

# Vaisheshika Darshan

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Of The six principal philosophical systems of India, the Vedanta is by far the most important, judging from the careful attention to the detail of thought, the height of speculative reasoning attained, and the growing popularity of the system in modern times among the educated classes of its native land. Next to the Vedanta come the Samkhya system which still has many influential followers in India and which is interwoven into many of the native religious systems and teachings. The Yoga system of Patanjali, once so powerful, has diminished in power and influence, until to-day it exists principally in its forms of Yoga practices and methods.

And as for the remaining three systems the Vaisheshika System of Kanada; the Nyaya System of Gotama; and the Purva Mimamsa System of Jaimini, respectively. The first and by far the most important of these three minor systems is that known as Vaisheshika System of Kanada. Its name is derived from its doctrine of atomic individualities (visheshas), which is one of its fundamental doctrines. The system has been called the Philosophy of Discrimination. It is supposed to be greater antiquity than that of Nyaya. The first systematic exposition is found in the Sutras of Kanada.

## Means of Knowledge

Vaisheshika philosophy accepts only two kinds of proofs – (1) Perception and (2) Inference. However, it needs to be noted that Vaisheshika also admits Yogic perception, by which the perpetual cognition of the soul arises, under perception. Further, it brings comparison (upamana), tradition (aitihya) and verbal knowledge (sabda) under inference.

## Reality (Padarthas)

Vaisheshika philosophy studies the eternal world and understands it in terms of atoms. It believes that atom and soul are both eternal. Atoms are indivisible particles, which are material causes of the universe. Atoms combine to form different structures. They only exist in nature in combined form.

In this philosophy terms like Dravya (substance), Guna (quality), Karma (action), Samanya (common features), Vishesh (special), Samavaya (inherent relation) and Abhava (absence) have been described vividly.

Padartha or Substance is defined as that thing which can be thought and named. Hence all things, which exist, which can be cognized and named, in short all objects of experience, and merely the things of the Physical World, are Padarthas.

**द्रव्य-गुण-कर्म-सामान्य-विशेष-समवाय-भावाः सप्त पदार्थाः।**

Padarthas are of two kinds-

(1) Bhava Padartha and (2) Abhava Padartha

## BHAVA PADARTHA :-

The six Padarthas that come under this category are-Dravya, guna, Karma, Samanya, Vishesh and Samavaya.

1. DRAVYA, OR Substance – Dravya is the first category of the Padartha and is of nine kinds. They are – Prithvi, Jala, Vayu, Akasha, Kala, Dik, Atman and manas.

**तत्र द्रव्याणि पृथिव्यप्तेजोवाय्वाकाशकालदिगात्मनांसि नवैव।**

First five are called Panch Bhutas because they have one or other guna present in them (gunas are – Gandha, Rasa, Roop, Sparsa and Shabda). Of the nine dravyas Akasha, Dik and Kala are imperceptible. However i.e. (present, past and future) Atman or Soul according to Vaisheshika darshan is also eternal (Nitya) and all pervading (Sarva Vyapi) substance, which is the basis of all living matter. It is of two kinds – Paramatman and Jivatman. or Ishwara is one. Jivatmans are many and present in different gross bodies (Sthula Shariras).

Mind (Manas) is the eternal device (Sadhan) for making visible the gunas such as joy, sorrow, pride of Jivatman. It is not apparent or visible. It is a medium or resource to give evidence to knowledge, experience of joy and sorrow.

2. **GUNA, or Qualities** – Guna is the second category of padartha and signifies a quality, which manifests and is an integral part of matter alone. Guna itself possesses no mobility or activity, Karma; hence Guna is Paranirbhar meaning dependent on others. Gunas are of twenty four kinds.

**रूप-रस-गन्ध-स्पर्श-संख्या-परिमाण-पृथक्त्व-संयोग-विभाग-परत्वाऽपरत्व-गुरुत्व-द्रवत्व-स्नेह-शब्द-बुद्धि-सुख-दुःखेच्छा-द्वेष-प्रयत्न-धर्मा-धर्म-संस्काराश्चतुर्विंशतिर्गुणाः ।**

The five main are Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Sparsh and Shabda. What can be perceived by eyes is Rupa. It is a quality found in Prithvi, Jal and Agni mahabhutas. What can be tasted by the tongue is rasa This quality is present in the Prithvi and Jala mahabhutas. That which can be obtained by the nose is Gandha or smell and it is present in Prithvi. The quality of Sparsha or touch is felt by the skin and it is present in Prithvi Jala Vayu and Agni. The quality obtained by the ear is called Shabda and remains in the Akasha mahabhuta. Thus, we see each element of nature has at least one quality associated with it – Akasha-Shabda, Vayu-Sparsha, Jala-Rasa, Teja-Rupa and Prithvi-Gandha.

3. **KARMA, or Action** – Karma is the third substance of the Vaisheshika Darshan. It is different from both Dravya and guna. While, Guna is a quality which continues to exist while, Karma ceases to exist. It is the distinction between continuant and occurrent qualities. The heaviness of an object is quality, while its falling is Karma. can take place in only gross materials, not abstract substances or qualities. Hence it is not possible for Akasha, Dik Kala or Atman to do an activity or show mobility because they cannot be displaced from one place to another. Karmas are of five kinds-
- (a) Upward motion,  
(b) Downward motion,  
(c) Contraction,  
(d) Expansion and  
(e) Movement in general.

**उत्क्षेपणा-पक्षेपणा-कुंचनप्रसारणगमनानि पंच कर्माणि ।**

4. **SAMANYA or Generality** – Samanya is the fourth padartha and is an important concept in Vaisheshika. If we have ten books we find each has something special about it. This is what makes them different from each other. Yet we call of them, books. This is called 'Anuvritti Pratyay' Whatever we are able to see is considered universal or Samanya. This is what we call Jati (common feature).

**परमपरं चेति द्विविधं सामान्यम् ।**

5. **VISHESHA, or Atomic Individuality, Or Separateness** – Next in the category of padartha is Vishesha, meaning particularity of a substance. The entire Vaisheshika philosophy is based on the principle of distinction between substances.

**नित्यद्रव्यवृत्तयो विशेषास्त्वनन्ता एव ।**

6. **SAMAVAYA, or Coherence** – Samavaya is the last category of padartha and forms the core of the Vaisheshika philosophy. When two inseparable substances exist, such that they are dependant on each other and cannot exist without the other, then their relationship is Samavaya or inherence. Thus dependence on each other exists till the last moment of existence. Example of Samavaya is fibre and cloth or Atman and happiness, because if fibre and Atman are removed, the cloth and happiness will definitely be destroyed. This kind of relationship is thus called Soamavaya in the Vaisheshika philosophy.

**समवायस्त्वेक एव ।**

#### **ABHAV PADARTHA or Non-Existence:-**

Abhava Padartha do not form a part of the original philosophy put forward by Kanada but were **later added as Seventh Category** to the last of six substances of Vaisheshika Sutra. The Non-existence of a substance is **Abhava**. It is of four kinds:

**अभावश्चतुर्विधः-प्रागभावः प्रध्वंसाऽभावो-त्यन्ताभावोऽन्योन्याऽभावश्चेति ।**

- (1) **Paragabhava- non** –existence of a thing before a fixed time.

- (2) **Pradhvansabhava-non**-existence due to destruction.
- (3) **Atyantabhava-non**-existence absolute i.e. difference.
- (4) **Anyonyabhava- non** –existence as a mutual action-reciprocity.

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