

Bharatiya Darsanam – Part 2

Vaisesika Darsanam

Praseed Pai

Agenda

- Introduction to Vaishesika Philosophy
- Ontology (MetaPhysics) of Vaishesika
- Atomic Pluralism (“Aanavika Bahutwavadham”) of Vaishesika
- Bondage and Liberation
- Summary

Summary of Six Schools of Philosophy

SIX HINDU SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY SUMMARY

Area	Nyāya	Vaiśeṣika	Sāṃkhya	Yoga	Mīmāṃsā	Vedānta
Founder	Goatama	Kanada	Kapila	Patanjali	Jaimini	Bādarāyaṇa
No of Sutras	528	374	526	196	2500	555
Reality of the world	16	7	2	3	-	1
If God Exists?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Cause of Suffering	Ignorance	Ignorance	Ignorance	Mind	Karma	Ignorance
Focus/Practice	Jnana Yoga	Jnana Yoga	Jnana Yoga	Raja Yoga	Karma Yoga	Jnana Yoga
Approx. Time	550 BC	600 BC	700 BC	200 BC	400 BC	500 BC

Introduction

- Vaishesika is next only to Sankhya and Much earlier than Nyaya System
- Vaishesika is derived from “Visesa” (Particular)
- Visesa means Particularity (essence of things)
- Sage Kanada is the founder of this system
- He was called Kanada because he survived (as an Ascetic) by eating grains
- Kana also means a Particular and lives on philosophy of particularity of things (Everything is a particular substance and it's own identity)

Vaisesika Sutra and Commentaries on it

- Kanada wrote Vaisesika sutra
- Prasastha Padha wrote a commentary on it called “Padharthadharma Sangraha”.Udhayana and Sridhara has written commentaries on “Padharthadharma Sangraha”.
- “Pluralistic Realism” – diversity is the soul (essence) of the universe. Vaisesika ontology is being leveraged by Nyaya for defining their Logic.
- Nyaya and Vaisesika are called syncretic systems (Samanantara system). Nyaya and Vaisesika fused together to become “Navya Nyaya”
- The Aim of Vaisesika (also Nyaya)is the “Liberation of the individual self (jivatma) from Ignorance”. Right knowledge of reality is the means of Liberation
- Vaisesika Accepts two Pramanas
 - Perception (Accepted by Nyaya/Vaisesika)
 - Inference (Accepted by Nyaya/Vaisesika)
 - Comparison (Accepted by Nyaya alone)
 - Testimony (Accepted by Nyaya alone)

Ontology

- Vaisesika defines seven Categories (Padarthas) which can describe the entire world. Every “Padartha” denotes Objects in the world. It includes all Objects of Knowledge (Nama) and All Objects which are Real(s) (Rupa)
- Reals are divided into “Being” (Bhava) and “Non Being” (Abhava). Being stands for all existing physical things, minds , souls. An example of “Non Being” (some kind of negation) is “non-existence of things”
- There are Six kinds of Being and One kind of Non-Being.
- They (Being) are Substance (Dravya) , Quality (Guna) , Action (Karma),Generality (Samanya),Particularity (Visesa),Relation of Inherence (Samavaya – Relationship between Cause and Effect)
- The relation of samavāya is not perceivable but only inferable from the inseparable connection of the substances
- Non-Existence (Abhava) is “Non-Being”

Substance (Dravyam)

- Substance is that in which Quality (Guna) or Action (Karma) exists. Substance is distinct from Quality and Action. Quality and Action cannot exist without Substance.
- Substance is the Substratum (“Aadharam”) of Qualities and Actions
- Substance is the Material Cause (“Upadhaana Karanam”) of other Composite things produced from it. (Threads are material cause of Cloth, which is a composite thing produced by threads)

Nine Kinds of Substances

Earth (**prithvi**)

Air (**vayu**)

Space (**dik**)

Water (**jala**)

Ether (**akasa**)

