, that one should evidently

240a).

25 Cf. LT II, loc VII, c VII, §§ 133-36, 73b-75b.

26 Etiamsi multis offeratur verbum, tamen apud paucos fructificat. Causa non potest quaeri in hominibus ... ultimum ergo in absoluto decreto refugium’ (LT II, loc VII, c VII, § 139, 76b).
take refuge in the God's absolute decree." Gerhard replies that God wants to convert people by the Word, because faith arises by hearing. Connected with the preaching of the Word is the work of the Spirit. The bearing of the fruit of the Word, however, is impeded very often and in many ways that are unknown to us.

The third objection is: ‘But you say all are totally committed to the same corruption; therefore, the reason that powers to conversion are given to some people, rests only in God’s mercy; on the contrary, the reason that there are others to whom the powers to conversion are refused can be none other than some decree of refusal by God.’ Gerhard’s answer to this objection is that one must distinguish between the Word that is heard externally and the Word that is internally approved by the heart. One should also distinguish between initial malice and blindness on the one hand and active obstinacy and blindness on the other.

The fourth objection is: ‘But you even say that not all those people are converted, and Paul says in [Romans] 9:16 that He deprives human effort and desire of the power of conversion.’ Gerhard replies to this objection with some examples of people who obstinately refused to listen to God. He also argues that there are people who seem to attempt to enter the gate of salvation and cannot, who seem to be driven by a thirst and hunger for the Word and still are not converted. However, they do not actually want to enter the gate even though they can, and when they finally see that they are going to die they call on the Lord, to escape the punishment prepared for them in whatever way they can. But they do not act on the basis of true penitence. Another group of people are seduced by the solicitudes of this age and the fallacy of riches. From all these examples it is clear that the reason that only a few people are converted always lies in people and not in God.

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27 ‘At, inquis, cor hominis per naturam non est bonum et sincerum, ut possit verbi semen cum fructu recipere: nec potest homo per naturales liberi arbitrii vires vocanti Deo obsequi: redit ergo difficultas, quod scilicet ad decretum Dei absolutum sit confugiendum’ (LT II, loc VII, c VII, § 139, 77a).

28 ‘At, inquis, omnes ommino in aequali haerent corruptione, quod ergo quibusdam dantur vires ad conversionem, ejus causa in sola Dei misericordia residet; vicissim ergo, quod quibusdam vires ad conversionem denegantur, ejus rei non potest esse causa alia, quam aliquod Dei denegantis decretum’ (LT II, loc VII, c VII, § 139, 77a).

29 ‘At, inquis, illi ipsi tamen non sunt omnes conversi, et Paulus Rom. 9: 16: hominis cursui et voluntati vim conversionis adimit’ (LT II, loc VII, c VII, § 139, 77b).
The fifth objection is: ‘But you say that there is not even a little left of the powers of the free will, so that he who is not reborn would either be able to accept the offered grace or to direct himself to it.’ Gerhard answers that the grace of the Spirit is required for the conversion of people who are not yet renewed to acknowledge the offered grace and to accept it. God’s grace and mercy come beforehand to all who are to be converted and He offers them his Word. God wants the Word to be effective in our hearts with respect to conversion. The work of the Spirit is connected with the Word. When grace comes beforehand, preparing and working, i.e. when the first starting points of faith and conversion are given to humans, the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit starts immediately, and it is clear that this light could not be ignited without a movement of our will.

8.1.3 LT III, loc XVI, c I: Justification by Faith
This part of the LT contains a long discussion regarding justification by faith, which means that the description of justification, faith and justification by faith are intertwined in this discourse.

‘The principal effective cause of justification is the grace of God. Justification is, however, an act of the only, sole true God, i.e. the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The real instrumental causes of justification on the part of God are the Word and the sacraments, (by which and in which the benefits of Christ are offered to people).’ As far as we are concerned, the instrumental cause of justification is faith. One should distinguish between the internal cause of justification, i.e. faith, and the external causes, which are the Word and the sacraments.

‘The appropriate and adequate object of faith, as a concept, is the Word of God, proposed in the prophetic scriptures and the apostles. In [Romans] 10:17 [it is said]: faith is by hearing, which, however, is by the Word of God, to which a

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30 ‘At, inquis, ne modiculum quidem in viribus liberi arbitrii reliquum est, ut possit homo non renatus vel gratiam oblatam acceptare vel ad eam sese applicare’ (LT II, loc VII, c VII, § 139, 78a).
31 ‘Causa efficiens principalis justificationis est gratia Dei .... Est autem justicicatio solius et unius veri Dei actio, qui est Pater, Filius et Spiritus sanctus.’ (LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 17, 309a). ‘Instrumentalis vero causa ex parte Dei sunt verbum et sacramenta ...’ (LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 64, 348b).
discourse about the perfection of Scripture belongs, from which it immediately follows that faith remains within the sphere of the revealed Word and is built only on that same fundament.’

And the object of faith (namely the revealed Word) contains the promise of the gospel regarding the gratuitous mercy and the remission of sins that we have acquired by Christ.

The question of whether a poor sinner, showing true penitence and having acquired faith by the Word of the gospel through the work of the Spirit can be and should be certain of the promise of grace and thus of the satisfaction and merits of Christ, is answered in the affirmative. Gerhard does not relate this question to that of election and perseverance. Six arguments are given by Gerhard: 1) the unchangeable power of the divine promises; 2) the stability of the divine oath; 3) the use of sacraments; 4) the truth of the Spirit who testifies in our hearts and of the sealing of the promise (confirmation by the testimony of the Spirit); 5) the infallibility of the promise, perceived by hearing; 6) the properties of true faith and finally, the deformity or vileness of doubt. In elaborating on the fourth argument Gerhard describes the double testimony of the Spirit: internal and external. The internal testimony confirms to us that we live in the grace of God from which peace and tranquillity of our consciousness arise, as well as the shout of joy and exultation; the external testimony exists if fruits follow from the internal testimony, such as ardent prayer, love for the Word, dedication to piety, patience in bearing the cross, etc. The external testimony does not elevate the internal testimony but rather presupposes it.

Finally, the question arises as to the causes and characteristics of justifying faith. ‘The principal effective cause of this justifying faith is God, or – which is the same thing – the Spirit, [and] while to him the work of regeneration and renewal is

32 ‘Fidei, ut est notitia, objectum proprium et adaequatum est Dei verbum in Scripturis propheticis et apostolicis propositum. Rom 10: 17 fides est ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Dei, quo pertinet dissertatio de perfectione sacrae Scripturae, ex qua prompte sequitur fidem intra spharem revelati verbi se continere atque eidem tanquam fundamento unice inniti’ (LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 70, 354a).

33 Cf. LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 82, 369a.

34 Cf. LT III, loc XVI, c I, §§ 84-90, 370b-378a.
ascribed, the Father and the Son may in no way be separated from him.

For this reason faith is called the work of God, because it is worked in the heart. We are corrupt and depraved by sin, and thus we are not only in need of redemption, remission of sins and the gift of eternal life, but we are also unable to effect this by our own power. If we accept these gifts of God, we are restored as participants in divine grace and heavenly riches.

The instrumental cause of faith is the preaching of the Word. Gerhard often emphasizes that God wants to effect faith only by his Word and not immediately in the human heart. ‘The Spirit, however, does not want to effect faith in the hearts of people immediately or by vehement forces but rather by way of mediation, through the preaching of the Word, the hearing, the reading and meditation. From the light of the Word the light of faith arises. Therefore, the instrumental cause of faith is the preaching of the Word: in the Word of the gospel not only does the Holy Spirit offer immeasurable benefits that are acquired by the suffering and death of Christ, but she is even effective through this Word in the human hearts; she ignites faith in them, so by this (faith) they embrace the proffered benefits and apply them to themselves.’

‘It is clear from this that the reason why so many people do not attain faith and salvation should not at all be sought in some absolute decree of God but in people who themselves prefer the glory of people above the glory of God.’

The object or material cause of faith is the Word of God put forth in Scripture by the prophets and apostles. The formal object of faith is the first truth or divine

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35 ‘Causa efficiens principalis fidei justificantis est Deus, vel quod idem est Spiritus sanctus, cui cum regenerationis ac renovationis opus adscribitur, ab eo Pater et Filius neutiquam sequestrantur’ (LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 126, 410b).

36 ‘Neque vero immediate vel per enthusiasticos raptus Spiritus sanctus vult operari fidem in cordibus hominum, sed mediate per verbi praedicationem, auditum, lectionem, meditationem. Ex luce verbi oritur lux fidei. Ergo causa instrumentalis fidei est praedicatio verbi, Spiritus s. non solum offert in verbo evangelii immensa beneficia Christi passione ac morte parta, sed etiam per verbum illud efficax est in cordibus hominum, accendit in eis fidem, qua oblata bona amplectantur sibique applicent’ (LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 127, 411b).

37 ‘Ex quo apparet, causam, quod plurimi ad fidem et salutem non perveniant, haudquaquam in absoluto quodam Dei decreto quaerendam esse, ..., sed in ipsis hominibus ... qui gloriam hominum gloriae Dei praeferunt’ (LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 127, 411b).
revelation.38 With regard to this Gerhard enters into an elaborate discussion with the Roman Catholic Church.

Baptism functions in two ways, depending on whether one is a child or an adult. According to Gerhard, baptism is the means of transferring and sealing or confirming faith. To the children faith is given by baptism, so that the Spirit works regeneration in the hearts of the baptized children, which has no place without faith. In adults, who already belong to Christ by true faith, baptism is a salvific means by which the Spirit seals, augments and confirms faith.39

The formal cause of justification is the gratuitous remission of sins and, second, the merit acquired by Christ, for faith is reckoned to our justification. Righteousness inherent to us, either naturally or practically, is not, however, the formal cause of justification.40

The final cause of justification with regard to us is, in this life, peace and tranquillity of conscience and, in the next, salvation and eternal well-being. Gerhard closes this *locus* with a definition of justification: ‘Justification is the act of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit by which He [God] by mere grace and mercy because of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ as mediator and redeemer removes one’s sins gratuitously – without one’s own works or merits – from the sinner who truly believes in Christ, [by which] He reckons the justification of Christ to [his] account and accepts that person to eternal life, to the glory of his divine name and to salvation of humankind.’41

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38 Cf. LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 128, 412a.
39 Cf. LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 147, 425a. Baptism is the sign or washing of the regeneration of the baptized. By means of faith, given through baptism, children become participants in the remission of sins, regeneration and eternal salvation. According to Gerhard, baptism does not effect faith *ex opere operato*. See also LT IV, loc XVIII, c I, esp. § 80, 198a and J. Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis. Das ist: Schriftliche und heilsame Unterrichtung was für Ursachen einen jeden wahren Christen zur Gottseligkeit bewegen sollen, auf welcher Gestalt er sich an derselben üben soll ...,* (Nürnberg: Endtner, 1709); 1B, 1T, C 9, 53-58.
40 Cf. LT III, loc XVI, c I, § 199, 479b.
41 ‘Justificatio est actio Dei Patris, Filii et Spiritus sancti, qua ex mera gratia et misericordia propter Christi mediatoris ac redemptoris obedientiam et satisfactionem homini peccatori vere in Christum credenti gratis sine operibus aut meritis propriis peccata
8.1.4 *LT VI, loc XXIII, c VI: Ecclesiastical Ministry*

The twenty-third part (*locus*) deals with the ministry of the church. The goal of ministry is, first, the glory of God and, second, the conversion of human beings, reconciliation with God and eternal salvation. Within this framework Gerhard refers to K. von Schwenckfeld.\(^{42}\) We will present his view, because many of his arguments are also used by Rahmann whom we will discuss in chapter 10.

Schwenckfeld denies, by means of fifteen arguments, that God works through his Spirit only through the Word. The most remarkable of these arguments is that there is a distinction between an external and an internal word. The internal word is the mediator of the Spirit since the external word is dead. Schwenckfeld also assumes that the only word God uses is the Word He speaks immediately in the human heart.\(^{43}\)

In reply to Schwenckfeld, Gerhard expresses his own view in eleven points, of which we shall deal with the most important ones below.\(^{44}\) All these points are mentioned to defend the inseparable connection of the significance of the Spirit with the words in Scripture. Word and meaning belong inseparably together.

First, the written Word of God or Holy Scripture is accepted not so much formally (it is described by the form of the letters or is made known by the distinct speech of the minister) as materially (Scripture explains the counsel and will of God

\(^{42}\) Kaspar von Schwenckfeld, (1489 - 1561 CE), developed a strongly ethically orientated theology. He emphasized the Reformational need for spiritual fruits (such as the emphasis on pious life, reading the Bible and praying daily) as well as the existence of the salvific knowledge of Christ. Gerhard rejects Schwenckfeld’s views on many points in his LT; see also R.H. Grützmacher, *Wort und Geist* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1902), 158-173.

\(^{43}\) ‘[4] litera occidit, Spiritus vivificat; [5] non verbum externum, sed internum, quod definit esse Christum, in Spiritu s. est mediator inter Deum et homines; [13] scriptura proprie loquendo non est Dei naturale verbum, nec omne quod docetur et praedicatur est Dei verbum etiamsi ex Scriptura desumatur, sed hoc est solum Dei verbum, quod Deus in homine loquitur, quodque se ipsum docet, praedicat, ad salutem se manifestat, potenter se exserit, in cor fidele se insinuat, inque eo operatur, habitat et vivit.’ Cf. Schwenkfeld, epist. 90, tom. 1 page 765 as quoted by Gerhard in LT VI, loc XXIII, c VI, § 250, 165b.

\(^{44}\) Cf. LT VI, loc XXIII, c VI, § 253, 169a and b.
to us), i.e. it must not be understood as a word (*signum*; here: a word that is written or revealed) but rather as the meaning of a written or revealed word (*signatum*).

Second, the Word of God is revealed immediately by either God or by Christ; the prophets and apostles wrote it down in Scripture.

Third, one should distinguish clearly between the principal cause and the instrumental cause: the ministry of the Word and the sacraments are instrumental causes and not at all principal causes of conversion and salvation, for this honour belongs only to God.

Fourth, one should also distinguish between instruments necessarily or eventually used. An architect, for example, has to use his instruments to build a house; he cannot complete his task without them. The Word, however, is not such a necessary instrument of conversion and salvation, for God could convert human beings without the Word, but instead he instituted, by his own will, that only by the Word and sacraments would he effect conversion and salvation in people.

Fifth, conversion and salvation do not belong naturally to the effects of the Word; it only pleased God to produce this effect of conversion and salvation, not immediately but by way of mediation.

Sixth, it does not matter whether the Word of God is read or heard, for it remains the same Word and has the same effects.

Seventh, instead of separation, the external means of salvation and the internal power and work of God distinct from each other just as distinction between the preaching and hearing of the Word on the one hand and conversion on the other. In the act of baptism, too, there is a distinction between the sprinkling of water and internal regeneration. From this distinction one should not, however, conclude impiously any kind of division or separation because, according to the same order of God, the external means of salvation are connected with the internal power and effect of God, since it pleased God to confer on us by external means his spiritual and celestial benefits. Gerhard’s conclusion is that the Word is an effective means by which God works to effect conversion and salvation. It is God’s Word that converts the soul, rejoices the heart, illuminates the eyes.

People fall into one of two groups. The first consists of those who are so blinded by sin that they take the blindness and darkness with them, naturally ignorant of the salvific knowledge of God. The second is that they are illuminated by
the Spirit, so that being illuminated by the grace of the Spirit through the light of the Word they are turned to the ministry of the Word, and are determined as cooperators of God in the conversion and salvation of others.\textsuperscript{45}

In relation to the question of how the Word truly is an effective means to convert people, Schwenckfeld assumes that the Word is not an instrumental cause, effecting the conversion of people but rather a sign, because it externally signifies what God wants to effect internally. This is denied by Gerhard: first of all, such an assumption is not to be found in the Word. God wants to effect conversion by the preached Word; this Word is thus not only an external sign but even an effective means and instrument.\textsuperscript{46} The Word is by itself as instrumental cause effective and not at all a dead letter. By the power of God and as instrumental cause it converts and renews people. The Word is spoken by God and is effective in the hearts of those who hear it and meditate upon it. ‘That which is a fruit-bearing seed and a Word of life, by which we are made believers and disciples of Christ, that which preserves us from eternal death and in which is eternal life is not a dead letter, but an effective instrument of conversion and salvation.’\textsuperscript{47} This argument of the living and effective Word is repeated by Gerhard many times: something which is ‘dead’ is not able to effect conversion and salvation, which means eternal life.

The last point of discussion with Schwenckfeld that is mentioned here concerns Romans 10:17, where it is said that faith comes from what is heard and that what is heard comes by the hearing of the Word of Christ. From this verse Schwenckfeld concludes that hearing refers to the internal hearing, for if faith comes from the external hearing then everyone who hears the Word should come to faith – which is not the case. Gerhard concedes that internal hearing is required for faith and that this internal hearing occurs through the Spirit, but there is still the question of whether

\textsuperscript{45} Cf. LT VI, loc XXIII, c VI, § 255, 170.
\textsuperscript{46} Cf. LT VI, loc XXIII, c VI, § 255, 170b.
\textsuperscript{47} ‘Quod est semen fructificans ac verbum vitae, per quod reddimur credentes ac discipuli Christi, quod conservat nos a morte aeterna et in quo est vita aeterna, illud non est litera mortua, sed efficax organum conversionis ac salutis’ (LT VI, loc XXIII, c VI, § 257, 171b).
the Spirit wants to effect faith as well as this internal hearing or approval immediately. Schwenckfeld affirms this, but Gerhard denies it on the basis of Romans 10:17. According to him, it is evident from the preceding and following verses that the apostle speaks of the preached and heard Word and that he clearly wants to affirm that by this (Word) God wants to be effective with regard to faith (efficax ad fidem). Therefore, external hearing is not at all excluded from the salvific means but rather included, in order to show the relation between preaching and hearing. For just as preaching is an external act, hearing is external too, through which God wants to arouse the internal hearing and faith.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{8.2 \textit{Tractatus de Legitima Scripturae Sacrae Interpretatione}}\textsuperscript{49}

This tract was written by Gerhard when he was superintendent in Heldburg. In this tract he deals elaborately with those aspects that have to be taken into account in order to ensure that the exposition of Scripture is done in the right way.

In itself, Scripture is very clear and transparent. It contains everything that is necessary for salvation. There are some obscure passages, but this should not prevent us from reading. Rather it should incite one to prayer and to a better investigation of the texts. In order to understand Scripture one needs an interpreter. The highest and authentic interpreter of Scripture is the Holy Spirit, because prophets and apostles did not speak on their own private authority but through the inspiration of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{50}

The theologians of the popes, on the contrary, declared that the right interpretation of Scripture is to be attributed to the church. According to them, Scripture in itself is a dead letter, a position that can be explained in various ways.

\textsuperscript{48} Cf. LT VI, loc XXIII, c VI, § 259, 172b.

\textsuperscript{49} The edition of the tract used here is \textit{Tractatus de legitima scripturae sacrae interpretatione}, Jenae 1610. This tract is also available as the second section of the LT, ed. Heldburg 1639, which is currently in the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel.

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. also Tr, 4: ‘... unde Spiritum S. esse supremum et authenticum Scripturae Interpretem pronunciamus .... Colligitur id evidenter ex loco Apostolico 2 Petr.1.v.20, v.21, quia nec proprio et privato arbitrio olim locuti sunt sancti Dei homines, sed ex inspiratione Spiritus sancti.’
However, Gerhard maintains that the Spirit is the only right interpreter, so that the right interpretation should not depend on the authority of popes or councils who are liable to make mistakes.

Whereas the Roman Catholic Church wants to separate the Spirit and Scripture, Gerhard assumes that they should, rather, be very closely connected. \(^{51}\)

‘The Holy Spirit talks to us in Scripture and through Scripture; therefore, in these same words of Scripture the voice and meaning of the Spirit resounds.’ \(^{52}\)

‘Doubtless, the theologians of the popes offer us a concept of Scripture, as if it were a skeleton, a mute and dead statue that ought to be animated beforehand by the Spirit in the Church and by the Church, i.e. by the speaking Pope.’ \(^{53}\) In reply to this proposition Gerhard expounds his view regarding the connection between the Spirit and the Word. The Pope speaks by means of his decrees and, in the same way, the Spirit speaks through the words of Scripture. If the purpose of the Spirit is separated from the words of Scripture, this would be the same as separating the purpose of the Pope from the words of the papal decrees. Moreover, the Pope cannot express his thoughts in any other way than in his words. If they are separated, how would one come to know what the words mean? The meaning of the words can never be separated from the words themselves. In the same way the purpose of the Spirit in Scripture cannot be separated from the words of Scripture. \(^{54}\)

In short, Gerhard disagrees with the Roman Catholic view regarding the right interpretation of Scripture. We will review the most important points. First, the Roman Catholic Church separates the purpose of the Holy Spirit from the words of Scripture, as if the purpose ought to be derived from somewhere else than from the words of Scripture. Second, it defines Scripture as a dead letter that needs to be animated by the spirit of the church. Third, it makes a distinction between that which

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\(^{51}\) Cf. Tr, 12.

\(^{52}\) ‘Spiritus sanctus in Scripturis et per Scripturas ad nos loquitur, ergo in illis ipsis Scripturae verbis sonat Spiritus s. vox et sententia ...’ (Tr, 12).

\(^{53}\) ‘Nimirum Pontificii proponunt nobis talem Scripturae ideam, quod sit quasi skeleton quoddam et statua muta atque mortua, quae sit prius animanda per Spiritum in Ecclesia et per Ecclesiam, id est, per Pontificem loquentem’ (Tr, 13).