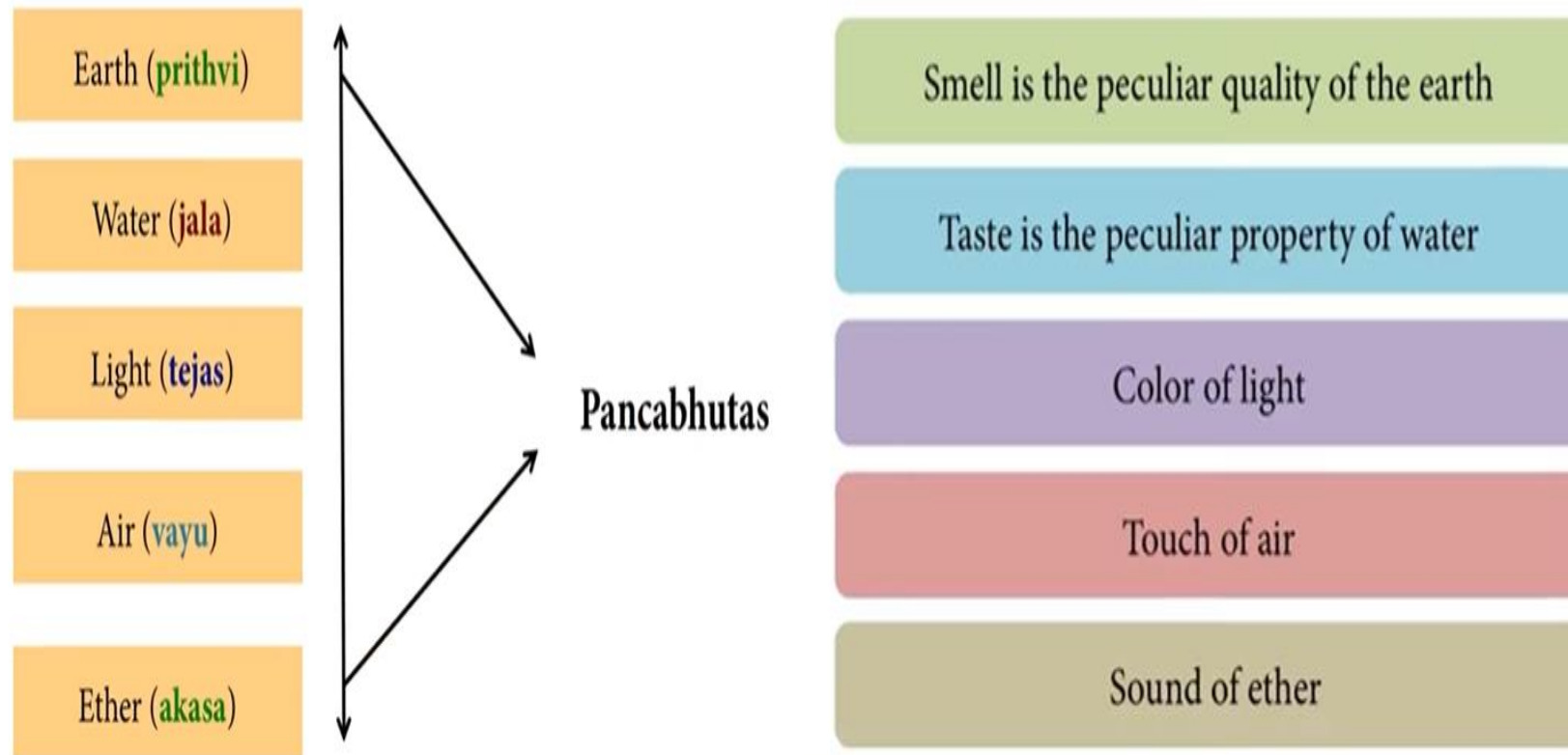
Soul (**atma**)

light (**tejas**)

Time (**kala**)

Mind (**manas**)

Panchabhutas – Each of them possess a specific quality (visesa) which is sensed by an external sense organ



Senses and their mapping to PanchaBhutas

- The Five Specific properties of “Pancha Bhutas” are sensed by
 - The Sense of Smell(Gandha) is constituted by elements of Earth (Prithvi)
 - The Sense of Taste (Rasa) by Water (Jalam)
 - The Sense of Sight (Rupa) by Light (Agni)
 - The Sense of Touch (Sparsha) by Air (Vayu)
 - The Sense of Hearing (Sabda) by Ether (Akasha)
- The Substance of earth is there in all other substances because they have the quality of smell .

Eternal and Non-Eternal Substances

The substance of earth, water, light, and air are of two kinds,

Eternal (nitya)

Non-eternal (anitya)

The eternal kind of earth, water, light and air are those which are constituted by the atoms (paramanus) which are partless and can be neither produced nor destroyed

Non-Eternal Kind of Atoms

- The Non-Eternal kind of Earth, Water, light and Air are produced by combination of atoms and are subject to disintegration or destruction
- The atoms are imperceptible and known by inference.
- There are four kind of atoms , namely of , earth, water , light and air.
- The Ether (or Akasa) , the fifth substance , is the substratum of the quality of the sound. The Sound can be perceived , but, Ether cannot be Perceived. The Space and Time are imperceptible Substances. They are also all pervading as Ether.
- Time is inferred from our cognitions of “past” , “present” ,”future” “older”,”younger”. Ether, Space and Time are decomposed into Different Parts
- The Soul (Atma) is an eternal and all pervading substance which is the substratum of the phenomena called consciousness