\(^{54}\) Cf. Tr, 13-14.
the prophets and apostles preached and that which they later wrote down in Scripture.\textsuperscript{55}

Gerhard considers the light of the Spirit to be necessary with regard to our understanding of every text. Without the illumination of the Spirit, this would not be possible due to the darkness of our intellect.\textsuperscript{56} The light of the Spirit, which ignited in us when we assiduously read Scripture, is required for a salvific knowledge of the divine words.\textsuperscript{57} In Scripture and through Scripture the light of the Spirit must be sought and obtained. The need for the Spirit and its illumination because of the native darkness of our intellect is repeatedly stressed – not only here but in the whole tractate. It is the task of the Spirit to remove that darkness.

Thus, it is clear that with regard to the knowledge and interpretation of Scripture our mind is by nature blind without the light of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{58} In addition to this blindness, there is also blindness due to malice and harsh impudence.\textsuperscript{59} Because our mind is blind, we have to call upon the assistance of the light of the Spirit through prayer. The Spirit does not give this illumination of the mind immediately but only through the light of the Word that is heard and meditated on. Since knowledge of doctrine is a prerequisite for salvation for everybody, they are stated in appropriate, clear and perspicuous words in Scripture. From these words the other texts of Scripture derive light. The rule of faith, to which the exposition of texts must conform, should be derived from the perspicuous texts. And if we do not understand the most appropriate and genuine meaning of all the texts, it is sufficient to say nothing that is contradictory to faith. However, it is useful to interpret those rather obscure Scriptural texts in a right and appropriate way so that it


\textsuperscript{56} Cf. Tr, 37.

\textsuperscript{57} Cf. Tr, 38.

\textsuperscript{58} Cf. Tr, 45.

\textsuperscript{59} Cf. also Tr, 45-46.
may be as if we employ the appropriate remedies to remove the obscurities. In order to find these remedies, we have to look for the sources of the obscurity.\textsuperscript{60}

Subsequently, the discussion shifts first to the role of the Spirit as the most important and authentic interpreter of Scripture, who explains the dogmas of faith that are needed for salvation in appropriate and perspicuous words. In addition, Gerhard discusses the rules of interpretation as followed by the Roman Catholic church. He concludes this debate with the assumption that the rule of faith can be found only in Scripture: ‘We do not reject the practice of the Church, the sentences of the Church fathers nor the decrees of the councils, provided that they take their power from Scripture.’\textsuperscript{61} He therefore concludes that Scripture is perfect, that Scripture is perspicuous and that the means of explanation lie in Scripture itself. In close connection with this is the assertion that ‘the Spirit today speaks to us in only Scripture and by means of Scripture.’\textsuperscript{62} Thus, Scripture is its own interpreter.


\textsuperscript{61} ‘... praxin Ecclesiae, Patrum sententias, Decreta Conciliorum non repudiamus, modo ex Scriptura robor accipiant’ (Tr, 64).

\textsuperscript{62} ‘Jam vero Spiritus s. non nisi in scripturis et per Scripturas hodie nobis loquitur’ (Tr, 88).
Further, Gerhard discusses the several kinds of interpretation. He distinguishes between a literal or historical interpretation and a spiritual or mystical one. The literal interpretation has two branches (the literal, direct interpretation and the figurative interpretation), whereas the mystical interpretation has three branches (the allegorical, tropological and analogical interpretation). Gerhard prefers the literal interpretation of Scripture, especially with regard to the articles of faith. In the articles of faith one should not deviate from the literal words, unless Scripture itself exposes it as inappropriate. Moreover, that which is not stated in Scripture in appropriate and perspicuous words is not to be considered as dogma of faith.

In dealing with the interpretation of Scripture, the use of philosophy is discussed, too. Gerhard distinguishes between three ways in which philosophy can be helpful: the organic use (the contribution of science in general to explain biblical and metaphysical concepts), the constructive use (the use of philosophical rules to provide natural or general knowledge about God) and the destructive use (the use of philosophy to refute those things that are in defiance of the light of grace and the natural light). ‘The organic use comes into play if our reason informs us about the peculiarities of grammar, the dialectical rules of order, a rhetoric exposition of forms, and a physical knowledge of natural facts derived from the philosophical

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63 Gerhard was certainly not the first one to use these methods of interpretation. They have been common means of exegesis since the Church Fathers. It was thought that there was a complete system of other meanings beyond the grammatical, historical sense of a biblical text: an allegorical, tropological and analogical sense, as it was called. The allegorical and analogical interpretation of Scripture consisted predominantly in communicating; the tropological sense was used to instruct and exhort, supporting the moralization of the texts. Not all four senses were found in every single place. Essentially, the scheme was reduced to a difference between a direct and a hidden sense.


64 Cf. Tr, 92-93.

65 ‘Interpretatio Scripturae debet esse propria et literalis, praesertim in articulis fidei’ (Tr, 112).
disciplines, in order to bring out the treasure of divine wisdom hidden in Scripture.\textsuperscript{66} The constructive use provides us with some natural knowledge of God, which is subordinate to the knowledge revealed in Scripture.\textsuperscript{67} The destructive use is related to the constructive use. Regarding the third use, Gerhard states that the erroneous principles first have to be destroyed by the fundaments of Scripture, so to speak the unique and appropriate principle of theology. The philosophical sciences can be added later, so it will be shown that this false doctrine is not only in defiance of the light of grace but also of natural light.\textsuperscript{68}

Connected with the use of philosophy, the question arises as to whether that which is true in philosophy can be false in theology. Gerhard answers that this is not possible: something that is false cannot be true at the same time. Nothing that exists can be non-existent at the same time. This means that it is not possible that something contain two opposite characteristics, such as true and false. However, that which is claimed philosophically can be false theologically.\textsuperscript{69} This is made clear by the example of the holy virgin Mary being pregnant. On the basis of reason it is impossible to assume that a virgin can be pregnant. But on the basis of faith this is possible because of God’s supernatural and extraordinary power. Nothing natural should be opposed to something supernatural: nature is not opposed to her creator. Therefore those people who oppose the literal sense in an article of faith on the basis of philosophical principles act wrongly.

\textsuperscript{66} 'Organicus usus est, si Grammaticam vocum proprietatem, Dialecticam ordinis observationem, Rhetoricam figurarum expositionem, et Physicam rerum naturalium cognitionem ex disciplini philosophicis haustam ratio nostra secum afferat ad erudendum divinae sapientiae thesaurum in Scripturis reconditum' (Tr, 125, 126).

\textsuperscript{67} 'Quod ad usum κατασκευαστικῶν attinet, ita habendum. Est quaedam naturalis Dei notitia ... illa vero subordinari debet illi, quae divinitus in verbo revelata est' (Tr, 126).

\textsuperscript{68} 'Confutandae prius sunt erroneae doctrinae ex Scripturae sacrae fundamentis, tanquam unico et proprio Theologiae principio, postea etiam addi possunt rationes philosophicae, ut ostendatur, falsum illud dogma repugnare non solum lumini gratiae, sed etiam lumini naturae' (Tr, 128).

\textsuperscript{69} 'Ergone, inquis, verum aliquid in Philosophia, quod in Theologia falsum? ... Idem simul verum et falsum esse nequit, scilicet per se et ὃσαότος. Nullum Ens simul est et non est. Tamen verum philosophice dicunt quidam falsum theologice' (Tr, 134).
It is then asked if someone who is said to be renewed but opposes, on the basis of rational principles, the literal sense in the articles of faith, has in fact a renewed intellect. Gerhard answers that he who has a renewed intellect discusses by means of the principles of the Word and not by those of reason. Thus, such a person is not renewed.

‘The scope of the whole Scripture is Christ. In order to find him in Scriptures, we need [to pay] particular attention.’70 ‘Just as, for instance, those digging for precious metals search thoroughly for the veins of gold or silver, so we too have to search the Scriptures for that true vein of life viz. Christ.’71 ‘The scope of every place and chapter should be exposed by careful examination of it.’72 Prayer, meditation and temptation are required, because they are effective, salvific and fruitful.

8.3 Methodus Studii Theologici73
In this book Gerhard is a minister rather than a theologian, as he was in LT and TR. But his motto is the same: God wants to save all people. This book on the ‘method of theological study’ is Gerhard’s most widespread book, next to his LT. It has been translated into more than twelve languages. Its readers were not only theologians but also common laypeople who used it to deepen their faith. It is clear in this book that by the term ‘theology’ Gerhard means not only theology as a practical discipline in the university but also as ‘knowledge about God.’

In the first pages of MST the term ‘theology’ is explained. We will not discuss the several meanings of this term since we already investigated this in the first and second sections of this chapter. On page 13 of MST Gerhard quotes Luther who once wrote that three things are necessary to theology: prayer, meditation and

70 ‘Scopus totius Scripturae est Christus, illum ut in Scripturis inveniamus, praecipua debet esse cura’ (Tr, 163).
71 ‘Quemadmodum fossores metallorum solici venas auri argentive perquirunt ita veram illam venam vitae Christum in Scripturis debemus ἐρεωσοὺ’ (Tr, 164).
72 ‘Scopus cuiusque loci et capitis ex diligenti ejusdem examine patefiet’ (Tr, 164).
73 J. Gerhard, Methodus studii theologici publicis praelectionis in Academia Jenensi, Jena: Tobias Steinmann, 1622.
temptation. This triad is often repeated in the MST as essential to salvation, to acquire knowledge about God. This knowledge should be derived especially from Scripture, of which the wisdom makes the wisdom of all other books look childish. The need for the illumination of the Spirit is emphasized in MST too. It is the task of the Spirit to illuminate, to guide us and to give one the right understanding of Scripture. ‘You should meditate, which means you should unfold Scripture with much inclination and meditate internally about it in your heart, so that you should not assume this wrong opinion, as if it would suffice to read [Scripture] once, twice or three times.’ ‘Finally, temptation occurs ... because it not only teaches to know but even to feel and experience the certainness, truth and pleasant effectivity and consolation of the Word.’

‘But we demonstrate the necessity of prayers seriously during a study of theology because of the following reasons. First, after the fall, we all abandoned the image of God, which means that the light of the divine knowledge in the mind and the conformity to the divine law in our will ... and therefore a celestial irradiation and illumination is required, which cannot be obtained but through prayer. Second, Scripture can be understood only salvifically through the Spirit, at whose instigation and inspiration it has been brought forth. Third, through prayers that depart from faith, this spiritual illumination, which is extremely necessary to understand Scripture, is not only preserved but even augmented. Those who neglect prayer will finally lack the spirit of wisdom and the intellect, and fall back from here into the

74 ‘Lutherus in praefatione ... colligit tria studii theologici requisita, videlicet orationem, meditationem ac tentationem. Scias (inquit) script. sacram esse talem librum, qui reliquorum librorum omnium sapientiam infantuet ...’ (MST, 13).

75 ‘Deinde mediteris, hoc est, scripturam sacram summo studio evolvas et interius in corde mediteris, nec perversam illam opinionem induas, quasi sufficiat semel, bis, terne legere’ (MST, 13).

76 ‘Denique, accedit tentatio, quae est instar Lydii lapidis, docet enim non solum scire, sed etiam sentire et experiri certitudinem, veritatem, suavitem efficaciam et consolationem verbi etc.’ (MST, 13).
former darkness.’’ For a salvific understanding and explication of Scripture it is required, that our intellect is captured by the obedience to Christ.

From page 93 onwards the use of philosophy in theological questions is discussed. Gerhard distinguishes here, as he did in his LT, three ways in which philosophy serves theology. The first, the organic use, is widespread. To this use also belongs logic, which serves philosophy in explaining terms and serves theology in handing down the laws of definition, divisions, methods and argumentation to expose the theological discussions distinctively and orderly, to explain the controversial topics more clearly, to express them more evidently and to reply the adversaries with more pressure. The constructive use consists in the verifying of questions. There are two groups of questions in theology. The first group concerns the mysteries of faith going beyond the reach of the human reason, such as the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation and resurrection etc. The second group is related to the first one, because the human intellect is able to increase its understanding of these things by the general ideas and the discourse deduced from the inspection of creatures. The destructive use of philosophy consists in the attack and refutation of questions.

‘‘Divine mysteries are placed beyond the reach of reason. Therefore, reason is neither able to nor should it judge the truth or falsehood of these [mysteries] and consequently it is not able to bear judgment about a contradiction in them.’’

‘‘Salvific knowledge of God is not natural or innate but must be sought and drawn from the revealed Word alone. God, who is called upon through pious prayer, does not want to ignite salvific knowledge immediately by the effectivity of his Spirit but

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77 ‘Demonstramus autem necessitatem seriarum precum in studio theologico sequentibus fundamentis 1. post lapsum omnes destituimus imagine Dei, hoc est, luce cognitionis divinae in mente et conformitate cum lege divina in voluntate ... requiritur igitur superna irradiaio et illuminatio, quae non nisi per preces obtinetur; 2. scripturae non intelliguntur salutariter nisi per spiritum sanctum, cujus impulsu et inspiratu sunt editae; 3. per preces ex fide profectas non solum conservatur sed etiam augetur spiritualis illa mentis collustratio ad scripturae intelligentiam summe necessaria. Qui preces negligunt, ab illis discedit spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, unde in priores tenebras relabuntur’ (MST, 24-26).

78 ‘Mysteria divina sunt supra captum rationis posita. Ergo de illorum vel veritate vel falsitate ratio judicare nec potest, nec debet et per consequens nec de contradictione in illis judicium ferre potest’ (MST, 119).
by hearing, reading and meditating on the Word.’  

‘In the same way that we speak to God through prayer, God speaks to us by his Word; prayers are channels through which the heavenly wisdom is distributed to us.’

Reading all those passages concerning the power of Scripture, one can only conclude that Gerhard definitely wants to maintain the inextricable connection between God’s Word and the Spirit. He defends his claim of ‘only by the Scripture’ (sola scriptura) by all means, i.e. philosophical arguments, theological arguments as well as explanation of passages in the Scripture.

God’s Word is the only means to effect conversion, but this is possible only because of the illumination of the Spirit of the human heart. By means of this connection Gerhard is able to defend himself against those who claim that the Spirit is ultimately the cause of conversion and grace instead of the Word, which is regarded as a dead letter. Gerhard has to admit that not all people are converted. This fact should, however, not be ascribed to a lack of effectivity on the part of the Word but to the innate darkness of people who refuse God’s grace.

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79 ‘Salutaris Dei notitia mentibus nostris non innascitur nec connascitur, sed ex revelato verbo unice petenda et haurienda est. Deus piis precibus invocatus salutarem sui cognitionem efficacia spiritus sancti vult accedere, non tamen immediate, sed per auditum, lectionem ac meditationem verbi’ (MST, 140).

80 ‘Sicut per preces cum Deo loquimur, ita per verbum suum Deus loquitur nobiscum, preces sunt canales, per quos coelestis sapientia ad nos derivatur’ (MST, 141).
9 Analysis of the Texts

In this chapter we will analyse the texts we presented in chapter 8. First, we will summarize the answers given to the questions that were formulated in the preceding chapter regarding Gerhard’s view of salvation, the role of Scripture in attaining salvation, the role of rational knowledge and the factors that impede salvation. Second, we will give a short overview of the most important characteristics of Gerhard’s ideas concerning the relation between Scripture and salvation.

9.1 Gerhard’s View of Salvation

The texts that we explored did not present a clear definition of salvation. It is assumed, it seems, that the reader already knows the meaning of salvation. Sometimes, however, indications are given as to the direction in which this meaning must be sought.

In LT it becomes clear that the concept of salvation is the heart of Gerhard’s theology. Salvation here means eternal life, the highest goal in life for every human being. If they are not saved, people will remain ‘captive’ to sin. Salvation can be attained through the Word, which is connected inseparably with the illumination by the Spirit. Salvation cannot be effected by one’s own human power but only through the Spirit who illuminates our heart and effects conversion. The natural condition of human life is sinfulness; people are blinded by the darkness caused by sin and are up to a certain level ignorant of the existence of God. This ‘darkness’ has to be removed by the Spirit before we are able to understand the meaning of Scripture. Accordingly, the Spirit and Scripture cannot be separated in the process of conversion and salvation.

Closely connected with the concept of salvation is that of faith. Faith is given to children through baptism. As far as adults are concerned, faith arises from hearing the Word; for them baptism is a sign of God’s grace but does not in itself awaken faith. Faith means that one has knowledge of God (theologia) and this knowledge is attained either through the light of grace or other ways such as prayer, meditation and experiences of perseverance. God wants to give us knowledge of the divine mysteries through diligent reading of and mediation on the Word.
In addition to the Word and sacraments, faith is one of the causes of justification. The principal effective cause of justifying faith is God or the Spirit to whom the work of regeneration and renewal is ascribed. The instrumental cause of faith is the preaching of the Word. Connected with the preaching of the Word is the work of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who illuminates us and effects conversion and salvation in our hearts. Finally, the object of faith is the Word of God. Faith arises through hearing the Word.

TR does not give us much explicit information about salvation. The title of the tract already indicates that its subject is Scripture rather than salvation, faith and belief. One is saved only if one knows God. This knowledge can be acquired through the careful reading of Scripture, prayer, meditation and temptation. Scripture, thus, plays an important role in acquiring knowledge of God.

MST does not define the concept of salvation explicitly but describes the several ways in which knowledge of God (the literal meaning of ‘theology’) can be acquired. It also indicates what a properly pious life is. Gerhard emphasises several times the need for prayer to obtain knowledge of God: God reveals himself by speaking to people as a reply to their prayers and in that way people are able to know more about him. Other means for acquiring knowledge of God are reading and meditating on Scripture and temptation of faith. The relation between salvation and the knowledge of God is also a central theme in MST. The Spirit, who illuminates our intellect in order to give us access to the divine mysteries that go beyond the reach of our intellect, plays an important role in this process of acquiring knowledge of God.

In short, salvation is the final goal of human life, often implying eternal life. It is preceded by knowledge of God, which can be acquired from Scripture through reading, meditation and prayer. Salvation is a gift of God’s grace, meant for all people. God saves people freely, just because he wants to save them. God justifies the believers in Christ.

However, despite the fact that salvation is offered to all, not everyone is saved. Gerhard’s opponents argue that this is because God’s Word is not efficacious.
Gerhard, however, explains, using the parable of the seed in Matthew 16 and Luke 8, that there will always be situations in which the Word does not bear fruit in people. The causes for this are not to be attributed to the Word, to God or to an absolute decree of God but to human beings who, because of the innate darkness of their hearts, stubbornly refuse to accept this gift of grace. Gerhard emphasises this repeatedly in his discussions with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, some Calvinists and Schwenckfeld.

9.2 The Role of Scripture and its Relation to Salvation

Scripture is very important in attaining salvation, especially because of its definition as a principle of theology. Gerhard’s concept of Scripture is influenced by his Lutheran predecessors and by Aristotelian epistemology.

In LT the role of Scripture with regard to salvation is evident. It is through Scripture that one obtains knowledge of God. Scripture, consequently, is the only means for obtaining knowledge of God. The effective cause and goal of Scripture lead to the conclusion of its perfection and perspicuity, for obscure words do not provide knowledge of God. Scripture is identical with the Word of God; it is self-authenticating and possesses absolute authority. God revealed himself directly to the prophets and apostles, who wrote his Word down in Scripture. The primary goal of Scripture is the salvific knowledge and glorification of God, whereas the secondary goals are instruction, examination, correction of wrong opinions, temptation (temptatio) and consolation. The ultimate goal is our salvation, which means eternal life. This goal does not exclude the illumination of the Spirit which is required for humans to attain this goal.

The relation between Scripture and faith can be viewed on several levels. At the first level Scripture is the instrumental cause of faith, because it contains the divine revelation. At the second level Scripture is the effective cause of one’s faith. Faith is communicated by the reading of and meditation on Scripture. God uses Scripture to inform humans about his being (essentia) and will (voluntas). As an instrumental cause of faith, the Word is effective in and by itself; it is not a dead letter or an external sign. The Word is the only means of effecting conversion and
salvation, even though this does not mean that it is truly necessary to effect conversion and salvation: God could have done that without his Word. However, by his own will he chose his Word as the only means through which faith can be arroused. Conversion and salvation do not belong naturally to the effects of the Word, it only pleased God to produce this effect of conversion and salvation through the mediation of the Word rather than immediately. Because of its effectivity, it cannot be maintained that Scripture is only a dead letter, for something that is dead is not able to effect faith.

Finally, we want to mention the role of the Spirit in relation to Scripture. First, the Spirit has inspired the human authors of the Bible to record the divine revelation in writing. Second, the Spirit testifies in the human hearts to God’s grace, internally as well as externally. The internal testimony confirms that we live in God’s grace from which peace and the tranquillity of our conscience arises, as well as the shout of joy and exaltation; the external testimony exists if fruit follows from the internal testimony. Third, we would not be able to understand Scripture without the Spirit, for the darkness of our intellect has to be removed if we are to discover God’s grace.

In TR the relation between Scripture and salvation is scarcely elaborated, due to the fact that the tractate deals explicitly with the right interpretation of Scripture rather than with salvation. From this tractate we can only deduce some characteristics of Scripture, such as the inseparable connection between the words of Scripture and their meaning – which can be found only in Scripture itself. Another characteristic is the evident perspicuity of Scripture. However, although Scripture is in itself perspicuous and provides all information necessary for obtaining salvation, we still need the illumination of the Spirit, because of the darkness of our intellect. The illumination of the Spirit enables us to understand the doctrines that provide salvific knowledge.

In MST, just as in LT and TR, Scripture plays an important role in acquiring faith. Once the meaning of Scripture is revealed to us by the illumination of the Spirit, we can derive salvific knowledge of God from it. Scripture must be read and meditated on diligently and with great empathy.
The authority of Scripture is unquestionable. If we believe in the written Word this is not because of the authority of the church but only because we are convinced by the internal majesty and divinity of Scripture.

Scripture is in itself perspicuous, even though it might seem that there are also passages that are difficult to understand. This is due to our own inability and not to any obscurity on the part of the texts themselves. Although Scripture is clear, the illumination of the Spirit is still needed to enlighten our hearts. One should thus distinguish between the external perspicuity of Scripture and the internal illumination of our hearts, both of which are necessary.

The direct connection between the Word of God and Scripture is due to the Reformational view that both are identical. Moreover, this identification was strengthened by Aristotelian influence: a distinction was made between external word and internal word (respectively, ‘form’ and ‘matter’). The external word was the word itself (*signum*), whereas the internal word was the meaning of the word (*signatum*). Gerhard argued that one should not separate the word from its meaning, stressing this unity in discussions with Roman Catholic theologians and with Schwenckfeld.

9.3 The Role of Reason with Regard to Faith and Salvation

In Gerhard’s theology reason seems to play a background role. Its influence is great as far as it concerns the framework of Gerhard’s dogmatics, but its reach is limited as soon as the issue is one of understanding the divine mysteries and God. This dilemma is faced every time the boundary between rational understanding and faith becomes visible. In philosophy Aristotelian epistemological principles were important. Knowledge is traced back to the relation between thing and intellect and is described in the categories of Aristotelian philosophy.

LT underlines the limitations of reason and intellect. Generally, the divine mysteries are beyond the reach of our intellect, which is dark in the same way as the world was in the time before creation. Thus, we are not able to understand these mysteries. Scripture itself is perspicuous, because it contains the knowledge necessary for salvation, but, despite this perspicuity, we need the Spirit to illuminate our heart and
intellect. Without this illumination, our intellectual capacities will not take us any further.

In TR the question of the relation between reason and faith is asked only in relation to the right interpretation of Scripture. Reason can be useful: by means of our intellect we can obtain a ‘natural’ knowledge of God. However, our intellect cannot arrive at the real, profound, salvific knowledge of God – the reach of the intellect is limited. Only the illumination of the Spirit can take us further. The relation between reason and faith can be compared to the relation between philosophy and theology. Philosophy might be useful to theology, but its usefulness is limited. Gerhard distinguishes between three ways in which philosophy is useful to theology: the organic way (the contribution of science in general to explain biblical and metaphysical concepts), the constructive way (the use of philosophical rules to provide natural or general knowledge of God) and the destructive way (the use of philosophy to refute those things that defy the light of grace and the light of nature). It is clear, however, that in all these cases philosophy only serves theology and never dominates it. Philosophy provides the tools to understand the divine mysteries in Scripture but never plays a role equal to theology in interpreting Scripture.

MST clearly describes the relation between philosophy and theology. Theology, actually, does not need philosophical concepts to instruct people about God: it could do the same task without the help of philosophy. The only way in which philosophy might be useful is in discussions with opponents, because they make use of philosophical principles. The reach of philosophy is limited, just as our reason and intellect are. That is because the divine mysteries cannot be grasped by the intellect but only in faith.

Because the divine mysteries are beyond the reach of the intellect (supra rationis captum), they can be known only through illumination by the divine light. Only after the natural light of the intellect is strengthened by the light of the Spirit is the adjustment between the content of revelation and the intellect possible.

The dividing line between natural knowledge of God and profound knowledge of God is thin but at the same time clear. Through our intellect we may be able to understand many things written down in Scripture but still not have a real
understanding of them. Gerhard describes this difference as the distinction between ‘grasping’ and ‘understanding.’ In the divine revelation there is always a ‘hidden’ element: even though Scripture is perspicuous, it is impossible to understand its true meaning without the help of the illumination of the Spirit. The fact that the revelation has mysterious aspects implies that it goes beyond the reach of the intellect. The content of revelation (i.e. Scripture) is conceived as a mystery of faith, not as rational truth. Thus revelation can be acknowledged by people only by means of the effectivity of the Word and the work of the Spirit. However, the mystery does not contradict the principles of reason.

9.4 The Conditions for Attaining Salvation

In Reformational discourse the question of the means for attaining salvation and that which hinders our being saved almost immediately invokes all kinds of associations with election and reprobation. Gerhard is not able to avoid this either. In his LT as well as in his Schola Pietatis he deals extensively with this doctrine. It is clear that he is influenced by his discussions with Calvinists and the Roman Catholic church on this issue.

In LT Gerhard states repeatedly that God wants us all to be saved. To this end he revealed himself in Scripture, instructed people by his Word, and inspired them to do well. God’s grace is given beforehand to all who are to be converted, offered by his Word. If one understands the Word of the gospel in serious and true penitence, one can be certain of the promise of grace and the satisfaction and merits of Christ. Scripture is an important means for our salvation and is available to everyone who wants to read it. The problem is, however, that many people do not accept the content of Scripture. They deliberately choose to reject this means for salvation by their own free will. Those who are not yet illuminated by the Spirit have external knowledge of God. The internal or profound knowledge that we are justified by faith, requires illumination, which will take place in the hearts of those who pray for it.
Tr emphasises the need for Scripture and for the illumination by the Spirit as an important aid in attaining salvation. Through this illumination we understand the meaning of Scripture and acquire knowledge of God. But in addition to this illumination, we must, of course, also look for the ‘veins of truth’ hidden in Scripture. To this end prayer, meditation and temptation are also required. One of the most important factors that prevent us from salvation is the darkness of our intellect, which is the cause of our misunderstanding of Scripture. This darkness can be removed only by the Spirit. A second factor that should be mentioned is our deliberate choice to refuse the gift of grace.

In MST the importance of prayer, meditation and temptation with regard to salvation are considered to be obvious. By these means and through illumination by the Spirit we are able to acquire salvific knowledge. Prayers are said to be helpful in removing the darkness from our intellects. It is even said that if prayers are neglected, the intellect will return to darkness and that there will be no wisdom left. The effect of the Word of Scripture and the Spirit are, thus, two central factors with regard to salvation. Gerhard does not say much about the factors that prevent us from attaining salvation.

In short, it is remarkable that many things that help people to be saved are explained and that little attention is paid to the factors that prevent us from attaining this salvation. Actually, there is only one thing that prevents us from being saved: our decision by our own free will (*arbitrium liberum*) to reject the gracious gift of salvation. In this context the parable of the seed (Luke 8) is very important for Gerhard. Salvation is offered to everyone, but the hearts of people often resist it. There is no reason why there should be an absolute decree of reprobation and election. Once the gift of God is accepted, it is obvious that believers do try to live according to the gospel. The fact that only a few are saved is caused by the people themselves, for if it was up to God everyone would be saved.
9.5 Questions for Further Investigation

Looking back, it is clear that a few elements come to the fore repeatedly: first, the importance of Scripture, which is described as the only means by which we can acquire knowledge about God; second, the role of the Spirit, who effects faith in us through the Word and by illumination of our hearts; third, salvation and faith, which imply knowledge of God’s being and will and can be acquired through the mediation of Scripture: God wants to effect faith in us via Scripture, which people understand after being illuminated by the Spirit.

The relation between these three factors, Scripture, the Spirit and salvation, forms the kernel of Gerhard’s theology of salvation. However, this relation, especially the inseparable connection between Scripture and the illumination of the Spirit, also led to some disputes with opponents. The Spirit never works apart from God’s Word. Moreover, Gerhard attributes to the Word the same effects as he does to the Spirit. In this way he upholds the principle of sola scriptura, although it is questionable whether Scripture alone, i.e. by its own words, leads to salvation or that this can be achieved only if the Spirit illuminates our understanding of the words.

The opponent we will discuss in the next chapter is Hermann Rahtmann, who rejected the identification of Scripture and God’s Word. Moreover, he stated that the relation between Scripture and the Spirit could be seen more loosely, for the Spirit could work in our hearts without the mediation of Scripture. In the next chapter we will see how Rahtmann disputed this relation between the Spirit, Scripture and salvation and what the consequences of his view were.
10 A Different View

Hermann Rahtmann (1585-1628 CE), whose opinion regarding the role of Scripture will be the subject of this chapter, was a Lutheran minister in Danzig. The so-called Rahtmannian dispute, well known in Lutheran church history, is named after him. In particular, this dispute concentrated on the question of whether Scripture was a means of grace and on the question concerning the relation between Scripture and Spirit.

The Rahtmannian dispute actually started in 1621, after the publication of Rahtmann’s book *Gnadenreich*. In the preface to this book Rahtmann dealt with the origin of Scripture, its characteristics and the question as to whether Scripture is effective with regard to salvation. As a result, Johannes Corvin, who was also a minister in Danzig and Rahtmann’s most important opponent, sent letters explaining his own point of view to several Lutheran faculties of theology to demonstrate how heretical Rahtmann’s theory was. Corvin asked the faculties to give their opinion, hoping that they would reject Rahtmann’s book and thus support his own view. One of the responses to Corvin’s letter came from Gerhard. The two questions that Rahtmann answered in the preface to *Gnadenreich* concerning the origin of Scripture and the effectivity of Scripture regarding salvation were also the core of the differences between Gerhard and Rahtmann, which we will discuss below.

In the first part of this chapter we will describe Rahtmann’s theory regarding Scripture, one of the central questions of the dispute. Secondly, we will analyse this overview by means of the four questions we used in the preceding chapter, which deal with the characteristics of Scripture, Scripture’s role regarding salvific

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1 H. Rahtmann, *Jesu Christi, deß Königs aller Könige und Herrn aller Herren Gnadenreich*, (Danzig: [s.n.], 1621). For the analysis of Hermann Rahtmann’s view we also have recourse to J. Gerhard, ‘Von der Natur, Krafft und Wirckung des geoffenbarten und geschriebenen Worts Gottes’, in *Thesauri consiliorum appendix nova continens quaedam inserenda operi Dedekenno-Gerhardino*, (Jenae: Hertel, 1671), 201-74. The tract *THESAPP*, which Gerhard’s Elector insisted he write, was written in 1628 and appeared after Rahtmann’s death. Quotations from Rahtmann’s books (except for his *Gnadenreich* and *Bedencken*) are taken from Heinrich Halverscheid’s dissertation, *Lumen Spiritus prius quam Scriptura intellecta. Hermann Rahtmanns Kritik am lutherischen Schriftprinzip*, (Marburg: [s.n.], 1971).
knowledge and the factors that help or, as the case may be, hinder salvation. Thus, it will be easier to discover the discrepancies between Gerhard and Rahmann, which we will also discuss here. Finally, we will try to trace the causes of these differences between Gerhard and Rahmann.

10.1 Rahmann’s View of Scripture

One of Rahmann’s motives for expressing his view with regard to Scripture in his book *Gnadenreich* was his concern about the Christian way of life. He regarded the influence of dogmatic sermons as devastating: all attention was fixed on dogmas derived from the exegesis of Scripture, but most ministers were not concerned with the influence of faith on the Christian life. Orthodoxy (in its literal meaning of ‘right doctrine’) was emphasized at the expense of orthopraxy (right conduct in life) and following Christ. He also stated that Aristotelianism had too much influence on Lutheran theology. Rahmann therefore argued that, once conversion had taken place, the influence of faith should be visible in one’s way of life. Influenced by Johann Arndt (1555-1621 CE, a Lutheran minister and the author of *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum*) he emphasised the necessity of internal piety through which faith could be nourished. Rahmann underscored the role of the Spirit in piety, for through the illumination by the Spirit faith arose and was kept alive. Although Scripture was the basis of dogmatic statements and the source of knowledge of God’s being (*essentia*) and will (*voluntas*), it did not effectuate faith.

In Rahmann’s view of Scripture, in which he was influenced by Augustine and by Johann Arndt, the distinction between the internal and the external word of

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2 Cf. also H. Rahmann, *Quaestiones undecim, ex quodam de regno Jesu Christ, libello odio magis, quam ex fide, conceptae, ac Academiarum quarundam illustri censuris subjectae, notis vero illustratae, reformatae et remissae a Hermanno Rahman ad D. Mariae Danisc. Ecclesiastae*, (Lüneburg: Stern, 1622) and H. Rahmann, *Wolgegründetes Bedencken, was von deß D. Conradi Dieterichs seinen Schwarmfragen, darinnen er vom Schwenckfeldianismo, betreffend das Beschriebene und gepredigte Wort Gottes, handelt, und desselbigen andere beschüldiget, zuhalten sey: Wobey auch die Frage erörtert wird ob ohne vorhergehende Erleuchtung deß h. Geistes die heilige Schrift möge verstanden werden*, (Lüneburg: [s.n.], 1623).

3 Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 73-75.
A DIFFERENT VIEW

Scripture is the most remarkable feature. The ‘internal Word’ was the spoken Word in which God had revealed himself to prophets and apostles and which was therefore eternal. The internal Word was retained only in the hearts of the prophets and apostles. Rahtmann also used the term ‘internal Word’ to designate the Word that God directly speaks into the human heart at present through the Spirit. In short, God spoke through this internal Word immediately to people and revealed himself without any other intermediary.

As soon as the internal Word was written down it became an external word, a written testimony of the internal Word of God’s revelation. The external word (or external testimony) is Scripture. The term ‘external word’ referred to the written word of Scripture, which was a created word and thus perishable. Rahtmann did not consider Scripture to be the true Word of God: it was only a testimony. Yet this did

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4 It is important to note that the meaning of the concepts ‘external’ and ‘internal’ word differs greatly from Gerhard’s use of these concepts. According to Gerhard, the external word is the external revelation of the Word of God as well as the external writing and reading, preaching and hearing of this Word. By ‘internal Word’ Gerhard indicated not only the internal meaning of the Word, which was included in the external word, but also the internal acceptance of the Word. For Gerhard, the external and internal Word are inseparably connected with each other.

5 ‘Das die Schrift aber sey ein eusserliches Wort oder Zeugniss, wird daher klar und offenbar, weil es ja ausser den Propheten und Aposteln in die Buchstaben verfasset, das also das innerliche Wort die Apostel in ihrem Gemüthe behalten haben, aber das eusserliche Wort als ein Zeugniss haben uns gelassen, und gilt allhie nicht minder was geschrieben stehet. Also ist auch die heilige Schrift eusserlich, wiewol geschrieben mit dem Finger Gottes, zum gewissen Zeugniss dessen, was Gott mit den Propheten und Aposteln geredt, und in ihre Seelen gewircket, überblieben und uns vertrawet, wie vom Gesetze geschrieben stehet (Dt. 31: 24). Hieraus ist nun der Unterscheid zu mercken deß eusserlichen unnd innerlichen Worts, welchem kein rechtschaffner Theologus und Gottsgelehrter widersprechen wird: “aliud est causa, aliud effectus, aliud res signata, aliud signum”’ (Gnadenreich, a iiij). Cf. also Bedencken, 4, Quaestiones undecim, 17 and ThesApp, 202a.

The quotations from Rahtmann have been taken literally from his works. As a result, we sometimes encounter an older, alternative form of German spelling.

6 ‘Es entstehet aber allhie die Frage was dann eigentlich Gottes Wort sey, unnd worfür die Schrift, ihrem Wesen und Wircken nach, zu aestimiren unnd zuachten, welches etwas zu erklären woh von nöhten, daß es den Einfältigen, so wol schrifftlich als mündlich,
not mean that Scripture could be put aside. Scripture is necessary, for without it we would not know God’s being or will. As an external word, Scripture is only the basis for the assumption of systematic theology and cannot be the basis of faith: someone who does not believe will not be able to understand the mysteries hidden in it simply by reading it.8

Although Scripture is perishable in its external form, it is still a special book, because it emanates from the inspiration of the Spirit,9 who inspired the prophets and apostles to write down God’s Word. This does not mean, however, that Scripture should be considered as identical with God’s Word.

The elements of external and internal word, the inspiration by the Spirit and its function as a testimony, describing God’s being and will lead to Rahtmann’s definition of Scripture: ‘... holy Scripture ... is a divine, external word or testimony of the holy will and of the acts of God, which are revealed by the Spirit through a great illumination in the hearts of the holy prophets and apostles, so by such an external testimony by the power of the Holy Spirit we will be converted to God and saved.’10

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7 ‘Doch bleibt es gewisse das ohne die Schrift als eine Regula und Richtschnur der Warheit, via ordinaria, nach ordentlicher Weise niemand ursprünglich zu Gott geführet und bekehret werde’ (Gnadenreich, aij 2).
10 ‘... die heilige Schrift ... ist ein göttliches eusserliches Wort oder Zeugnüß deß heiligen Willens und der Thaten Gottes, die von dem heiligen Geist durch eine hohe
In the explanation of this definition Rahtmann emphasises that the reception of Scripture in the present is different from its reception in the past. For example, biblical authors heard the voice of God immediately (the internal voice of God was like a vision),\textsuperscript{11} whereas at present Scripture is used to mediate God’s voice.\textsuperscript{12} Rahtmann distinguishes between God’s revealed Word and Scripture and concludes that God’s eternal Word is not identical with the words of Scripture. Scripture itself is only a dead letter, which is not able to effect conversion. Once the Word was alive in the hearts of prophets and apostles; at present, Scripture is the external testimony of that Word, which must be made alive again in the heart. This conclusion does not imply that Rahtmann denies the importance of Scripture. Rather, he poses the question as to whether Scripture still plays a central role in the process of conversion or not. If Scripture is regarded as an external word, this would imply that it is not able to guide people to conversion. In its literal sense Scripture is useful only to those who do not yet believe, because it is an instruction about God’s will and acts in history.

Answering the question as to what role Scripture plays in conversion and attaining salvation, Rahtmann developed a theory of the effectivity of Scripture. He argued in the preface of his book \textit{Gnadenreich} that one should distinguish between two levels regarding this effectivity.\textsuperscript{13} On the first level Scripture informs us of the divine truth that lies beyond the literal text and depicts God’s being and will objectively. The function of this level is demonstrated by the examples of a sign along the road and of a portrait of a king.\textsuperscript{14} The sign merely contains information about the places that can be reached and the directions one has to go to reach them, whereas the portrait of a king shows his image. But the sign and the portrait are not identical with that to which they refer. The things that were referred to on the first level are realized on the second level, provided that illumination takes place. That to which Scripture refers can be understood only if the Spirit illuminates both Scripture

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. \textit{Bedencken}, 5-7.
\textsuperscript{12} Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 59.
\textsuperscript{13} Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 77ff.
\textsuperscript{14} Cf. \textit{Gnadenreich}, b.
and the human heart. The second level is explained by the example of a painting standing on a table. As long as the room is dark, the painting cannot be seen, but as soon as a light is kindled, the image on the painting is visible. In the same way the light of the Spirit is necessary to show Scripture and its contents. It is the illumination that shows the special character of Scripture compared with other books. Scripture itself, namely, is only a collection of letters and thus Scripture cannot influence the human heart as the Spirit is able to do.

Rahtmann’s point of view raised many questions at the time, such as that of the factor that would convince the reader that Scripture is indeed different from other books. Another question was that of the way in which Scripture is able to guide people to God. A third question that was asked was: What was the other factor that caused conversion if Scripture did not? Answering the criticism of his opponent and colleague Corvin, Rahtmann introduced in Quaestiones XI and Demonstrationis Copia a doctrine of the two functions of Scripture. The first function is to describe God’s being and will and our duties, to lead to them, to instruct people about them and to refer to them through words and signs. Scripture must do the same regarding faith, love and hope. The second task of Scripture is to bring those things into the hearts of people. Scripture, however, cannot effect these things on its own (because it is an external word, written on paper) if God’s Spirit does not voluntarily add

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\(^{15}\) Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 87ff.

\(^{16}\) ‘So viel hat nun die Schriftt, als Schriftt betrachtet, in sich daß sie zeiget, lehret, weiset objective, wie in einem warhaftigen Zeugnüß, gemelde, Contrafactur und Zeichen, was Gottes wesen, willen und unsere Gebühr sey’ (Gnadenreich, b).
power and illumination as the principal cause. Only after the preparation of the heart by the Spirit can Scripture enter the human heart.

Rahtmann created a tension between the role of Scripture and that of the Spirit concerning conversion by regarding the preparation of the Spirit as necessary. This tension was not solved but increased by Rahtmann’s view of the relation between Scripture and the Spirit. In his Gnadenreich Rahtmann looked at these two ‘entities’ from the viewpoint of temporal order on the one hand and the order of nature on the other. In the temporal order the illumination by the Spirit occurs at the same moment (simul tempore) as the reading of Scripture. But in the order of nature the Spirit has a higher priority than Scripture. If the Spirit enters the heart

17 ‘Sol aber dasselbig was die Schrift zeiget, weiset und lehret, warhafftig erkandt und ins Herz auffgenommen, darinne bejahet und erfüllet werden, daß der Mensch sich von der Lügen, ipso actu, zu Gott kehre, und den weg der Warheit leuffe, so muß der heilige Geist durch die Schrift, oder bey diesem Zeichen leuchten. Denn so das Wort Gottes, welches die Apostel unnd Propheten gehabt haben innerlich, und in die Schrift vorgebildet ist eusserlich, auch noch heutiges Tages sol in den Herzen der Menschen auffgehen, also muß das ewige Wort, oder der h. Geist durch Erleuchtung, in und auß der Schrifft solches schaffen. ... Denn ohne diese Erleuchtung wird die Schrift nicht erkandt zum Leben, daß nemlich, was sie eusserlich zeiget, in der Seele des Menschen innerlich möge empfunden werden’ (Gnadenreich, b). Cf. also Bedencken, 24-29.

It should be noted that this opinion concurs with the Augsburg Confession, article 5: ‘Ut hanc fidem consequamur, institutum est ministerium docendi evangeli et porrigendi sacramenta. Nam per verbum et sacramenta tanquam per instrumenta donatur spiritus sanctus, qui fidem efficit, ubi et quando visum est Deo, in his, qui audiant evangelium ...’ (Konkordienbuch, 1580).

18 ‘Darumb ob wol die H. Schrifft und derselbigen erwegung und betrachtung und erleuchtung zum rechten verstande/ tempore simul, in der zeit zusammen sind in actu conversionis et agnitionis, in dem der Mensch lernet Gott erkennen und wird bekehret/ und zu Gott geführet/ so gehet doch nach und in der ordnung deß wahren lebendigen Erkänntmüß oder bekehrung die erleuchtung vorher/ wie erkläret worden/ weil die Erleuchtung geschicht durch den H. Geist/ als die Häuptursach’ (Gnadenreich, b iiij 3). Cf. also Halverscheid, 1971, 106.