Souls

- Souls are of two kinds
 - Individual Soul (Jivatman)
 - Universal Soul (Paramatman)
- Jivatman is mentally perceived as possessing some quality, when one says “I am happy” , “I am sorry” , “I am sad” etc
- Paramatman is one and inferred as a the creator of the world
- Manas (Mind) is the substance which is the internal sense (“antar indriya”) organ (Sixth Sense Organs)
- Mind is the basis for the perception of the individual soul and it’s qualities like pleasure , pain . It is also atomic and imperceptible.

Quality

- Quality cannot exist independently by itself but embedded (inheres) in a substance. It is not a constitutive cause of anything.
- Quality is the static and the permanent feature of a substance
- Qualities are of two kinds , “Mental” and “Material” Qualities.
- Category of Quality is called an Independent reality because it can be Conceived(Prameya), Thought (Jneya) , Named (Abhideya) independently of a Substance.
- For Kanada there are seventeen Qualities and Prasasta Pada did add another seven to make the total number of Qualities to twenty four

Twenty four qualities of Vaisesika

- The original 17 guṇas (qualities) from Kanada are, rūpa (colour), rasa (taste), gandha (smell), sparśa (touch), saṁkhyā (number), parimāṇa (size/dimension/quantity), pṛthaktva (individuality), saṁyoga (conjunction/accompaniments), vibhāga (disjunction), paratva (priority), aparatva (posteriority), buddhi (knowledge), sukha (pleasure), duḥkha (pain), icchā (desire), dveṣa (aversion) and prayatna (effort).
- Praśastapāda added gurutva (heaviness), dravatva (fluidity), sneha (viscosity), dharma (merit), adharma (demerit), śabda (sound) and saṁskāra (faculty)

Action

- The Category of action inheres in a Substance (like Quality). IT does not have independent existence (from the Substance)
- The Action is a dynamic and transient nature of the Substance (Unlike Quality, which is static and permanent feature). Action is given to it or somebody has to put a stop to the Action of the Substance. Thus Action is not inherent in the substance.
- Action is the cause of Conjunction and disjunction
- Action is of five kinds
 - Upward movement, downward movement, contraction, expansion and locomotion

Generality (Universality)

- Generality or Universality is a class Concept. It is the common characteristics of things which fall under the same class (Generality like “whiteness” , “cowness” , “humanity” etc)
- It is different from genus which stands for the Class and Includes Sub Classes
- Generality stands not for the class , but for the common characteristics of certain individuals and does not includes sub classes
- It may also be referring to a class , because it is the universal by possession of which different individuals are referred to as belonging to a single class
- Generality is one and eternal, residing in many. For instance, humanity is the generality and the class essence of all human beings. It is the universal of the human beings inherent in them.