19 Cf. Gnadenreich, b iiij 3. If two entities – for example the Scripture and the Spirit – are said to be simul tempore, this does not imply that both appear and disappear at the same time. Rather, it means that they exist at the same time and that their effectivity occurs at the same time. Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 106.
before Scripture and is, therefore, the starting point of conversion, consequently the
effectivity of Scripture depends on the illumination by the Spirit.\textsuperscript{20}

In order to enable people to understand Scripture, God gives his grace (\textit{gratia praeveniens}) to them which prepares their heart before they truly read Scripture.\textsuperscript{21} Augustine assumed that God gave his grace to people in two ways: first by the external means of the Word and sacraments and, second, by internal grace. Rahtmann considered this internal grace to be the preliminary grace that arouses the interest and desire of people regarding God. The change of will and intellect, caused by preliminary grace, prepares one to understand Scripture.\textsuperscript{22}

Rahtmann assumed that knowledge ‘depends’ on human will: if someone does not want or does not desire to know something, he will never try to understand it. A necessary condition for wanting to know God’s being and will is the desire to know them. If someone does not desire to know God, he will never know God at all. This means that the desire for God’s Word precedes the salvific understanding and leads to this understanding. The natural human will does not play a part, because the origin of the desire for God’s Word is ascribed to God. First, the human being must have a new will that leads her attention to God’s Word, and therefore the internal grace must work in the heart before the Word is accepted.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Cf. also \textit{Bedencken}, 58 and 60: ‘... daß nemlich der heilige Geist mit seiner Erleuchtung als die Hauptursache \textit{ordine naturae} natürlicher Ordnung nach der Schrifft die doch \textit{tempore} ist mit der Hauptursach zusammen fürhergehe, oder zuvor komme, wann in unnd auß der Schrifft, das seelige heylsame Erkentnuß soll geschöpfet werden.’ (58) ‘In diesen meinen Worten habt ihr klärlich zuvernehmen, daß ich den heiligen Geist mit seiner Erleuchtung als die Hauptursache, und die heilige Schrifft als die Mittelursach \textit{tempore} zu der Bekehrung der Menschen, oder zum seeligmachenden Erkentnuß, wil zusammen haben. Fürs Andere, weil der heilige Geist mit seiner Erleuchtung ist die Hauptursache, und die Schrifft die Mittel oder underursache, wann der \textit{effectus} nemlich die bekehrung, heiligung und seeligmachung sol im herzen geschaffen werden ... ob nicht die Hauptursache das erste sey, welches den anfang mache, daß in der Schrifft das Erkentnuß gefunden und ins herze genommen werde’? (60).
\item \textsuperscript{21} Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 127-31.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 144-54.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 147. The question as to the role the human will plays in conversion is important to Rahtmann, because this question is related to the Pelagian discussion of whether God or humans are responsible for one’s conversion. According to
\end{itemize}
The ‘epistemological’ part of conversion is described in Wolgegründetes Bedencken. Knowledge is acquired if there is an adaptation between the matter to be known and the intellect. This implies in the case of the knowledge of Scripture that both Scripture and the intellect must be changed under the influence of the Spirit. Scripture possesses in itself a light (Rahtmann called this lumen grammaticum sive historicum), that is intensified by the Spirit. The distinction between two sorts of light (namely the instrumental and the principal lights) serves to demonstrate Rahtmann’s statement that without the illumination of the Spirit we are not able to understand Scripture in a salvific way. The objective or instrumental light (which is also called the historical light elsewhere in this work) is the ‘natural’ meaning of the words of Scripture. By means of this instrumental light, Scripture gives us the interpretation of her words and images. To find the instrumental light, the principal light works in the heart of people as well as in Scripture. The latter is the Spirit of revelation, namely, the gratia praeventiens, which is Christ who enters the human heart with his grace and illuminates all people. This principal light not only illuminates the human heart but also the human intellect in order to prepare it for the understanding of Scripture. Thus, the principal light (or the

Rahtmann, Pelagius assumed that God gives us instructions through Scripture and sermons with respect to our conduct. Having heard God’s instructions, we have to decide whether we act on them. Everyone who argues that God’s grace comes to us only through Scripture and sermons takes the same position as Pelagius, according to Rahtmann. He assumed that the church fathers (especially Augustine) said, contra Pelagius, that God’s grace comes to people in two ways: first, by external means such as his Word and the sacraments and, second, by the internal means of speaking to the heart and bringing his grace into it.


25 ‘Darnach sollet ihr wissen, daß duplex lumen sey 1. Lumen instrumentale et historicum, ein Instrumental historisch Schriftlicht 2. Lumen principale, movens, dirigens, applicans ein Principal und bewegendes licht, welches die Schrift in ihre ubung bringet. Woraus habt diesen Bericht, daß ich zwar allezeit der guten Schrift, das lumen instrumentale historicum, das Instrumental und historische Licht zu eygne, aber das Principal Liecht scripturam applicans et dirigens kompt freywillig dazu, darumb muß es einig und allein der heilige Geist zur Schrift bringen, daß die Schrift nicht allein ins Herze komme, sondern auch darin krefflig wircken könne’ (Bedencken, 72-73).

26 Cf. Bedencken, 93-95.
praeveniens, which is Christ) must precede the instrumental light.\textsuperscript{27} Rahtmann compares the process of illumination to a cloud through which the sun shines. Just as the cloud is transparent and thus is able to let the sun shine through it, so Scripture is able to let the light of the Spirit shine through it.\textsuperscript{28} Just as a horse pulls the chariot along the road until it reaches its destination, so the Spirit (compared to the horse) pulls Scripture with her to the human heart and intellect. The Spirit reaches the heart first and illuminates the intellect. Only after illumination by the Spirit can Scripture be understood.

The power of conversion belongs only to God, to his own eternal Word, and not to the created word, Scripture. Moreover, the power that converts people cannot be part of Scripture. Scripture can only describe the power and testify to it. If Scripture possessed this power, even the devils and the unbelievers would have been converted, sanctified and saved.\textsuperscript{29} Insofar as Scripture is an external word it is not able to effect conversion and it does not cause either conversion or salvation. In conclusion, Rahtmann rejected the notion that there is a relation between the Spirit

\textsuperscript{27} ‘Darumb gehet das Gnadenliecht Gottes des heiligen Geistes \textit{ordine naturae} für den erkanten Essenz, form und Wesen, dz ist, für der Schrifft meinung fürher. Der die Essentz unnd das Wesen der Schrifft ins herze bringet, daß er darin seliglich bewahret werde, der gehet auch für dem Erkentnus der Essentz und dem Wesen der Schrifft vorher: der Wage zeucht nit dz pferdt, sondern dz Pferd zeucht den Wagen .... Nun bringt der Geist durch sein Gnadenliecht die Essentz und das wesen der Schrifft, das ist die meinung, ins Herz’ (\textit{Bedencken}, 100-101).

\textsuperscript{28} Cf. \textit{Bedencken}, 125.

\textsuperscript{29} ‘(Quaestio) Ob die blosse Schrifft, so ferne sie alleine im Buchstaben verfasset, ein eußerlich zeugnis ist, und eußerlich in ihren Tafeln bleibt, ohne die Erleuchtung Gottes des heiligen Geistes, zu Gott führe, bekehre, heilige und selige. (Antwort) Ad hanc quaestionem, ex libello (\textit{Gnadenreich}, TB) meo conceptam, negative respondeo argumento duplici, cujus primum tale est 1. Si nudae Scripturae in tabulis permanenti, praeter et extra Spiritus sancti cooperationem, actus conversionis, sanctificationis, et salvationis attribuendus est, sequitur, Diabolum et impios converti, sanctificari et salvari: at vero consequens falsum, ergo et antecedens .... Antecedens falsum esse necesse est: atque ita manet verum, Scripturam nudam, ut in tabulis manet, extra cooperationem Spiritus sancti liberam, non conferre Actum conversionis, sanctificationis et salvationis’ (\textit{Quaestiones undecim}, 24-25).
Gerhard maintained that Scripture is always effective both if it is used (\textit{in usu}) as well as if it is not used (\textit{extra usum}).

The external words of Scripture are not connected with the internal meaning – the meaning is beyond the words.\footnote{Cf. Rahtmann's assumption: 'Aber das die Krafft seelig zumachen allezeit für dem rechten Gebrauch in den Worten der Schrift stecke, und darein sey eingeschlossen, das sie der Prediger daraß nemen, unnd in seine Worte, so offt er wil kan einschliessen und anhefften, ist nicht Evangelisch, sondern Fanatisch und Schwermerisch zuachten' (\textit{Bedencken}, 17).}

Rahtmann had previously stated (cf. \textit{Bedencken}, 16) that the orthodox Lutheran theologians were inconsistent regarding the power they considered to be inherent to Scripture. In Rahtmann's view such an opinion was similar to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the power inherent to the bread of the Eucharist. If Lutheran orthodox theologians considered this Roman Catholic doctrine false, they should also consider it heretical that Scripture possessed inherent power.

\footnote{Cf. \textit{ThESApp}, 209b.}

\footnote{Cf. \textit{ThESApp}, 211a.}

\footnote{‘Das Wort ist eine Göttliche unnd ewige Krafft, denn wiewol die Stimme oder Rede (\textit{addo ego}, die Buchstaben, Syllaben und Wörter, die etwas bedeuten) verschwindet, so bleibt doch der Kern, das ist der Verstand, die Warheit, so in die Stimme verfasset wird. Als wenn ich einen Becher an Mundt setze, in welchem der Wein gefasset ist, so trincke ich den Wein hinein, wiewol ich den Becher nit in Hals stosse, also ist auch das Wort, das die Stimme (\textit{addo ego}, daß die geschriebene Wörter), bringet es selbst ins Herz und wird lebendig, so doch die Stimme (\textit{addo ego}, die Schrifttwörter unnd Buchstaben) herausen bleiben unnd vergehen' (\textit{Bedencken}, 45-46).}

\footnote{Cf. \textit{Bedencken}, 100-101.}
people eternal life.\textsuperscript{36} It is the Spirit who brings Christ (the \textit{signatum}) in the human heart and not the letters of Scripture itself (\textit{signum}). This means that \textit{signatum} and \textit{signum} are separated from each other and are only combined in the heart. It is in the direct connection to Christ that the power of the eternal Word of God is felt.

According to Rahtmann, Augustine assumed that Scripture remained a dead letter if God’s Spirit did not change the human will. Rahtmann adopted this view but did not conclude that in the end it is only the Spirit who causes salvation without mediation. That would imply that Scripture is not necessary at all to effect conversion.

Although Rahtmann underscored time and again that the Spirit precedes Scripture in the process of conversion, he did not in the end dissolve the relation between Scripture and the Spirit but always saw them in combination.\textsuperscript{37} This can be deduced from three important points. The first is that Rahtmann continued to hold that Christ can be known only by reading or hearing Scripture. The second is that the internal work of grace is not only a mediation of power but also the illumination of the heart in acknowledging that Scripture is salvific. The third point is that the indwelling of Christ in the heart and intellect is the condition of the salvific knowledge of Scripture. Christ is the true light that shines and illuminates the intellect. Rahtmann’s dilemma was how to maintain the salvific knowledge of Scripture while avoiding the trap of the notion that a human being can effect his own salvation, for Scripture was, in Rahtmann’s view, a human ‘product.’ Rahtmann solved this dilemma by arguing that Christ, dwelling in the heart and coming in the place of the intellect, gives knowledge about God. Thus, Christ also awakens faith. The indwelling of Christ is important, because that causes people to be united with God. Finally, that to which Scripture refers (\textit{signatum}) is not only Christ but rather faith, which originates by means of the indwelling of the internal Word of God and is supported by the salvific knowledge of Scripture.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 156ff.
\textsuperscript{38} Cf. Halverscheid, 1971, 169. It seems to me that there is a discrepancy here concerning the question what the \textit{signatum} is: Christ or faith. In my view, this discrepancy is due to Rahtmann and Halverscheid has only adopted it while dealing with the topic of \textit{signatum}. 
10.2 Differences between Gerhard and Rahtmann

Rahtmann’s doctrine of Scripture will be analysed by means of the same four questions that were used before with regard to Gerhard’s texts. The first question is: In which way is the concept of release defined in the texts and how is release connected with knowledge and with that which impedes knowledge? The second question is: What is the relation between canonical texts and release? The third is: What role is played by reason and rational argumentation, by means of which knowledge is acquired generally, in the process of acquiring release? The fourth question is: What are the conditions for release and which factors prevent human beings from being released? These questions were derived from the central question of this investigation, how the claim can be made that human beings can obtain release only by means of the canonical texts as a source of salvific knowledge. By comparing Rahtmann’s answers to Gerhard’s, which we acquired from our analysis in chapter 8, the differences between them will become clear.

The first question looks at the way in which the concept of release was used in the text and how release is related to knowledge. This question is not answered, although it is plausible, that salvation means accepting God’s Word and living according to His commandments. We can derive this from Rahtmann’s emphasis on the fact that many people assume they are Christians but do not behave as Christians: they are not captivated by God’s love and do not subsequently change their behaviour.

The second question refers to the nature of Scripture and the relation between Scripture and salvation. Rahtmann distinguishes between God’s revealed Word as the internal word and Scripture as an external word. He argues that the external word of Scripture and God’s internal Word are not identical. Scripture is the external testimony of the internal Word which God once spoke to the prophets and apostles. Scripture, in its external form, is subservient to God’s Word. As an external word, Scripture shows the way to salvation objectively, which means that it does not cause illumination, conversion and salvation. Due to the distinction between the external and the internal word, Rathmann denies that Scripture is effective regarding salvation. The separation between external word and internal word also implies the separation of a word (the external form) from its meaning (the
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internal form). It is not possible to derive the meaning of the words in Scripture from Scripture itself. To understand the meaning of Scripture we need the illumination of the Spirit. The Spirit prepares our heart and enters it before Scripture (gratia praeveniens). Without the illumination of the Spirit, Scripture cannot be understood.

The third question takes up the role of rational argumentation in relation to salvation. In the texts that were analysed Rahtmann, unfortunately, does not answer this question nor the question of the extent to which human reason and intellect are able to give us salvific knowledge.

The fourth question concerns the factors that help in reaching salvation and those factors that prevent us from it. Some passages in Rahtmann’s books refer to a more active role of Scripture in providing salvific knowledge of God. But, generally, Rahtmann considers Scripture to be a passive instrument that derives its power to convert from the Spirit. Scripture, thus, is subordinate to the Spirit with regard to illumination, conversion and salvation. This is also proven by the fact that Scripture does not cause conversion in everyone who reads or hears it. The power of conversion is to be ascribed only to the Spirit, who speaks immediately to the human heart. The Spirit prepares our will and intellect and turns them toward God. She brings Scripture, which informs us about God’s will and being, into our heart. In short, although Scripture is useful, it is not the actual cause of faith and salvation. Our question as to which factors prevent us from being saved remains unanswered.

The most central differences between Rahtmann and Gerhard are their definition of Scripture and the consequences of the decision as to whether Scripture is identical with God’s Word or not.

The first difference between Gerhard and Rahtmann here regards the identity of God’s Word with Scripture. Gerhard considers Scripture to be God’s Word, which He revealed to us by grace through the prophets and apostles who recorded this revelation in writing. It is by this written revelation that we are guided to knowledge of God and converted and saved. According to Gerhard, there is essentially no difference between the Word that was once spoken and the written Word: it is the same Word of God. The essence of Scripture is not its external form (its letters, signum, i.e. the material cause) but rather its internal form (its revealed
content, *signatum*, i.e. the formal cause). The internal and external form, however, should not be separated but only distinguished. Separation would imply that the essence of the Scripture and the external word are torn apart. Conversely, Rahtmann considered Scripture to be a dead letter and a human word rather than a Word spoken by God. Without the illumination of the Spirit Scripture is like the portrait of a king that depicts the image of the king but is not the king itself. In the same way Scripture refers to God’s words but is not God’s Word itself. This is the so-called first level in Rahtmann’s theory. Consequently, Scripture is not able to effectuate salvation.

The second difference between Gerhard and Rahtmann is the relation between Scripture and Spirit. Rahtmann considers Scripture to be an external word that only objectively shows the right way but is itself dead. It is not Scripture that effectuates salvation but rather the Spirit who prepares the heart and enters it prior to Scripture. The illumination by the Spirit exists at the same time (*simul tempore*) as the reading of Scripture and is also effective at the same time. According to Rahtmann, this does not imply that both appear and disappear at the same moment but that they are effective at the same time. But in the order of nature the Spirit has a higher priority than Scripture. Gerhard, on the other hand, assumes that one should not make a distinction between Scripture and the Spirit to the same extent as Rahtmann does. Gerhard argues that Spirit and Scripture work together at the same moment (*simul tempore*) and have the same order (*simul ordine*). Gerhard does not deny that the Spirit is needed to illuminate the heart and to remove the darkness of the intellect that prevents us from understanding Scripture. Although this illumination is necessary before Scripture could truly be understood, this does not imply that the Spirit enters the heart prior to Scripture. Rahtmann’s conclusion that the Spirit is in fact more important than Scripture is not accepted by Gerhard either. Scripture and Spirit are of equal importance to Gerhard and have the same order.

Gerhard assumes that the illumination, conversion and salvation of people are effected by the Spirit by means of the Word. If one assumes that Scripture is a means of conversion, then it must be understood as a means that is not only present but also effective. Scripture is not a passive but an active instrument, living and powerful. Gerhard fears that accepting a separation in the order of Scripture and Spirit will finally end up in a separation between the effectivity of both. Through
such a separation one would turn away from the salvific means of the revealed Word that is ordered by God and ascribe the acceptance or the refusal of God’s grace to the choice of one’s own human will.\footnote{Cf. ThesApp, 220a.}

The third difference concerns the reason why so many people are not converted after they have read or heard Scripture. According to Rahtmann, this is due to the ineffectiveness of Scripture: Scripture does not contain the power of illumination and conversion that are necessary to effect salvation. The power to effect these things must originate from another source: the Spirit. If the start of conversion was caused by the preached or heard word, this would imply that a human act, namely the preaching or the hearing, is the cause of conversion. Right to its ultimate conclusion, the process of conversion would have found its source in human beings and not in God. This idea is emphasised by Rahtmann’s definition of Scripture as a human document that is created and is thus not identical to God’s Word in which He reveals himself to people.

Conversely, Gerhard assumes that Scripture is the only means that is able to effectuate salvation. The power is part of Scripture’s essence. Only through Scripture is one able to acquire knowledge of God. Some people are not converted after having read Scripture or having heard it, and that is not because of a ‘lack’ of power but rather because of sin and stubbornness. In the first place, the human heart has become depraved after the fall and needs the assistance of Scripture connected with the Spirit to find the way back to God; in the second place, people are stubborn and deliberately choose to reject God’s grace, instead of accepting salvation.

\section*{10.3 The Concept of the Word}

It is clear from the analysis that the differences between Gerhard and Rahtmann can be traced back to the question of which word is the real Word of God and thus contains power to cause salvation. Or, in other words, the background of the differences is the question concerning the relation between Spirit and Scripture with regard to the cause of salvation.

Gerhard assumes that Scripture is a living Word, God’s Word, and thus contains power to effect salvation. Rahtmann, on the other hand, considers Scripture
to be an external testimony of God’s revelation. The only function of this testimony is to refer to the divine reality and mysteries lying beyond the reach of created reality. The issue at stake is the identity between the spoken Word of God in which He revealed himself and the Word of God that was written down in Scripture.

Rahtmann, who denies the identity between the spoken Word and the written word, concludes that Scripture is not able to cause salvation, because it is not truly God’s Word. If it had been God’s Word, its effect would have been the conversion of people the moment they read or hear Scripture. This power is not found in Scripture itself. Ultimately, it is an instrument that contains this power within it. According to Rahtmann, in this way Scripture can be compared to a vessel from which water can be poured out. The water, however, does not belong originally or naturally to the vessel: the vessel does not always contain water.

According to Rahtmann, the true Word of God is the Word He once spoke to prophets and apostles and by which He revealed Himself. This Word is spoken today immediately in the human heart by the Spirit. The Spirit starts the process of illumination in our hearts. The relation between Spirit and Scripture is, that the Spirit is always first, because we will understand the meaning of Scripture only after being illuminated by the Spirit. Illumination, thus, does not start with the preached or written Word of God; the power of illumination and conversion is externally added to the Word by the Spirit. Without this illumination Scripture is a dead letter; connected with the Spirit Scripture is a passive instrument, merely a tool of the Spirit, and not able to convert and save by itself.
11 Conclusion Part Two

In the second part of this book we discussed Johann Gerhard’s view of Scripture as the only means of salvation. We looked briefly at Aristotelian philosophy, from which Gerhard borrowed some important epistemological concepts for his dogmatics, the *Loci Theologici*. Relevant texts in which Gerhard expressed his position on salvation and on Scripture’s role in attaining salvation were analysed. To show some of the problems that Gerhard’s view of the relation between Scripture and the Spirit caused we looked at the opposing view raised by Hermann Rahtmann.

In this chapter we will discuss the role of salvation. Second, we will turn to the relation between salvation and Scripture. Within this framework we will also look at the dispute between Gerhard and Rahtmann, which originated from their different views on the nature of Scripture.

11.1 Salvation

Salvation plays a central role in Gerhard’s theology, for that is the goal intended by God for human beings. Salvation can be attained if one accepts the word of God, if one’s heart is illuminated by the Spirit.

Salvation is closely connected with faith. Without faith, the acceptance of God’s gift of grace, one will not be saved. Faith is a gift from God, which means that it can not be obtained by good works or one’s own merits. This gift, however, is not always gratefully accepted by people. Although some accept it, others deliberately reject it. Thus, the reason why not everyone is saved is not caused by an absolute decree of election by God (in which God chose beforehand who was to be saved and who was to be rejected) but rather by our sin and our deliberate rejection of salvation.

The starting point of salvation is not found in one’s own free will. To ‘grasp’ salvific knowledge is a grace given by the Spirit. Once someone believes, a new way of life starts. Faith should cause a new life of piety that consists in reading Scripture, prayer, meditation and temptation (*oratio, meditatio, temptatio*). This triad was introduced by Luther, who had combined these three together in prominent places. Prayer, meditation and temptation are not conditions that must be fulfilled in order to attain salvation but rather means to preserve and increase faith.
According to Gerhard, Scripture is the external instrument that is able to cause salvation. Scripture provides general knowledge about God’s being (essentia) and will (voluntas) and also provides salvific knowledge.

Gerhard assumes that everyone has a certain knowledge about God that is inherited or natural. Knowledge of matters concerning divine mysteries, however, goes beyond the limit of the human intellect. In order to understand such matters the Spirit has to illuminate the heart. Through this illumination the darkness of the intellect is removed. It is a necessary condition for the clarity and effectiveness of Scripture.

Scripture and the Spirit always work in combination: Scripture does not effect salvation without the Spirit nor the Spirit without Scripture. According to Gerhard, the unity of Scripture and the Spirit concerns three areas, i.e. the inspiration of the prophets and apostles, the illumination of the human heart and the effectivity of Scripture. The last point especially is important to our investigation, for it is the point of dispute between Gerhard and Rahtmann.

11.2 The Relation Between Scripture and Salvation
Gerhard’s doctrine of the relation between Scripture and salvation contains three points that led to discussion with his opponents, especially in the dispute with Rahtmann. The first point is the relation between the words of Scripture and their meaning, i.e. the relation between ‘form’ and ‘matter.’ The second point concerns the effectivity of Scripture. The third point is the most important one: What exactly is the role of the Spirit in salvation? The close connection between Scripture and the Spirit implies that the effectivity of Scripture presupposes an internal power that cannot be separated from Scripture. Scripture and the Spirit are always connected with each other, whether people use Scripture or not. This thought leads to the conclusion that the Word is always effective; it contains power even if it is not actually used (extra usum). It is, however, evident that the actual salvific work of Scripture occurs only through the reading and hearing of the Word.

With respect to the first point, Gerhard maintained the relation between words and their meaning in Scripture by referring to the Aristotelian system of philosophy. In
Aristotelian epistemology ‘form’ and ‘matter’ are inseparably connected, which implies that words (‘form’) and their meaning (‘matter’) belong together.

The distinction between the external and the internal word of Scripture is closely connected with this first issue. The ‘external word’ is the external revelation of God’s Word as well as the external writing and reading, preaching and hearing of that Word. By ‘internal word’ Gerhard indicated not only the internal meaning of the Word but also the internal acceptance of this Word by people.

Gerhard’s opponents questioned the effectivity of Scripture: Is reading or hearing the words of Scripture indeed effective enough to lead to salvation? Gerhard’s solution was that Scripture is indeed an instrumental cause of salvation: the words in Scripture are not dead, they are alive and also effective. In close cooperation with the illumination by the Spirit Scripture is able to convert and convince people of the message of God. Everyone who accepts the grace of God is saved.

The answer to the third point, the role of the Spirit with regard to salvation, is the most difficult. Gerhard states that one should not separate the work of Scripture from that of the Spirit. Both work together; together they effect salvation. Scripture, whether it is read or heard, informs us about God’s being and will as well as about the divine mysteries. The Spirit illuminates our heart at the same time and prepares it for understanding the message of Scripture. Without Scripture we will not acquire knowledge of God; without the Spirit we will not be able to understand and accept its contents.

Time and again Rahtmann emphasised that it is God and not the human being who begins the process of attaining salvation. He considered Scripture to be a dead letter. Consequently, the assumption that reading or hearing Scripture could effect salvation is claiming that salvation is dependent on human action. In order to emphasise that only God is able to effect salvation, Rahtmann assumed that the Spirit precedes Scripture, because the Spirit is the *primum movens* of the salvific knowledge of Scripture. This opinion was in contrast with the Formula of Concord, where it is stated that the Spirit comes to people through the Word when it is heard. Rahtmann, however, argued that if one denies the power of the Spirit as preceding
Scripture and connects the Spirit with the letter of Scripture, he invokes the charge of Pelagianism.

It is actually this point that forms the background of Rahtmann’s view of the relation between Spirit and Scripture. Rahtmann opposes the idea that the human being is able to cause salvation by his own powers. He states that only God is able to draw people to Him. He wants to emphasise that God is the only One who effects salvation, who awakens faith in people. This can be guaranteed, according to Rahtmann, if it is the Spirit who enters the human heart first. The task of the Spirit is to change the will into a desire for God and to illuminate the intellect. Only then can there be faith. The ultimate conclusion of this view is that the Spirit effects salvation and that Scripture merely is a passive instrument. Rahtmann, however, did not draw this conclusion in his *Gnadenreich*. Even although Scripture is an external testimony, it is necessary, for without it God’s being or will could not be known. Conversion and salvation are effected by the power of the Spirit, who precedes Scripture.

This standpoint bridges the gap between Rahtmann and Gerhard concerning the relation between Scripture and the Spirit, for here Rahtmann acknowledges that the work of Scripture and Spirit should be connected in order to become effective regarding salvation. The main difference is, however, that Gerhard argues that the work of Scripture and Spirit are simultaneous and equally important, while Rahtmann emphasizes that the Spirit necessarily precedes Scripture. According to Rahtmann, if Scripture precedes the Spirit, we would not be able to understand the content of Scripture. In other words, one could assume that, in Rahtmann’s opinion, the Spirit, which precedes Scripture, is therefore necessary for understanding Scripture. In Gerhard’s view, Scripture and the Spirit enter the human heart at the same time (like two friends), locked tightly together.

Rahtmann wanted to describe the start of God’s relation with people in relation to the faithful knowledge of Scripture. He had to deal with the change of the human intellect and the will, which were defiled by sin. He wanted to take the subjective human will into account and assumed that the attention and the desire for God’s Word preceded the salvific knowledge. To do justice to all these elements of the
human will and intellect as well as to take account of the importance of God’s Word, he chose to make a separation between (the work of) the Spirit and Scripture.

Rahtmann’s view that, in the process of conversion ‘something’ must be added to Scripture means that the matter \([\textit{signatum}]\) to which the words \([\textit{signum}]\) of Scripture refer can be understood only if one experiences this through the Spirit.\(^1\) Assisted by the Spirit, Scripture and its contents ‘meet’ each other in the human heart. After having prepared the heart for understanding the content of Scripture, the Spirit brings this content into the heart. The matter to which Scripture refers \([\textit{signatum}]\) is neither the doctrine nor the commandments or the history recorded in Scripture but Christ to whom the whole content of Scripture refers. Christ is brought into the heart through the human being touched immediately the Spirit, which causes faith and subsequently a desire for Scripture.

According to Rahtmann, being touched by the Spirit should effect a visible change in the behaviour and life of Christians. Rahtmann was disappointed that this effect seemed to be very modest in converted people, for he did not discover a change to the best in these converted people. In his opinion, the fact that conversion did not change people’s lives was due to the emphasis laid on orthodoxy instead of on orthopraxy and the work of the Spirit. The Spirit, in Rahtmann’s opinion, deserved more attention. The small effect of conversion was ascribed by Rahtmann to the minimal effectivity of Scripture. For if Scripture had been more effective, faith would have influenced more deeply the spiritual life of people.

### 11.3 Who is the Real Pelagian?

Attention should be paid briefly to the question whether it is Rahtmann or Gerhard who is Pelagian, for both accused each other of this. Rahtmann accuses Gerhard, and Lutheran orthodox theologians in general, of being Pelagian. Conversely, these theologians argue that Rahtmann is Pelagian. In addition, we should ask whether this accusation is indeed true.

According to Rahtmann, Pelagianism rejects the theory of original sin and assumes that people are fundamentally good, i.e. they do not live in sin nor are they born in sin. Moreover, Rahtmann was also convinced that Pelagius assumed that,

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\(^1\) Cf. also Halverscheid, 1971, 173.
due to free human will, people are able to decide on basis of their own rational judgment and faculties to obey God’s commands. The most important opponent of Pelagius was Augustine, then bishop in Hippo Regius in North Africa.

As we noted in chapter 10, Rahtmann narrowed this Pelagian point of view to the statement on the human element in conversion: is either God or the human responsible for one’s being converted? After all, Scripture was a human ‘product’, created and not having the same authority as God’s Word. If Scripture was regarded as the means by which conversion was begun, in Rahtmann’s view this meant that a human testimony was the cause of conversion. In consequence, Rahtmann assumed that those who argued that God’s grace comes to us only through Scripture took up the same position as Pelagius once did and therefore denied God’s power regarding conversion. Rahtmann’s view derived from his definition of Scripture as the external word and testimony of God’s internal Word.

According to Rahtmann, the orthodox Lutheran theologians determined that a human act was the starting point of conversion. They argued that God’s grace was given to people through Scripture. But Scripture had to be read before its content could enter the human heart and, since reading was a human act, Rahtmann concluded conversion was caused by a human act. Consequently, Rahtmann accused the orthodox Lutheran theologians of being Pelagian. Rahtmann’s accusation did not do justice to the orthodox point of view, for the latter considered Scripture to be identical with God’s Word, and not a human product at all.

Confronted with Rahtmann’s view, the orthodox theologians replied that the starting point of conversion was grace, given to people through the illumination of the Spirit, whose work was always connected with Scripture. As Gerhard had often argued, conversion had a starting point and a way of progression. The starting point was the grace that God gave everyone at the very moment of conversion and faith started with the struggle of the flesh and the Spirit. Of course, such a struggle cannot take place without a change in the free will in deciding whether to accept the grace or not. But before the free will makes such a decision God has already given his

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2 Current research shows that Rahtmann’s ideas concerning Pelagius were wrong; cf. M. Lamberigts ‘Recent Reasearch into Pelagianism with Particular Emphasis on the Role of Julian of Aclanum’, in *Augustiniana* 52 (2002): 175-98.

3 Cf. Gerhard, LT II, loc VII, c VII, § 139, 77b.
grace. People do not cause faith themselves, according to Gerhard, but only the grace of a compassionate God awakens faith through his Word and the Spirit in the human heart. Even the starting point of conversion does not take place without Scripture.

The orthodox Lutheran theologians, including Gerhard, accused Rahtmann in turn of being Pelagian. First, they threw doubt on the nature of the content of Scripture in Rahtmann’s view. Rahtmann had argued that God spoke immediately to people, but Gerhard doubted how human thoughts could be seen as being inspired by God if this could not be measured against Scripture. He argued that the framework of Scripture was necessary for proving that the ideas concerning God were truly derived from Scripture and were truly God’s words. Second, they considered Rahtmann to be the real Pelagian due to his view that the change in the human will was of overriding importance in conversion. For, according to the orthodox theologians, Rahtmann had assumed that if the will did not change, Scripture would not be accepted. Since the decision of the will and the intellect to accept the content of Scripture was a human act, Rahtmann was considered to be guilty of Pelagianism.

But just as Rahtmann did not do justice to the orthodox theologians, neither did they do justice to Rahtmann’s concern to see God as the starting point of conversion. Rahtmann safeguarded this divine starting point of salvation by the role of the Spirit, which had to precede Scripture (which was, in Rahtmann’s view, a human testimony) and had to enter the heart before even Scripture could enter and be understood. Rahtmann assumed that the intellect and the will of the human being had to change in order to accept Scripture’s content, but this change could only be caused by the illumination by the Spirit. Thus, in my opinion, although both parties (Rahtmann as well as Gerhard) accused each other of being Pelagian, this accusation was founded on a misunderstanding of each other’s standpoint and was actually not justified, not even in the limited understanding of Pelagian teaching at that time.

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4 Cf. Gerhard, LT II, c IX, § 170, 89a.
11.4 Salvation by Scripture Alone?
The Aristotelian influence on Gerhard’s theological position was great. First, he defined theology as a practical discipline. Second, he saw salvation as the goal towards which everything was directed. Third, he regarded Scripture as the instrumental cause for guiding people to that goal. Moreover, as a principle, Scripture was considered to be effective, authoritative and the only source of knowledge concerning God’s being and will. Aristotelianism also formed the background for Gerhard’s concepts of ‘form’ and ‘matter’ (respectively, words in Scripture and their meaning). Analogous to the indissoluble connection of ‘form’ and ‘matter’, a word and its meaning were also inseparable.

Rahtmann argued that there is no connection at all. Rather, a word and its meaning are separate from each other. A word does not contain any meaning in itself; it is only an external sign referring to a meaning that exists beyond the word. Consequently, Scripture’s words are only an external testimony of a reality beyond them, just as the portrait of a king is not the king himself but only refers to the real king. Finally something that is dead is not able to cause salvation, which, after all, means eternal life.

Rahtmann’s first objection to Gerhard is that the meaning of Scripture cannot be understood immediately by the hearer at the moment of hearing. It is absolutely necessary that the Spirit enter and illuminate the heart before one can understand Scripture. The second objection is the denial of the effectivity of Scripture. Is Scripture effective in itself or is Scripture effective only because the Spirit is connected with it? According to Rahtmann, the effectivity of Scripture is limited. Scripture itself does not have the effective power to convert people and guide them to salvation, for Scripture is a dead letter, an external sign or testimony of God. The fact that Scripture is able to effect a change in people is due only to her connection with the Spirit. If the Spirit does not illuminate the heart, if she does not make Scripture alive, conversion will not take place. In Rahtmann’s view, the Spirit is the actual means of salvation.

He does not, however, draw the ultimate conclusion that conversion is possible without Scripture. Rahtmann does not deny the importance of Scripture as the only authoritative source of knowledge concerning God’s being and will. He does, however, deny Gerhard’s assumption that Scripture is the only means of salvation.
Gerhard does not accept Rahtmann’s view. His problem, that many people are not converted even if they have read Scripture, is not solved by Rahtmann’s solution of separating the Word from its meaning and consequently denying the effectivity of Scripture. This answer did not fit Gerhard’s theological and philosophical system. If he had accepted the separation between the words of Scripture and their meaning, he would have had to abandon Aristotelian epistemology. Because of the consequences of this epistemology, by which Scripture was defined as a principle of theology (which included the undoubtable effectivity of Scripture), Gerhard was not willing to accept that the effectivity of Scripture could be limited by the possibility that one could reject God’s offer of salvation, as Rahtmann argued. Such human influence did not fit into his epistemological system.

The most important point in the Rahtmannian debate is the question how people attain salvation and acquire knowledge of God. After having examined carefully the answers of both Gerhard and Rahtmann within their own contexts, the conclusion should be drawn that these answers depend largely on the view on Scripture either as identical with God’s Word or as an external testimony that refers to God’s being and God’s will. The choices that are made are influenced by the different philosophical and theological frameworks that both theologians use. It is, however, remarkable that both Gerhard and Rahtmann want to emphasise that, in the end, God is the only cause of salvation. The way in which this claim is maintained, however, is very different.
Part III
The Function of Canonical Texts As the Only Means to Release

The central question of this investigation was which arguments are used to defend the claim that canonical texts are the only means of salvific knowledge in order to be released. We also wanted to deepen our understanding of the extent and limits of the authority of these canonical texts. We intended to investigate whether the arguments used by both proponents and opponents had a logic or plausible rationale in themselves. The arguments used by representatives of two religious traditions who consider the relation between canonical texts and release to be exclusive were analysed: Śaṅkara (a philosopher of the Advaita Vedānta, who lived during the eighth century CE) and Johann Gerhard (an orthodox Lutheran theologian (1582-1637 CE).

In parts I and II we examined texts of Śaṅkara and Johann Gerhard and of their opponents, Maṇḍana and Rahtmann respectively. The latter two argued that knowledge of Brahman and God resp. which is derived from the respective canonical texts should be supplied by other means than canonical texts alone. Both criticised the exclusivity of canonical texts with regard to release.

The texts by Śaṅkara and Gerhard that we discussed dealt with the concepts of canonical texts and release as well as with the way in which salvific knowledge could be acquired from the canonical texts. The texts were analysed by means of four questions, which concerned the relation between the three most important concepts, i.e. ‘canonical texts’, ‘(salvific) knowledge’ and ‘release.’ These four questions were:

1) In what way is the concept of release defined in the texts and how is release connected with knowledge and with whatever impedes this knowledge?

2) What is the relation between canonical texts and release?

3) What role do both reason as well as rational argumentation play in the general acquirement of knowledge in the process of obtaining release?

4) What are the conditions for being released and what factors prevent human beings from being released?

In this Part we will first summarise the answers to these four questions. The questions related to this aim will also be answered: In what way precisely are
canonical texts regarded as the only means to release? How does one come to choose canonical texts and not other means such as rituals, meditation and prayer? What problems emerge in discussion with opponents who criticise the exclusivity of canonical texts? Are the arguments that are used to defend the exclusivity of canonical texts as a source of knowledge that effects release the same, even though they are used in different religious traditions?

To this end, we will first summarise Śaṅkara’s and Gerhard’s points of view (12.1.1 and 12.1.2) and then compare their views (12.1.3 and 12.1.4). Second, we will look at their opponents Maṇḍana (12.2.1) and Rahtmann (12.2.2) and search for the similarities (12.2.3) and dissimilarities (12.2.4) between them. Third, the motives of Śaṅkara and Gerhard will be discussed: How do they defend the exclusive role of canonical texts as a means of salvific knowledge by which one can be released (12.3)?

In the final chapter we will present the final results of this comparative investigation. Two questions will be answered. The first is, whether it has been useful and enlightening to compare two very different religious traditions in order to investigate the arguments that are used to defend the exclusivity of canonical texts as a source of knowledge that causes release are similar. The second is, whether the claim of the exclusive role of canonical texts is actually tenable.
12 Tertium Comparationis

12.1 The Line of Argumentation in Śaṅkara and Gerhard

12.1.1 Śaṅkara

Śaṅkara claims that the Vedas lead us to knowledge that causes the awareness that our self (ātman) is not different from Brahman and that our experience of suffering is false. If one gains knowledge of the identity between Brahman and the self, ignorance ceases immediately. Once one is aware of this identity, one is released. Such knowledge cannot be acquired by means of (ritual) acts or meditation but can only be derived from the Vedas. His argumentation is as follows.

1. The Vedas are not created by a person (apauruṣeyatva) and have no origin at some point in time.
2. Knowledge that is derived from immediate sense perception (pratyakṣa) is valid in itself. One does not need another means of knowledge to verify this knowledge. According to Śaṅkara, the Vedas provide knowledge that is just as valid as knowledge derived from immediate sense perception. Consequently, the Vedas do not need any other means to prove that Vedic knowledge is valid. The Vedas are intrinsically coherent and possess intrinsic authority (svataḥ-pramāṇa). They are, in fact, the only means by which valid knowledge (jñāna) of Brahman can be acquired. The central passages in the Vedas all refer to the identity of Brahman and the self. If one is aware of this identity, one is released. The term ‘valid knowledge’ refers to knowledge that reveals the identity between Brahman and the self and thus leads to release. ‘Valid knowledge’ stands in contrast to ‘general knowledge’, which provides only general information about Brahman. Over against valid knowledge, general knowledge is not able to cause release, although it is useful to those who are not yet aware of the identity of one’s self with Brahman.
3. Several methods of rational argumentation, such as metaphors, figurative speech and inference are used to show the meaning of the sentences of the Vedas. They are considered to be of help in understanding the oneness of the Self. The reach of rational argumentation is limited, for it should be ‘compatible’ with quotations from the śruti. Some of the means of knowledge (e.g. inference), even though they might be influenced by ignorance, may help
in destroying ignorance. Other means such as logic are accepted as auxiliary in
destroying ignorance as well. However, these rational means are not the cause
of the realisation that one’s self is identical with Brahman. Rational means
merely provide general knowledge about Brahman.

4. According to Śāṅkara, means such as ritual acts and continuous meditation are
less important than the Vedas with regard to release. They are used in order to
lift the veil that covers the true perception of reality. Reality is perceived in a
false way, due to ignorance. This reality is called ‘false’ because people
assume there is a difference between a reality characterised by suffering and a
reality in which they are released. However, this difference does not actually
exist. Although the Vedas themselves are also part of this false reality, they are
still a valid means of knowledge regarding Brahman because of their non-
personal origin.

5. Once the central passages of the Vedas are heard, they cause release. However,
the passages of the Vedas are sometimes misunderstood through ignorance.
Repetition of the most important texts is only needed by those who do not
grasp this knowledge immediately. The repetition of texts by the teacher has a
preliminary function in reaching release.

6. Valid knowledge of Brahman, which is derived from the Vedas, is the final
cause of the awareness of identity (anubhava or avagati) of Brahman and the
self, and thus the exclusive cause of release. This realisation cannot be grasped
by means of the intellect or by rational argumentation. Rather, it is a sudden
breakthrough or an Aha-Erlebnis.

12.1.2 Gerhard

Johann Gerhard claims that one should acquire knowledge of God from Scripture.
This knowledge leads to salvation, which is defined by Gerhard as justification by
faith. His line of reasoning is as follows.

1. Holy Scripture is identical to God’s Word, which he once spoke to prophets
and apostles and is now spoken to us. Because of its origin, Scripture is
intrinsically authoritative; it is perspicuous and effective, containing salvific
knowledge of God.
2. These characteristics of Scripture are also underlined by the application of Aristotelian epistemology, especially the Aristotelian distinction between form and matter and the Aristotelian distinction of four causes (effective, final, formal and material causes) as the foundation of true knowledge. Generally, however, the reach of rational argumentation and the intellect are limited, according to Gerhard. The divine mysteries are beyond the reach of our intellect. By means of our intellect we can only obtain a ‘natural’ knowledge of God. Only after the illumination by the Spirit is the adaptation between the content of revelation and the intellect possible.

3. The goal of Scripture is to lead human beings to salvation. In principle, salvation is intended for everyone. However, not everyone is saved, due to their own free choice to reject salvation. Moreover, not everyone is saved immediately after having heard Scripture or reflected on it, because of the darkness of the human heart and intellect.

4. If one is not yet saved or does not yet understand Scripture’s words, the knowledge that is derived from God’s Word in Scripture or by looking at God’s creation is only general knowledge about God (so-called ‘natural knowledge’). Salvific knowledge must be derived from Scripture and can only be grasped after being illuminated by the Spirit.

12.1.3 Similarities in Argumentation
An analysis of the line of argumentation provides four similarities, which we will summarise and explain in this paragraph.

The first is, that both Śaṅkara and Gerhard defended epistemologically the exclusivity of the canonical texts as the cause of release, even though Brahman and God are beyond reality and the grasp of human intellect. Both claim that the texts are intrinsically authoritative and a valid means of knowledge of Brahman and God. Canonical texts are also the only cause of release.

Śaṅkara maintains that the Vedas are a means of valid knowledge, just like any other means of valid knowledge such as immediate sense perception. Consequently, he applies all the characteristics of such valid means of knowledge to the Vedas. Śaṅkara considers the Vedas to be self-evident, inherently authoritative
and intrinsically coherent. Gerhard applies some of the characteristics of principle in Aristotelian epistemology (such as self-evidence, reliability and authority) to Scripture by defining it as a principle of knowledge. The knowledge that is derived from Scripture is not internally contradictory – it is effective and it is reliable.

It is remarkable that the characteristics ascribed by Śaṅkara and Gerhard to the canonical texts from an epistemological point of view are similar to a certain extent, namely the self-evidence, perspicuity, internal coherence and inherent authority of the canonical texts. The reliability of the knowledge that both canons contain is beyond any discussion and is maintained in order to demonstrate that these texts are a reliable source of knowledge. Consequently, they are an effective means to release.

The second similarity is the distinction between two kinds of knowledge that the canonical texts, according to Śaṅkara and Gerhard, contain. One might conclude that both Śaṅkara and Gerhard presuppose a so-called two-tier opinion of knowledge. They distinguish between general knowledge (about Brahman / God) on the one hand and salvific knowledge (of Brahman / God) on the other.

‘General knowledge’ refers to knowledge about Brahman and God, respectively. This kind of knowledge is accessible to all people who are not yet aware of the identity of one’s self and Brahman or do not yet realise that they are justified by faith. It can also be acquired by other means, which are, however, to be considered auxiliary. Consequently, human reason is only able to provide access to the general content of Scripture.

This knowledge is different from salvific knowledge, which means knowledge of Brahman or God and which causes release. In principle, ‘salvific knowledge’ is easy to acquire, for the canonical texts are perspicuous, so that they can effectuate release.

The third similarity is that both Śaṅkara and Gerhard admitted that, even though canonical texts are self-evident and perspicuous, explanation of the texts is necessary for effecting release. The explanation of the texts is given by someone who already possesses salvific knowledge and is able to transfer this knowledge. In this framework Śaṅkara introduces the teacher who explains the content of the
central passages of the Vedas to the ignorant pupil. Gerhard emphasises the role of the Spirit, who is the author of the Scripture from a certain point of view and who illuminates one’s heart and intellect in order to make the content of Scripture understandable. One should note that the assistance of the teacher in Śaṅkara's thinking is actually almost always necessary, although in principle people are able to acquire release at once. Gerhard even states that Scripture cannot be understood at all without the assistance of the Spirit.

The role of the teacher as well as the role of the Spirit are elements that allow means other than canonical texts in by the backdoor as means for obtaining release. This is another proof of the limitation of their own thesis that canonical texts are the exclusive means of release.

The fourth similarity is the reason why certain means, other than those of hearing or reading the canonical texts, are necessary to allow people to understand the meaning of these texts. There are factors that cause the canonical texts to be misunderstood by those who hear or read the texts and therefore impede release. The misunderstanding of the texts is, according to Śaṅkara, caused by (the influence of) ignorance, i.e. the impossibility of understanding that Brahman and the self are identical. This ignorance is inherent to all people. According to Gerhard, this misunderstanding stems from the darkness of the human heart and intellect. In both situations this ‘ignorance’ is caused by a ‘lack’ in those people who either hear or read the texts. Both Śaṅkara and Gerhard admit that canonical texts contain difficult passages. However, this difficulty is not the reason that they are misunderstood or misinterpreted.

In conclusion, both assume that the canonical texts contain valid knowledge of Brahman or God. This assumption indicates the limitation of Śaṅkara’s and Gerhard’s claim: even though this release is often not effectuated immediately and assistance is needed to understand the texts, these texts should be regarded as the only means of release. Of course, if this assumption is refuted, the claim itself is refuted.

Although Brahman and God are not part of the empirical reality, general knowledge of them can be acquired by means of the rational argumentation that is
used to explain the texts. The salvific knowledge that causes final release is, however, beyond human influence.

12.1.4 Dissimilarities
Here we will look at the differences between Śaṅkara’s and Gerhard’s arguments to defend the claim that canonical texts are the only means that cause release.

The first dissimilarity is the answer to the question why people do not immediately grasp the salvific knowledge contained in the canonical texts.

Śaṅkara and Gerhard have to deal with the question of why many people are not released at all, despite their view that everyone can be saved by means of the knowledge provided by canonical texts. According to Śaṅkara, the most important reasons why someone is not immediately released after having heard the texts are ignorance and false perception of the reality. Both are inherent to people. Similarly, according to Gerhard, people are not released because of the darkness of their hearts and intellect. This darkness is inherent to people and must be attributed to original sin.

Gerhard differs from Śaṅkara by arguing that it is actually possible for people to choose to refuse the salvation offered by God to all people. Consequently, it is their own choice to remain in darkness and not to accept salvation. The choice of people to refuse salvation does not come to the fore in Śaṅkara’s philosophy. Understanding the identity of Brahman and the Self is not a choice that could be made; it simply happens. Either one grasps the identity of Brahman and the Self, or one does not. Moreover, Śaṅkara and Gerhard differ in their view of what happens to people after being released. Śaṅkara argues that being aware of the identity of the Brahman and the self causes the cessation of transmigration. According to Gerhard, having accepted God’s grace implies that someone’s behaviour is changed due to the influence of God’s Spirit. After death, one goes to heaven.

The second dissimilarity is the relation between the canonical texts and the reality in which people live.

In Śaṅkara’s opinion, people live in a reality which they perceive in a false way. The Vedas neither refer to nor ‘guide’ people to a reality that is different from
the one they already know. Rather, the Vedas remove the veil of ignorance in order to show that it is the very same reality but now seen in a different way and from a different perspective, namely the identity of the Brahman and the self. Exactly because the Vedas are part of the ‘false’ reality in which people live, they are effective in causing the right knowledge. The texts can be understood by people because they contain ‘human’ language.

Gerhard assumes that Scripture is not part of the reality in which people live and which is characterised by sin. It is precisely because Scripture is not influenced by sin that it is able to cause salvation. This difference is an important element in Gerhard’s defence of his claim that salvation is possible only by means of Scripture. Gerhard wants to emphasise that people cannot release themselves by means of their own thoughts or by ‘human’ inventions or products (which Scripture would be if it was part of and even identical with human reality). The Spirit, who is the author of Scripture, is the connection between the reality to which Scripture refers and the reality in which people live.

The third dissimilarity is the necessity of auxiliary means in order to be certain that the canonical texts are understood properly.

Śaṅkara argues that people will be released immediately the moment they understand the texts and the identity of Brahman and the self. Only if they truly do not understand the texts can they use auxiliary means. In this framework he also introduces the idea of instruction by a special teacher, whose task is to instruct those who are not yet released and to show them the way to release. The teacher is able to do so because he himself is already released. His teachings do not coincide with the Vedas nor is he inextricably bound to the Vedas. Repetition and contemplation of the texts are also mentioned as important auxiliary means for understanding them. All these means, however, do not effectuate release themselves nor are they absolutely necessary for acquiring valid knowledge. Rather, they provide general knowledge of the Vedas instead of the salvific knowledge of the identity between Brahman and the self that is needed.

Gerhard admits openly that people are often not converted immediately after reading the texts. This can be derived from the sequence of subjects in his theological exposures in LT. For immediately after stating that it is only by means of
Scripture that one can be saved, he explains the important role of the Spirit. He even claims that the effectivity of the Spirit and the Scripture with regard to salvation are inextricably bound, i.e. the role of the Spirit in effectuating salvation is not to be separated from Scripture. Without the illumination by the Spirit, salvation is not at all possible.

In short, it is clear that, in addition to the canonical texts themselves, both Śaṅkara and Gerhard accept other auxiliary means as causes of release. Both are forced to admit that often release does not take place immediately after the canonical texts are heard or read. The difference between Śaṅkara and Gerhard is the importance ascribed to these auxiliary means. Śaṅkara argues that the hearing of canonical texts should be effective enough to cause release. However, other means such as the teacher’s instruction or contemplation or ritual acts are actually necessary to understand the meaning of a sentence such as ‘you are that.’ If people are not released immediately after having been engaged with the texts for a long time, other means should be used to become aware of the identity of the self and Brahman. Gerhard does not regard the explanatory role of the Spirit as an auxiliary means at all. Rather, he defines this role as indissolubly connected to the texts and inherent to them. One cannot separate Scripture and the Spirit, for the Spirit is the author of Scripture and therefore its best teacher and interpreter. Yet the proper sequence is that the words of Scripture enter the heart first and the Spirit comes into play an instant afterwards.

In conclusion, we found three dissimilarities between Śaṅkara and Gerhard. First, according to Śaṅkara, ignorance and the false perception of the reality impede release. According to Gerhard, that people are not released is because of the darkness of the heart and the intellect. This darkness is inherent to people; it is part of human nature. However, in contrast to Śaṅkara, Gerhard states that the choice to remain in darkness and to refuse salvation is one’s own. Śaṅkara’s view disallows such a choice, for the identity of the self and Brahman is realised either immediately or in the future.

Second, in Śaṅkara’s view the Vedas do not refer to a completely different reality than the one in which people live. Rather, the Vedas remove ignorance and demonstrate the false perception of reality that impede release. Gerhard argues that
Scripture is not influenced by sin like the reality in which people live. If Scripture is part of the human, sinful world, it would not be effective in causing release.

Third, Śaṅkara argues that it is possible to be released immediately after having understood the identity of the self and Brahman. However, other means such as the assistance of a teacher, repetition of the texts or meditation and sacrifices are useful for being released. These means are necessary if the texts are not immediately understood. Gerhard, however, does not deny the close relation between the role of the Spirit and the understanding of the canonical texts. Scripture cannot be understood without the assistance of the Spirit. Consequently, release can not be reached.

12.2 The Line of Argumentation in Maṇḍana and Rahtmann

12.2.1 Maṇḍana
Maṇḍana assumes that only words and sentences that exhort one to act are able to give knowledge of something. The immediate knowledge of Brahman, which leads to release, can be effectuated only through ritual acts and continuous meditation. These means supply the general knowledge about Brahman derived from the Vedas. His line of argumentation is as follows.

1. Brahman is pure knowledge and free of diversity. It is experienced as bliss (ānanda), which one cannot describe only in negative terms, such as the cessation of suffering. Rather, bliss is the full experience of a situation of happiness in Brahman. The individual self, however, is characterised as diverse (or dual) and is defiled by ignorance. To become truly identical with Brahman this ignorance must be destroyed. However, release is not acquired at the same moment as salvific knowledge is attained. First, the remnants of dharma should be destroyed. The removal of ignorance proceeds gradually.

2. The means to knowledge of Brahman, such as hearing, reflecting and continuously meditating on the texts, are characterised by diversity or duality. However, knowledge of Brahman itself, which is the final goal of these means, is free of diversity. The fact that a diverse means of knowledge aims at
something free of diversity (Brahman) is not inconsistent, for the diversity has already disappeared the moment one has knowledge of non-diversity.

3. Knowledge by means of the word does not arise in the same way as knowledge by means of direct sense perception. For the word by which knowledge arises can be used only if one is conscious of the meaning of the word. However, the use of senses, such as the eyes, is generally unconscious. One learns the meaning of words from injunctions to act and also from descriptions of a situation. The word can only give us knowledge derived from the meaning of the words in one single sentence.

4. Knowledge of Brahman that has arisen from revelatory sentences (such as the Vedas) is not enough to cause release. Rather, an immediate knowledge (pratyakṣam jñānam) of Brahman is needed. Immediate knowledge does not depend on the different elements of a sentence and thus on the context of the words in a sentence. Moreover, it is devoid of all diversity. The immediate knowledge of Brahman lies ‘beyond the word’ (śabdaparokṣatva).\(^1\)

5. The Vedas as a means of knowledge give general knowledge and not immediate knowledge of Brahman. Thus, the Vedas are only a means of superficial knowledge and unable to cause release. The Vedas can only direct us towards release (or well-being, as Maṇḍana calls it), but they cannot reveal it to us. In order to acknowledge and prove the knowledge of the Vedas direct perception is needed, for perception has a direct connection with the object, viz. Brahman, that words do not have. To transform the general knowledge from the Vedas into immediate knowledge of Brahman, ritual acts and continuous meditation (upāsana) are required. Only in this way will one be able to elevate oneself beyond the characteristics of transmigration.

6. Ignorance ceases through hearing, reflecting and continuous meditation and other means such as chastity. Continuous meditation presupposes hearing and reflecting and is aimed at the self (ātman). This kind of meditation plays an important role in attaining the highest state of well-being. The emphasis on meditation stresses the individual activity of the person who is not yet released.

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\(^1\) Cf. Vetter, 1969, 18.
In conclusion, Śaṅkarā argued that the words of the sentence ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asi) can be understood by reading the context of this sentence. Moreover, he stated that the Vedas (despite the fact that they are part of a reality characterised by ignorance) are the exclusive means of valid knowledge of Brahmān. Both arguments are criticised by Maṇḍana. In Maṇḍana’s opinion, the fact that the Vedas consist of words that can only give information about things but not direct perception of them is reason enough to reject the Vedas as a valid means of knowledge at all.

12.2.2 Rahtmann

Rahtmann, Gerhard’s opponent, argues that Scripture is not the cause of conversion nor is it effective with regard to salvation. For Scripture is a human product and only an external sign of God’s Word. It is the Spirit who enters the heart even before Scripture and who is the ultimate cause of salvation. In this way Rahtmann emphasises that the cause of salvation is God and not the human being herself. His line of argumentation is as follows.

1. Rahtmann distinguishes between an internal and an external word: the first is spoken by God in the human heart by means of the Spirit; the latter is the Word written down in letters. Scripture is not the real word of God but only a testimony of that word. Actually, it is a created word, but it is special because it emanates from the inspiration of the Spirit. Scripture is not able to guide people to conversion; it is useful only to those who do not yet believe, because it teaches about God’s will and acts in history.

2. Since the Spirit enters the heart before Scripture does, it is the Spirit that is the starting point of conversion. Consequently, the effectivity of Scripture depends on the illumination by the Spirit, without whom we are not able to understand Scripture in a salvific way.

3. ‘Knowledge’ depends on the human will: if one does not want or desire to know something, one will never attempt to understand it. The desire to know God’s Word is caused by God who gives the human being a new will and a new heart. This is done through internal grace, which must work in the heart before God’s Word is accepted.

4. Epistemologically, knowledge is obtained if the intellect adapts to the matter to be known. This implies that both Scripture (i.e. the matter to be known) and
the intellect must be changed under the influence of the Spirit so that they will be adapted. In order to achieve this adaptation, two different kinds of light are needed. The first light is the principal light, called the *gratia praeveniens*, which is Christ. This principal light works in the hearts of people as well as in Scripture. In this way the second light can be found, i.e. the instrumental light that Scripture inherently possesses and that is intensified by the Spirit.

5. The external word is not connected with the internal meaning, which lies beyond the words. There is a difference between the words that are written in Scripture (*signum*) and the matters to which the words in Scripture (*signatum*) refer. They are combined only in the heart of the believer.

6. The power of conversion belongs only to God and his own eternal Word and not to the created word, Scripture. Insofar as Scripture is an external, created word, it is not able to effect conversion and it does not lead to conversion nor salvation.

In conclusion, Rahtmann does not deny the importance of God’s Word, but he does emphasise that the illumination of the Spirit is always necessary before his Word can be effective. Rahtmann thus reverses Gerhard’s order, who claims that the Spirit illuminates the heart after one has read Scripture.

In Rahtmann’s view, the function of Scripture is to describe God’s being and will and the duties of Christians, to guide them, to instruct people about these duties and to refer to them through words and tokens. Scripture must do the same regarding faith, love and hope. The second task of Scripture is to bring those things into the heart of people after they have been illuminated by the Spirit.

Rahtmann rejects especially the identity between God’s Word and Scripture. He maintains that one acquires general knowledge about God through Scripture. Only if one deliberately chooses to believe and to accept God’s grace and if the illumination of one’s intellect and one’s heart by the Spirit precedes the reading of Scripture will this knowledge lead to salvation.
12.2.3 Similarities in Argumentation

In this section we will search for similarities in the arguments that are used by both Maṇḍana and Rahtmann to reject the claims of the opposing views that canonical texts are the only means that provide people with valid knowledge of Brahman or God and are thus the only means for finding release.

First, both Maṇḍana and Rahtmann reject the canonical texts as a means of salvific knowledge of Brahman or God. Both argue that these texts can provide only general knowledge about Brahman and God. They do not contain salvific knowledge, i.e. valid knowledge.

According to Maṇḍana, Brahman cannot be the object of knowledge that is derived from revelatory statements. Because the Vedas only contain such statements, in which the nature of Brahman is revealed, they do not give us immediate knowledge of Brahman (pratyaksam jñānam), but only knowledge about Brahman. Immediate knowledge, which causes the removal of our ignorance and thus effectuates release, must be acquired by ritual acts and continuous meditation (upāsana). To acknowledge and prove the knowledge of the Vedas, direct perception is needed, for perception has a direct connection with the object, viz. Brahman, that words do not. In conclusion, one should add continuous meditation and ritual acts to the knowledge that has originated from the revelation. Maṇḍana does not deny the origin of the Vedas in Brahman but argues that the Vedas will never lead to the direct perception of Brahman.

Rahtmann defines the Bible as being created and having a human nature, for it has been written down by people. He also criticises Gerhard’s identification of the Bible with God’s Word, for the human being is then made the starting point of conversion. The ‘external’ words of the Bible do not contain a salvific meaning: they provide only general knowledge about God. The ‘internal meaning’ of words that refer to God is beyond the words themselves. Due to its character as external testimony of God’s essence and will, Scripture’s effectivity is limited, for Scripture is not able to cause salvation.

Second, both Maṇḍana and Rahtmann accept a means for effecting release that is regarded as an auxiliary means by their respective opponents.
Maṇḍana argues that, in addition to the general knowledge derived from the Vedas, other means are necessary to acquire immediate knowledge in order to remove the false perception of a difference between Brahman and the self. This argument means a stronger emphasis on ritual actions and continuous meditation (upāsana). He states that one needs these two means to acquire immediate knowledge of Brahman. Maṇḍana regards continuous meditation especially as the ultimate means by which immediate knowledge of Brahman is acquired. However, in Śaṅkara’s theory contemplation (nididhyāsana) is part of the triad of hearing, reflecting on and contemplating the Vedas, which should be repeated in order to discover the true meaning of the Vedic words. Contemplation is a closer consideration of Brahman, revealed by these words. In contrast to Maṇḍana, Śaṅkara considers meditation (upāsana) as part of a prescribed ritual by which a certain goal (e.g. a state of well-being) should be realised. Thus, Śaṅkara regards it as a means for acquiring general knowledge about Brahman instead of salvific knowledge of Brahman.

Rahtmann gives much more attention to the role of the Spirit at the expense of the role of Scripture, although he does not deny the significance of Scripture as a means for acquiring knowledge about God. Rahtmann assumes that the Spirit precedes the Bible, which the Spirit has to do in order to illuminate the Bible’s salvific meaning as well as the human heart and intellect. The knowledge acquired from the Bible, however, is not salvific if the Spirit does not precede it. Gerhard never argues that the Spirit was of less value. He emphasises only that it is by means of Scripture alone that salvation must be acquired. Gerhard considers the work of the Spirit to be essential in the process of conversion and salvation. The work of the Spirit and Scripture cannot be separated from each other. Moreover, there is no difference in order between them. In Gerhard’s view, the work of the Spirit is inherent to that of Scripture. One could almost argue that Rahtmann’s view is the reverse of this: salvation comes through the Spirit, assisted by Scripture.

In conclusion, Maṇḍana and Rahtmann both argue that the Vedas and Scripture are not the only means for acquiring release and bringing the characteristics of duality and sin to one’s attention. The canonical texts contain only general knowledge about Brahman or God. However, release can be effected only through ritual actions and continuous meditation which put a stop to the characteristics of transmigration
(according to Maṇḍana) or if the illumination of the human intellect and heart by the Spirit has occurred first (according to Rahtmann). As a result, Maṇḍana and Rahtmann remove the basis of the thesis that canonical texts are effective in causing release.

Second, it is striking that the means which Maṇḍana and Rahtmann prefer, i.e. ritual acts, meditation or the illumination by the Spirit, are in turn regarded by them as much more important means for effecting release. In their view, other means, such as canonical texts, are auxiliary. Canonical texts are not the means of salvific knowledge. They should be regarded as necessary sources of general knowledge. The Vedas and Scripture only guide people halfway towards release. These texts that contain knowledge about Brahman or God are useful and necessary but not sufficient and effective enough to cause release.

However, the question remains as to whether the means to gain knowledge of a transcendent reality as indicated by Maṇḍana and Rahtmann are ‘more’ valid than the canonical texts. Are their ‘solutions’ to the problems to which they refer in Śaṅkara and Gerhard more easily defended and less exposed to criticism? Maṇḍana and Rahtmann both reject the validity of knowledge derived from canonical texts as salvific knowledge. Both assume that the means that they prefer are valid and reliable means of true knowledge of Brahman and God. However, exactly as both Śaṅkara and Gerhard point out in their criticism of their opponents, the validity of knowledge that is transferred through meditation (as Maṇḍana proposed) or through illumination of the Spirit (Rahtmann’s proposal), cannot be verified either. It cannot be proven whether the knowledge of Brahman or God that is acquired through meditation or illumination is valid knowledge that causes release or mere phantasy, daydreaming or ventriloquism. According to Śaṅkara and Gerhard, the advantage of texts as the basis of valid knowledge of a transcendent reality is undoubtedly that these texts can be analysed by rational argumentation.

12.2.4 Dissimilarities
The aim of this section is to look at the differences between Maṇḍana and Rahtmann with respect to the way in which they reject the exclusive role of canonical texts in relation to release. Are there perhaps different aspects in the line of argumentation of their opponents that they reject? In which way do they choose a different approach in pointing to ways in which one can be released other than by canonical texts?
The most important dissimilarity is, that although Maṇḍana and Rahtmann both deny that because of the invalidity of such knowledge canonical texts are not able to cause release and salvation, the elements in the arguments of Śaṅkara and Gerhard that they criticise are very different.

Maṇḍana rejects Śaṅkara’s arguments that the words of the Vedas are valid means of knowledge of Brahman. Thus Maṇḍana’s criticism is also directed at Śaṅkara’s epistemology. Maṇḍana denies the validity of knowledge from canonical texts, for the Vedas can only refer and guide to the state of bliss, i.e. the highest state of well-being (ānanda). Bliss is reached if we know Brahman’s own nature as it truly is, i.e. as pure knowledge. ‘Pure knowledge’ should be gained through continuous meditation. This ‘pure knowledge’ is identical with the discovery of Brahman. Meditation that takes ‘pure knowledge’ derived from the words of the Vedas leads to the direct perception of bliss. For this reason, mere listening to the Vedic texts can never be sufficient but must be supplemented by meditation. In this Maṇḍana agrees with the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā.

Rahtmann argues that canonical texts are unable to cause release especially because their origin is human. He wants to insure that release cannot be caused by a human factor but only by God. This contrasts with Maṇḍana, who does not deal with the question of the origin of the Vedas but with the opposition of knowledge and ignorance as well as with the problem of how immediate knowledge can be acquired. In his criticism Rahtmann elaborates especially on the metaphysical part of Gerhard’s argumentation that canonical texts are the only source of knowledge of God that cause salvation.

12.3 Tertium Comparationis

The analysis of the texts as well as the comparison between Śaṅkara and Gerhard on the one hand and Maṇḍana and Rahtmann on the other show the extents and limits of the claim that canonical texts are the sole cause of release. The comparison also demonstrates that the arguments as well as the solutions that were offered with regard to the problems in defending this relation against the opponents are not always similar. But one question remains unanswered: What is their motive in defending this claim?
Why is it so important to argue that only by canonical texts as a valid source of knowledge can release be acquired?

It seems that Śaṅkara chooses the Vedas as a means to release because he is impressed by the so-called ‘great words’ in the Vedas that proclaim the identity of Brahman and the self (ātman) such as ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asi, ChU VI, 8, 7). He considers such sentences to be the key to release. Once the meaning of such a sentence is understood, the false perception of reality is destroyed and, consequently, transmigration has ceased. Nothing more than the understanding of those imperative three words are necessary to be released. The liberating function of those three words are extended to the whole Vedas, i.e. by means of the Vedas release can be attained.

However, once it is established that release comes through knowledge, Śaṅkara has to deal with the problem that this special knowledge of the Vedas can be considered as liberating, only if the Vedas are considered a valid means of knowledge in the same way as direct sense perception. Thus he has to give the validity of knowledge derived from the Vedas an epistemological basis. Should the Vedas not meet the requirements of a valid means of knowledge, Śaṅkara’s thesis that one is able to attain release by means of knowledge from the Vedas will be considered nonsense.

Thus, the theme of Śaṅkara’s disputes with his opponents is more of an epistemological than a metaphysical nature. The most important question that Śaṅkara has to answer in the disputes is whether it is truly possible to consider the Vedas as a valid means of knowledge that provides us with valid knowledge in the same way as direct perception (pratyakṣa) does, even though Brahman cannot be grasped by sense perception.

To defend his thesis, Śaṅkara has to elaborate on the authority and effectivity of the Vedas as the only means of knowledge that can cause release. He accomplishes this task by giving his thesis a firm, epistemological basis to answer his philosophical opponents. Here USP XVIII is very important, for the combination of both rational argumentation and metaphysical knowledge in this passage turns out to be the key of the understanding of ‘you are that’ (tat tvam asi).

Since Brahman cannot be grasped by the human senses, Śaṅkara relies on the Vedas as the only valid means of knowledge that provide us with knowledge of Brahman and the identity of Brahman and the self. To those who do not immediately
understand the central passages of the Vedas, Śaṅkara adopts and adapts the old triad of hearing (śravaṇa), reflecting (manana) and contemplating (nididhyāsana). The knowledge that is derived from contemplation is not new. If ignorance means transmigration and thus suffering, then knowledge must be the means of release. However, by giving place in his commentaries to contemplation and ritual acts as purifying the heart so that it will be susceptible to the messages of the central passages of the Vedas, the radicalism of the claim that the Vedas are the only valid means of knowledge that causes release becomes weaker.

The fact that Śaṅkara emphasises the Vedas as a valid means of knowledge also explains the fact that the central point in the discussion between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana is the validity of the Vedas as a means of knowledge of Brahman. In Śaṅkara’s opinion, the Vedas provide valid knowledge that can be supplied by contemplation and rituals, if necessary. That means that contemplation and rituals should be used only if the sudden awareness (anubhava) of the identity of the self and Brahman does not immediately occur. In Maṇḍana’s opinion, it is almost exactly the opposite, for he argues that it is necessary to perform continuous meditation (upāsana) after having heard the words of the Vedas. Only then the remaining effects of transmigration can be stopped.

Why is the role of Scripture so important to Gerhard that it is the basis of his theology with regard to salvation? He is overwhelmed by the grace of God who wants everyone to be saved, and therefore, gave his Word to people so they could understand that he wants to save them. Thus, Gerhard wants to insure that only God causes conversion and that humans themselves cannot have any part in effecting their salvation. He is anxious to avoid the idea that salvation can be ascribed to human influence. Thus, he founds the authority of the Scripture on the theological basis of the intrinsic authority of Scripture as God’s Word as well as on the epistemological basis of Aristotelianism. He maintains that only by means of Scripture is one converted, for the power to do so is part of Scripture’s essence. God’s grace, which has been given to all, is, however, not accepted by everyone, for, according to Gerhard, the human heart is depraved after the fall. Thus, one needs the aid of Scripture connected with the Spirit to find the way to God. Moreover, people are often stubborn and deliberately choose to reject God’s
grace. Yet Scripture is a means of conversion and should be regarded as an effective, active and powerful instrument with regard to salvation.

In his debate with Rahtmann Gerhard reinforces his arguments by paying more attention to the role of the Spirit. He connects God’s Word inseparably with the Spirit who inspired the authors of Scripture. According to Gerhard, the Spirit also illuminates the human heart and intellect to prepare it for understanding the meaning of important passages in Scripture. Gerhard, namely, fears that a separation between the effectivity of the Spirit and the effectivity of Scripture will diminish the exclusive role of the Word as the only cause of salvation.

Is there a third term of comparison (*tertium comparationis*) in the analysis of the similarities as well as in the dissimilarities of Śaṅkara and Gerhard? Yes indeed. This third point is their search for a valid source that contains valid, salvific knowledge of Brahman or God that effectuates release. The fact that there are also important dissimilarities does not diminish this.

This search for a valid means of knowledge that is related to a reality characterised by release and is also able to cause release throws new light on the comparison between Śaṅkara and Gerhard. It demonstrates that both seem to share more than simply some arguments defending a similar claim.

First, they share a motive that lies beyond their theories. Both want to be certain that the way in which release can be achieved is a valid and reliable way instead of a hunt after daydreams or phantasies. Second, they are eager to demonstrate that everyone who thoroughly reads and listens to the canonical texts that contain liberating knowledge of Brahman or God can indeed be released. Third, they state that it is, in fact, sufficient to read or listen to the texts instead of supplying this by other acts. The words of the texts are effective enough to cause release if their meaning is understood. Nothing else is needed. Fourth, release is not something that is caused by one’s actions or tasks that need to be performed. Rather, release is something that suddenly occurs. Being aware of the true identity of the self and Brahman or believing in God’s saving grace is a sudden breakthrough that simply takes place. In the end, this experience is not dependent on one’s own decisions or choices or knowledge but on an unexpected ‘flash’ from ‘the other side.’
At first glance it seems that Śaṅkara and Gerhard are completely at odds to Maṇḍana and Rahtmann. Of course, they are opponents indeed in that they view the nature of their respective canonical texts as well as the effectivity of the texts to stop the remnants of transmigration or sin in a completely different way. It is remarkable that despite this important difference our analysis and comparison show that the motives of Maṇḍana and Rahtmann are also, in fact, similar to those of Śaṅkara and Gerhard, namely the search for means to be released by means of valid knowledge. In conclusion, the borderline between ‘true’ and ‘right’ on the one hand and ‘heretical’ or ‘false’ on the other is not as clear as is often stated in disputes.
13 Conclusion

The central question was how the claim can be made that human beings can obtain release only by means of the canonical texts as a source of salvific knowledge. By investigating the arguments that are used to defend the exclusivity of canonical texts as a source of knowledge that causes release we discovered that it has been useful and enlightening to compare two very different religious traditions. The four questions that were used to analyse the texts of Śaṅkara and Gerhard were useful indeed to this end.

The investigation yielded meaningful results. First, in Śaṅkara’s and Gerhard’s theories there are similar arguments and even a structure of argumentation that is more or less correspondent. The arguments of both in defending the claim of the exclusive role of canonical texts run parallel to each other to a great extent. The most important similarity is that both Śaṅkara and Gerhard found the knowledge that is derived from the respective canonical texts to be sufficient and effective to cause release.

Second, through the analysis of Śaṅkara and Gerhard on the one hand and of Maṇḍana and Rahtmann on the other one can see that the essence of the claim regarding the exclusive role of canonical texts concerning release is the close connection between the concepts of canonical texts, release and knowledge. If one of these three concepts is confuted and, consequently, the relation between the concepts is questioned (e.g. canonical texts do not cause release but other means are needed instead) the claim that only these texts and the knowledge derived from them can cause release is completely undermined.

Third, the comparison demonstrated that the thesis of whether it is truly by means of reliable knowledge derived from canonical texts alone that release is possible requires a fundamental epistemological foundation to justify the view that words are indeed a reliable source of knowledge of something or someone beyond the reach of human senses and, moreover, are effective in causing release.

The most important condition that one has to fulfil to defend this thesis successfully is to demonstrate that the texts are able to provide valid knowledge of a reality that is not perceivable by the senses in the same way as sense perception, which gives us valid knowledge of perceivable reality. The connection between words and
their meaning plays an important role in this framework. If one assumes that the meaning of the words lies beyond the words themselves (as is done by Maṇḍana and Rahtmann), it is not possible to maintain that words are able to provide salvific knowledge of Brahman and God, respectively. Other means that cause release (such as ritual acts or continuous meditation or the influence of the Spirit) can be accepted only insofar they also provide reliable knowledge.

Fourth, the solutions that Maṇḍana and Rahtmann bring to the fore indicate that the claim that release can be acquired only by means of canonical texts is difficult to defend. If we look very carefully at the texts of Śaṅkara and Gerhard we have to conclude that their claims of the exclusivity of canonical texts regarding release are not as strong as they always suggest. This is more evident in Gerhard, who time and again argues that God wants to confer salvation by means of his Word but that the effectivity of the Word regarding salvation is always attached to the effectivity of the Spirit. In his view, one cannot separate the Word from the Spirit. Śaṅkara states radically that only by means of the central passages of the Vedas does the awareness of the identity of Brahman and the self (anubhava) arise and, consequently, release. It is, however, doubtful whether this radicalism is not slightly modified by his admitting that most people are not immediately released but need to practice the traditional triad of hearing, reflection and contemplation.

Even though the canonical texts themselves may contain passages that give rise to the idea that they are the only means that effectuate release, this claim is to be criticized. In general, people are not suddenly released only by means of reading, hearing or contemplating the content of these texts. In almost all situations they need, in one way or another, an additional factor, e.g. an interpreter, a preparation of the heart or the mind by the author of the texts.

Fifth, it is evident, that the authority and effectivity of the canonical texts regarding release are not only a matter of a thorough-going epistemology. Another, more subjective, element should be taken into account as well. The authority and effectivity of the texts with regard to release are claimed by the texts themselves. However, authority will also be given to the texts by the people who either hear or read these texts. If they feel addressed and supported in their faith, they will more easily regard
the texts as liberating in themselves. The opposite, however, is just as true: many people regard the texts as simply ‘texts giving information about a reality’ without feeling addressed or urged to change their lives. To them, the texts are merely human words, just as valuable as any other collection of texts but not at all salvific.

The fact that one cannot hold on to the exclusivity of the texts with regard to release does not diminish the value or authority of the texts with regard to release: for all four thinkers it is a moot point that these texts have a special meaning of their own. Although additional factors might be necessary to acquire release, the canonical texts are essential and play an important, necessary role regarding knowledge of Brahman and God respectively, even though their exclusive character and effectivity to effect release cannot be successfully maintained.

The question arises whether these conclusions could not have been drawn if we had only examined Śaṅkara (and Maṇḍana) or Gerhard (and Rahtmann). There are two points which clearly show the advantage of a comparison, in my view. These were drawn by meticulously analysing the texts and comparing the answers to the central question of investigation. They also indicate that the answers have indeed a plausible rationale in themselves.

First, a fundamental epistemological foundation is required to justify the view that words are indeed a reliable source of knowledge of something or someone beyond the reach of human senses and, moreover, are effective in causing release. Second, the relation between the concepts of canonical texts, release and knowledge is of crucial importance to maintain the exclusivity of the texts as a means of release.

Moreover, there is one unexpected result from the present comparative investigation that have made the comparison enlightening indeed. As was already mentioned before, all four thinkers (Śaṅkara, Maṇḍana, Gerhard and Rahtmann) try to achieve the same goal: they search for a means that is related immediately to the salvific reality of Brahman or God, respectively, and which is able to cross the borderline between this salvific reality and the reality in which people experience pain, suffering, love and hope for a better future. All four use knowledge in one way or another as a means for establishing the relation between humankind and Brahman or God who are beyond the reach of the intellect. Rational knowledge can only partly establish the validity of the
existence of Brahman of God. In the end, however, it is by such a ‘leap of faith’, as it 
could be called, that one truly believes this one way to salvation to be the only way. It 
is not possible to effect release by human efforts, at least not according to Śaṅkara and 
Gerhard. Rather, release is an experience that suddenly and unexpectedly happens. Of 
course, the nature of such salvific knowledge (Brahman or God) as well as the way in 
which it is acquired (canonical texts, ritual acts and continuous meditation or the 
influence of the Spirit) are different according to the defendants of the claim and their 
opponents. However, that does not lessen the value of this conclusion. Finally, it is not 
release itself that is questioned but rather the way and the means to release that are 
under attack.

The striking similarities that were traced underline the importance of an eidetic point 
of view before jumping to the conclusion that the differences between either people or 
religious convictions are too diverging to be bridged. Moreover, one should conclude 
that a careful investigation of the same central question in other different traditions can 
lead to more analogies.

The present investigation was a rather theoretical task of carefully reading texts in 
search for similarities and differences. But what does this mean in practice? In my 
view, it should be judged as positive that, despite all differences, there are important 
similarities in two religious traditions that seem so utterly different at first. The 
investigation has led to a deeper understanding of the function and the role of 
canonical texts in religious traditions. There are indeed important elements that are 
shared by widely divergent religious traditions which enable representatives of these 
traditions to encounter and mutually understand each other. E.g. Śaṅkara and Gerhard 
and their opponents all share the quest for valid knowledge of a transcendent reality.

Whereas currently the differences between people and traditions are stressed 
much more than the similarities, the result of this investigation should be an injunction 
to make the most of the possibility of religious dialogue. The striking similarities that 
were traced could function as the starting point for understanding and respecting one 
another. Further scholarly investigation in other religions in which canonical texts play 
a very important role should therefore be stimulated. This could result in a more 
urgent undertaking of reading each other’s canonical texts together and sharing
experiences. After all, Rudyard Kipling in his famous “Ballad of East and West” was right:

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
tho’ they come from the ends of the earth!²

Samenvatting van het proefschrift

In dit proefschrift worden de grenzen en de reikwijdte onderzocht van de stelling dat alleen canonieke teksten heil veroorzaken, omdat zij de enige bron zijn waardoor kennis van een transcendentale werkelijkheid kan worden verkregen. In de studie besteden we aandacht aan vier denkers: de Advaita Vedânta filosoof Śaṅkara (8e eeuw CE) en de lutherse theoloog Johann Gerhard (1582 - 1637) en hun tegenstanders, Mañḍana (ca 700 CE) en Hermann Rahtmann (1585 - 1628).

Van hen analyseren we de belangrijkste teksten die vanuit verschillende invalshoeken de relatie tussen canonieke teksten en heil beschrijven. Dit gebeurt aan de hand van vier vragen:

(1) hoe wordt ‘heil’ gedefinieerd en wat is de relatie tussen heil en kennis;
(2) wat is de relatie tussen canonieke teksten en heil;
(3) welke rol spelen rede en rationele argumentatie in het verkrijgen van kennis die tot heil leidt;
(4) aan welke voorwaarden is het verkrijgen van heil gebonden en welke factoren verhinderen het verkrijgen van heil?

De antwoorden op deze vragen dienen als middel voor een vergelijking tussen de argumenten die door Śaṅkara en Gerhard gebruikt worden om hun visie op de exclusieve relatie tussen canonieke teksten en heil te verdedigen.

Het is duidelijk dat deze twee denkers twee zeer verschillende religieuze tradities vertegenwoordigen. Juist omdat zij zo verschillend zijn is het van belang om te onderzoeken of identieke vraagstellingen ook leiden tot antwoorden die onderling te vergelijken zijn en analoge elementen opleveren. Met andere woorden: is er een intrinsieke wetmatigheid te ontdekken in het verdedigen van het gezag en de effectiviteit van canonieke teksten en zijn de problemen waar men tegenaan loopt als ook de oplossingen die men geeft vergelijkelijkbaar?
DEEL I: ŠAṆKARA

In deel I besteedden we aandacht aan Šaṅkara en zijn theorie over de verhouding tussen de Vedas en bevrijding. In hoofdstuk 1 beschreven we de Nyāya, de Mīmāṃsā en de Yoga, drie filosofische scholen die elk elementen bevatten die van invloed zijn geweest op Šaṅkara's denken. De hoofdstukken 2 en 3 waren gewijd aan teksten van Šaṅkara, die vanuit diverse invalshoeken de relatie tussen de Vedas en bevrijding schetsen. De teksten werden geanalyseerd aan de hand van de vier vragen die in de inleiding opgesteld waren. Deze teksten zijn: UpadeśasāhasrīPadyabandha (USP) XVII en XVIII, UpadeśasāhasrīGadyabandha (USG) I en van BrahmaSūtraBhāṣya (BSŪBh) de inleiding, I, 1, 1 - 4 en IV, 1, 1 - 2. In hoofdstuk 4 stond Brahmasiddhi I (BSI) centraal, een tekst van de Advaitin Maṇḍana (ca. 700 CE), die op een aantal fundamentele punten van Šaṅkara afwijkt. Hoofdstuk 5 bevatte de conclusie.

Door analyse van de teksten zijn we een belangrijke tendens in zijn werken op het spoor gekomen. Šaṅkara definieert bevrijding (mokṣa) in deze teksten vooral in relatie tot kennis (vidyā) enerzijds en onwetendheid (avidyā) anderzijds. ‘Kennis’ is geen rationeel verkregen kennis, maar eerder een intuitieve kennis, die wordt beschouwd als de oorzaak van bevrijding. ‘Juiste kennis’ is het zich bewust zijn van de identiteit van het (eigen) zelf (atman) en Brahman. ‘Onwetendheid’, de tegenpool van kennis, manifesteert zich onder andere in projectie van attributen van het zelf op Brahman (het Zelf). Hierdoor beseft men evenmin dat de werkelijkheid foutief waargenomen wordt, en dat mensen feitelijk niet lijden maar eigenlijk al bevrijd zijn. Onwetendheid is één van de belangrijkste oorzaken van transmigratie (samsāra), het tegenovergestelde van bevrijding.

Kennis die leidt tot bevrijding wordt met name verkregen uit de Vedas. Šaṅkara kiest voor de Vedas als kenmiddel omdat de Vedas geen oorsprong in de tijd hebben. Sommige ‘grote woorden’ uit de Vedas, zoals “dat ben jij” (tat tvam āsi, CHU 6, 8, 7) spelen een zeer belangrijke rol.

Wie niet direct de betekenis van passages uit de Vedas begrijpt moet kennis opdoen via het horen (śravana) van dergelijke teksten, het reflecteren daarop (manana) en het contempleren erover (nididhyāsana). Hierbij wordt vaak gebruik gemaakt van middelen van rationele argumentatie zoals metaforisch taalgebruik, inductie, deductie en vergelijking. In sommige teksten van Šaṅkara wordt rationele
argumentatie zeer positief beoordeeld, terwijl in andere teksten hieraan nauwelijks enige waarde wordt toegekend. Deze middelen zijn echter niet van doorslaggevend belang bij het bereiken van de intuïtieve kennis, die de oorzaak van bevrijding is.

Juiste kennis van Brahman is de belangrijkste factor bij het bereiken van heil. Onwetendheid is in het algemeen de belangrijkste oorzaak van het voortbestaan van transmigratie. Maar er zijn ook nog andere factoren die dit heil verhinderen, zoals rituele handelingen en meditatie, en andere vormen waarin onwetendheid zich uit, zoals foutieve perceptie van de werkelijkheid en het verlangen naar genot. Rituele handelingen en meditatie zijn alleen van belang als voorbereiding op het heil. Ze zijn echter contraproducentief zodra men verwacht dat zij bevrijding veroorzaken.

Uit het vergelijken van de antwoorden op de vier analyse-vragen treden er diverse verschillen tussen Śaṅkara en Maṇḍana op de voorgrond. Het eerste verschil betreft de positie van de Vedas. Śaṅkara benadert deze in veel teksten als de enige bron van kennis van Brahman en als enig middel tot bevrijding. Door de Vedas te bereflexteren veroorzaken deze bevrijding. Maṇḍana beschouwt de Vedas echter slechts als een bron van algemene kennis over Brahman, die geen bevrijding veroorzaken. Dergelijke kennis moet worden aangevuld en verbeterd met andere middelen, zoals voortdurende meditatie en rituele handelingen.


Het derde verschil betreft de functie en het doel van herhaling. Herhaling betekent voor Śaṅkara herhaling van het juiste inzicht door de leraar betreffende de verhouding tussen Brahman en het zelf, zolang men nog niet bevrijd was. Doel van de herhaling is het versnellen van het moment van bevrijding. Bij Maṇḍana is herhaling van de juiste kennis noodzakelijk om de onwetendheid te verwijderen door het ‘neutraliseren’ van de invloed van transmigratie. Deze herhaling geschiedt door de mens die bevrijd wil worden, en niet door een leraar.


[1] Het begrip ‘bevrijding’ wordt in veel teksten op twee manieren gedefinieerd. Allereerst is bevrijding het bezitten van kennis van de identiteit van Brahman en het zelf, waarbij ook een foute perceptie van de realiteit van belang is. Onwetendheid, de oorzaak van een foute perceptie, dient derhalve plaats te maken voor kennis. Ten tweede is bevrijding het tegenovergestelde van transmigratie. Men is zich niet bewust van het feit dat er geen transmigratie bestaat en dat er feitelijk dus al bevrijding is. De illusie van transmigratie wordt veroorzaakt en in stand gehouden door onwetendheid. Deze twee definities vullen elkaar aan, en zijn niet tegengesteld.

[2] De aard van de Vedas brengt met zich mee, dat er behalve de Vedas geen enkel ander middel nodig is om geldige kennis omtrent de identiteit van Brahman en het zelf te verkrijgen. De Vedas dienen allereerst gehoord te worden. Indien dat niet voldoende is, is het aan te bevelen over de belangrijkste passages te reflecteren en erover te contempleren. Befrijding vindt plaats op het moment dat de kennis omtrent de identiteit van het zelf met Brahman verworven is.

DEEL II: JOHANN GERHARD (1582 - 1637)

Deel II is gewijd aan Johann Gerhard, een luthers theoloog uit de derde generatie van de Reformatie. In hoofdstuk 6 werd een inleiding gegeven op het filosofisch denkkader waarin Johann Gerhard zijn *Loci Theologici* (LT) heeft ingebed. De hoofdstukken 7 en 8 waren gewijd aan de analyse van belangrijke teksten van Gerhard die een relatie hebben tot de diverse aspecten van de bijbel in relatie tot het heil: LT I de inleiding (*Prooemium*) en loc I; LT II loc VII, c VII; LT III loc XVI, c I; LT VI loc XXIII c VI; *Tractatus de legitima Scripturae sacrae interpretatione* (Tr) en *Methodus Studii theologici* (MST). Deze teksten werden geanalyseerd aan de hand van de vier vragen die in de inleiding werden genoemd. In hoofdstuk 9 besteedden we aandacht aan Hermann Rahtmann, een predikant uit Dantzig, die wees op het gevaar van de ‘dode letter’ tegenover de inspiratie door de Geest. Hoofdstuk 10 vormde de conclusie van dit deel.


In de teksten komt sterk naar voren dat God alleen heil bewerkt door het Woord, en niet los daarvan (hoewel Hij daartoe wel in staat is). De Schrift is identiek met het Woord van God en bezit absoluut gezag. Het doel van de Schrift is het verschaffen van kennis van God, nl. van zijn wezen en wil. De Schrift is geen dode letter, maar is effectief om heil en bekeering te bewerken. Buiten de Schrift om is er voor het heil ook niets anders nodig, want de Schrift is perfect. Om de mens kennis van God te geven, is de Schrift helder. Dat de Schrift niet begrepen wordt, ligt aan ons verstand dat verduisterd is en door de Geest verlicht moet worden.
De menselijke intellectuele vermogens zijn beperkt. Men kan niet met behulp van de menselijke rede de goddelijke mysteries ontrafelen. De verlichting van de Geest is daarvoor noodzakelijk. De rede verschaf ons alleen algemene kennis over God, maar geen heils kennis van God. De rol van de filosofie ten opzichte van de theologie is dan ook in dezelfde mate beperkt als de rol van rede ten opzichte van de Geest.

Het heil is voor iedereen bestemd, maar niet iedereen accepteert het. Voor het heil is kennis van God noodzakelijk, die alleen via de Schrift verkregen kan worden en na verlichting door de Geest. Feitelijk is er maar één factor die genoemd wordt als werkelijk belemmerend voor ons heil: onze eigen keuze om het heil niet te aanvaarden. Hoewel de duisternis van ons verstand ook een belemmerende factor is om heil te verkrijgen, kan deze door de verlichting van de Geest worden opgeheven.


Samenvattend moeten we drie zaken goed in het oog houden. Het eerste punt is de aard van de Schrift, het tweede is de relatie tussen Schrift en de Geest en het derde is de effectiviteit van de Schrift.


DEEL III: CONCLUSIE

Dit onderzoek was gewijd aan de beperkingen en reikwijdte van de these dat alleen canonieke teksten in hun functie als kenmiddel heil kunnen veroorzaken. Na de analyse van teksten en een grondiger onderzoek naar de argumentatie van zowel Šaṅkara als Gerhard en hun opponenten zijn er voldoende elementen aanwezig voor een vergelijking van de argumentatie. Uiteraard kan men zeggen dat door deze wijze van onderzoek niet volledig recht kan worden gedaan aan Šaṅkara, Gerhard of hun opponenten: we kunnen immers niet alle details meenemen in een vergelijking, zoals de ontwikkeling die een filosoof of theoloog innerlijk hebben doorgemaakt. Toch menen we dat het goed mogelijk is om via de methode van vergelijking een beter inzicht te krijgen in de reikwijdte van de effectiviteit van canonieke teksten dan via de uitgebreide beschrijving van slechts één denker hierover. Zo kunnen we de vraag vollediger beantwoorden of men tot het uiterste het gezag en de effectiviteit van canonieke teksten kan blijven verdedigen.

Šaṅkara en Gerhard vergeleken

Een analyse van de argumentatie van Šaṅkara en Gerhard levert vier overeenkomsten op:

1. Beiden stellen met behulp van epistemologie vast dat de teksten gezaghebbend zijn en een betrouwbare middel om kennis van God of Brahman te verkrijgen. Zo zijn de teksten in veel van hun werken beschreven als de enige oorzaak van heil.


3. Omdat mensen vaak niet onmiddellijk de teksten begrijpen zijn hulpmiddelen noodzakelijk om toch tot heilskennis te komen.

4. Voor beiden liggen de belemmerende factoren waardoor dergelijke hulpmiddelen noodzakelijk zijn niet in de teksten zelf maar in de mens zelf.
Er zijn ook verschillen te ontdekken tussen Śaṅkara en Gerhard:

1. Śaṅkara wijt het feit dat mensen niet direct tot bewustwording komen van de identiteit tussen het zelf en Brahman aan onwetendheid en een foutieve waarneming van de realiteit. Deze beiden zijn oorzaak van transmigratie en inherent aan het menszijn. Gerhard stelt dat mensen vaak niet onmiddellijk heil bereiken door de duisternis van het menselijk hart en verstand; deze duisternis is volgens Gerhard inherent aan het menszijn en toe te schrijven aan de erfzonde. Maar Gerhard houdt de mogelijkheid open dat mensen er bewust voor kunnen kiezen om het heil te verwerpen. Bij Śaṅkara is er geen sprake van een vrije keuze: of men ervaart de identiteit van het zelf en Brahman, dan wel men moet dat nog ervaren.

2. Volgens Śaṅkara zijn de Vedas deel van dezelfde realiteit (die gekenmerkt wordt door onwetendheid) als de realiteit waarin mensen leven. Het zich bewustzijn van de identiteit tussen het zelf en Brahman verandert het zicht op deze realiteit. De Vedas verwijzen niet naar een andere realiteit, maar halen als het ware de sluier van onwetendheid van de realiteit af en laten die zien vanuit een ander perspectief. Gerhard gaat uit van twee realiteiten: de realiteit van God, beschreven in de Schrift, is anders dan die van de mensen. Zijns inziens is juist door dit verschil de Schrift in staat om heil te veroorzaken. De Geest is de verbinding tussen de Goddelijke en de menselijke realiteit.

3. Śaṅkara stelt dat mensen onmiddellijk worden bevrijd na het begrijpen van de centrale teksten en de identiteit van het zelf en Brahman. Alleen als dit niet geval is, kan men hulpmiddelen gebruiken. In dit kader introduceert hij de leraar die zelf reeds bevrijd is maar anderen helpt bij het verstaan van de teksten. Daarnaast kunnen ook herhaling van de teksten, het nadenken erover, contemplatie daarover en eventueel rituele handelingen een hulpmiddel zijn. Deze middelen zijn echter van minder belang dan de Vedas, omdat ze feitelijk alleen algemene kennis geven over Brahman en geen bewustwording van de identiteit tussen het zelf en Brahman veroorzaken. Gerhard geeft openlijk toe dat mensen vaak niet onmiddellijk heil verkrijgen na het lezen van de teksten. Dit is te concluderen uit de belangrijke plaats die hij toekent aan de heilige Geest als auteur en uitlegger van de teksten en als verlichter van hart en verstand. Zonder de invloed van de Geest is de Schrift geen heilsmiddel.
Maṇḍana en Rahtmann vergeleken

Tussen Maṇḍana en Rahtmann is een tweetal opvallende overeenkomsten te ontdekken in hun verweer tegen Śaṅkara en Gerhard. Beiden verwerpen de these dat canonieke teksten heil kunnen veroorzaken omdat volgens hen deze teksten slechts algemene kennis over Brahman of God verschaffen. Ten tweede wijzen zowel Maṇḍana als Rahtmann in plaats van de teksten als enig middel een ander middel aan. Bij Maṇḍana zijn dat rituele handelingen en voortdurende meditatie, bij Rahtmann is dat het werk van de Geest. Beiden beschouwen canonieke teksten als hulpmiddel voor het verkrijgen van algemene kennis over Brahman en God.

De vraag die dan opkomt is, of deze twee alternatieve beiden minder problematisch zijn. Is het beter te verdedigen dat rituele handelingen en voortdurende meditatie volgens Maṇḍana dan wel het werk van de Geest volgens Rahtmann geldige kennis geven die tot heil leidt dan canonieke teksten dat doen?


Rahtmann verwerpt canonieke teksten als oorzaak van heil omdat hun oorsprong menselijk is. Alleen God kan heil brengen, en derhalve kunnen canonieke teksten slechts algemene kennis over God geven. Waar Maṇḍana met name kritiek heeft op de epistemologische argumentatie van Śaṅkara, legt Rahtmann zijn kritiek vooral neer bij de theologische argumentatie van Gerhard hoewel hij daarmee tegelijkertijd wel de epistemologie van Gerhard onderuit haalt.

Nu de overeenkomsten en verschillen duidelijk zijn, komt des te sterker de vraag naar voren: waarom was het voor Śaṅkara en Gerhard zo belangrijk om de unieke rol van de canonieke teksten als enig geldig kenmiddel waardoor heil veroorzaakt wordt, te verdedigen?

Śaṅkara is met name gegrepen door het imperatief karakter van de drie woorden in de Vedas die staan voor de identiteit tussen het zelf en Brahman: ‘dat ben jij’ (tat
SAMENVATTING

tvam asi, CHU VI, 8, 7). De bevrijdende kracht van die drie woorden werd door Śaṅkara ook betrokken op de Vedas zelf. Om op deze wijze de Vedas tot oorzaak van het verkrijgen van bevrijdende kennis te maken moest Śaṅkara via epistemologische argumentatie duidelijk maken dat de Vedas een geldig kenmiddel van Brahman waren op dezelfde manier zoals directe zintuiglijke waarneming dat was. Feitelijk is dit ook het grootste strijd punt tussen Śaṅkara en Maṇḍana: zijn de Vedas nu wel of niet geldig kenmiddel van Brahman? Volgens Śaṅkara is het antwoord bevestigend. Voor het geval er niet onmiddellijk bevrijding optreedt, kan men (om die bevrijding toch tot stand te brengen) eventueel aanvullend gebruik maken van andere middelen zoals het regelmatig horen van de Vedas, het erover nadenken en ervoor contempleren. In Maṇḍana’s argumentatie is het bijna omgekeerd: nadat de woorden van de Vedas gehoord zijn is het beslist noodzakelijk om voortdurend meditatie te beoefenen en rituele handelingen te verrichten. Alleen op deze wijze wordt de algemene kennis die via de Vedas over Brahman verkregen is, omgezet in ‘ommiddellijke kennis’.


De vraag of de vergelijking een meerwaarde opgeleverd heeft en inderdaad een beter inzicht verschafte in de vragen rond de effectiviteit van canonieke teksten bij het veroorzaken van heil heeft waardevolle inzichten opgeleverd. Er zijn inderdaad opmerkelijke overeenkomsten naar voren zijn gekomen. Ten eerste is er een grote mate van correspondentie tussen de elementen en de opbouw van de argumentatie die gebruikt worden ter verdediging van de claim dat alleen door de effectiviteit van canonieke teksten als kenmiddel heil bereikt wordt. Ten tweede is duidelijk
aangetoond dat de driehoeksverhouding tussen ‘canonieke teksten’, ‘heil’ en bevrijding’ weliswaar een stevige is, maar alleen zolang alle drie concepten op een bepaalde wijze en in verhouding tot elkaar geaccepteerd worden. Ten derde laat de vergelijking zien dat de theses slechts gehandhaafd kan blijven indien men epistemologisch veel aandacht besteedt aan de wijze waarop kennis kan worden verkregen over iets dan wel iemand buiten onze waarneembare werkelijkheid. Een vierde resultaat is dat de discussies tussen Śaṅkara en Maṇḍana enerzijds en Gerhard en Rahtmann anderzijds wijzen op de grote problemen die de theses niet alleen in de praktijk maar ook theoretisch veroorzaken. Śaṅkara en Gerhard geven beiden toe dat er vaak een persoon of hulpmiddelen nodig zijn om uitleg te verschaffen over teksten die niet onmiddellijk begrepen worden.

Bovengenoemde overeenkomsten tonen aan dat de claim van de exclusiviteit van canonieke teksten voor het bereiken van heil zeker beperkingen heeft. Dit alles doet echter niets af aan het bijzondere karakter van de canonieke teksten. Want hoe men ook tegen canonieke teksten aan kijkt, ze zijn en blijven volgens Śaṅkara en Maṇḍana enerzijds en Gerhard en Rahtmann anderzijds toch een essentiële bron van kennis.

Śaṅkara en Gerhard kennen gezag toe aan de Vedas en de Bijbel op grond van de vooronderstelling dat deze canonieke teksten geldige kennis van Brahman, respectievelijk God bevatten. Zodra echter deze vooronderstelling onderuit gehaald wordt, wankelt daarmee ook het gezag van de teksten zelf. De vooronderstelling is daarmee tegelijkertijd de zwakste schakel. De teksten claimen zelf gezag, maar het is wel noodzakelijk dat dit gezag ook werkelijk door een religieuze gemeenschap of een individu als zodanig erkend wordt. Zodra het gezag extern niet toegekend wordt aan de teksten, wordt evenmin de gedachte aanvaard dat zij als enige middel om heil te bereiken gezien moeten worden.

De meest verrassende uitkomst van de vergelijking is dat de motivatie achter de these dat canonieke teksten het enige middel zijn waarmee heil kan worden bereikt - ondanks het verschil in waardering van de canonieke teksten in relatie tot het verkrijgen van heil - toch overeen kan komen: het zoeken naar een betrouwbaar middel om tot heil te komen.
Veel argumenten die naar voren zijn gebracht om de these te verdedigen zijn duidelijk gerelateerd aan een specifieke religieuze traditie. Concepten als ‘bevrijding’ kan men bijvoorbeeld maar in beperkte mate met elkaar vergelijken, want een definitie als ‘bevrijding is het ervaren van de identiteit tussen het zelf en Brahman’ is dermate karakteristiek voor de Vedânta, dat het inhoudelijk nauwelijks zin heeft om dit te leggen naast eenzelfde definitie van Gerhard. Met name de disputen tussen de opponenten onderling (Śaṅkara en Maṇḍana enerzijds en Gerhard en Rahtmann anderzijds) tonen dit aan.

Anderzijds kan men stellen dat vergelijkend onderzoek wel degelijk zin heeft. Ondanks de inhoudelijke verschillen zoals we die op het spoor zijn gekomen, zijn er namelijk wel mogelijkheden tot vergelijking, zij het dan op een meer formele niveau. Er zijn inderdaad belangrijke raakvlakken te vinden die het mogelijk maken dat vertegenwoordigers van uiteenlopende religieuze tradities die elkaar persoonlijk ontmoeten en van gedachten wisselen, elkaar tot op zekere hoogte goed kunnen begrijpen. Een voorbeeld hiervan is de gemeenschappelijke vraag voor Śaṅkara en Maṇḍana enerzijds en Gerhard en Rahtmann over de manier waarop men kennis kan verkrijgen van iets of iemand buiten het bereik van de empirische werkelijkheid. Dat dergelijke aanknopingspunten voor een gezamenlijk aangelegen punt aanwezig zijn is des te meer een aansporing om door te gaan met de interreligieuze dialoog. In dat kader is het gezamenlijk lezen van elkaars canonieke teksten noodzakelijk, om zo door het gezamenlijke gesprek daarover op z’n minst meer kennis van elkaar te krijgen. Zo krijgt dan Rudyard Kipling toch nog gelijk:

\[
\begin{align*}
Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, \\
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat; \\
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, \\
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!
\end{align*}
\]
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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ALB</td>
<td>Adyar Library Bulletin</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>Ānandaśrama Sanskrit Series</td>
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<td>Nr 10 (1936)</td>
<td>Sagaudapādiyakārikātharvavediyamāndūkyopanisad</td>
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<td>Aph.sacr</td>
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<td>Aph.sacr.praec.</td>
<td>Aphorismi sacri praecipuæ</td>
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<td>Aph.sucetsac</td>
<td>Aphorismi succincti et selecti</td>
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<td>BHG</td>
<td>Bhagavad Gīta</td>
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<td>BRU</td>
<td>Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, see ASS</td>
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<td>Comm.Gen.</td>
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<td>Comm.1/2Pet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disp.jud.spir.s.</td>
<td>Disputatio de judicio Spiritus sancti</td>
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<td>D.Praed.</td>
<td>Disputatio de praedestinatione</td>
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<td>disp.pr.</td>
<td>disputatio prima</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.T.</td>
<td>Disputations Theologicorum</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.T., disp.fanat.</td>
<td>Disputatio Theol., disputatio de novis fanaticis</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.T., Pont,Calv,Phot.</td>
<td>Disputatio Theol., Pontificas, Calvinianas, Photinianas</td>
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<td>D.T., D.Weig.</td>
<td>Disputatio Theol., Disputatio Weigelianus</td>
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<td>GK</td>
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<td>MāṇḍūU</td>
<td>see ASS</td>
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<td>RGG</td>
<td>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</td>
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<td>S.P.</td>
<td>Schola Pietatis</td>
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<td>TAITU</td>
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<td>TB</td>
<td>Tineke Boekenstijn - my own remarks</td>
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<td>THESAPP</td>
<td>Thesauri consiliorum appendix nova</td>
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<td>Tr</td>
<td>Tractatus de legitima scripturae sacrae interpretatione</td>
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<td>Vorr.</td>
<td>Vorrede</td>
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<td>US</td>
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<td>USG</td>
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<td>Wallmann Theologiebegriff Johann Gerhard - Georg Calixt</td>
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<td>WZKS</td>
<td>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens</td>
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<td>WZKSO</td>
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<td>YS(BH)</td>
<td>YogaSūtra(Bhāsyā)</td>
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<td>ZDMG</td>
<td>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</td>
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Gnadenreich, Danzig: [s.n.], 1621.

Quaestiones undecim, ex quodam de regno Jesu Christi, libello, odio magis,
quam ex fide, conceptae, ac Academiarum quarundam illustri censuris
subjecta, notis vero illustratae, reformatae et remissae a Hermanno Rahtman
ad D. Mariae Danisc Ecclesiaste, Lüneburg: Stern, 1622.

Wolgegründetes Bedencken, was von deß D. Conradi Dieterichs seinen
Schwarmfragern, darinnen er vom Schwenckfieldianismo, betreffend das
Beschriebene und gepredite Wort Gottets, handelt, und desselbigen andere
beschüldiget, zuhalten sey: Worbey auch die Frage erörtert wird ob ohne
vorhergehende Erleuchtung deß h. Geistes die heilige Schrift möge
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