Particularity and Generality



Kanāda

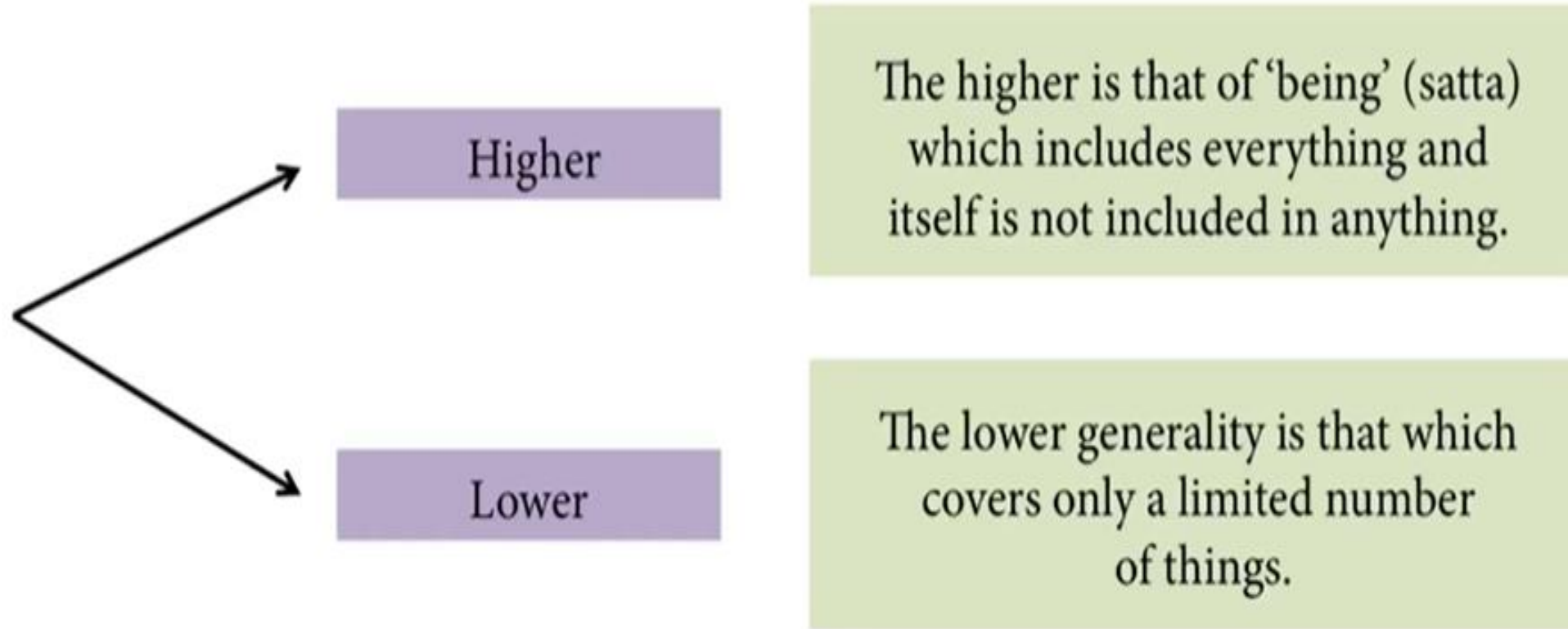
Kanada calls generality and particularity as relative to thought. But yet they are not mere subjective concepts of our mind

Both are objective realities.

Generality is eternal and shared by many particulars.

The universals reside in substances qualities and actions.

Higher Generality (Satta) vs Lower Generality



Three Theories of Universality in Indian Philosophy

- Nominalism (Of Buddhism) – The Universals are only names and not reals (they do not have existence of it's own)
- Conceptualism (Of Vedanta/Jainism)- The Universal is not just a name. But, a reality which exists apart from our mind in the Particular Objects (It is not all pervasive...particular objects do posses it)
- Realism (Of Nyaya/Vaisesika) – The Universal are Objectively real as Particulars (They exists independently of our mind and the particulars). The Generality exists in mind and in the Objects as well.

Particularity (Vishesha)

- Particularity signifies every individual is a single and a unique thing different from others. It enables us perceive things as being different and unique from one another
- Particularity is opposed to generality. It is exclusive , where as generality is inclusive. Composite Objects are not real particulars as they are composed of parts.
- Only the ultimate , simple and eternal substances like atoms and souls are particulars. They are qualitatively and quantitatively different from one another. Thus, Nyaya Vaisesika realism is both qualitatively and quantitatively plural.

Non Existence

- The Seventh and Last Category is “Non Existence” (Abhava). IT is neither positive nor absolute like other categories. IT is negative and relative in it's conception (It is related to some other things)
- The Absolute Negation is a (impossibility and a) Psuedo idea , as Negation pre-supposes some affirmation. Vaisesika considers knowledge of negation as different from thing negated (That is why they treat “Abhava” as a separate category). Absence of an Object and Knowledge of it's Absence are different.
- There are Four kinds of Non Existence
 - Antecedent Non-Existence (Praghabhava)
 - Subsequent Non-Existence (Pradvamsabhava)
 - Mutual Non-Existence (AnyonyaBhava)
 - Absolute Non-Existence (AtyantaBhava)

Details of four kinds of non existence

- First is the non-existence of a thing before its **production**
- Second is the non-existence of a thing after its **destruction**
- Third is the non-existence of a thing as another thing which is **different from it**
- Fourth is the **pseudo-idea** such as the absence of a relation between two things in **the past, present and future**
- To illustrate the four kinds of non-existence –
 - A pot does not exist before its production;
 - It does not exist after its destruction;
 - It does not exist as a cloth;
 - It does not exist as a liquid pot.

Atomism

- Vaishesika says materials are composed of parts , which are further decomposed into smaller parts. The smallest indivisible , partless and eternal particle is called an atom (paramanu)
- The Creation means the combinations of atoms in different proportions and destruction means the dissolution of such combinations. The atoms are eternal (they are neither produced nor destroyed). It is only atomic combinations which are produced or destroyed. These combinations are not the essential nature of atoms.(they do not pre-existant in atoms)
- The atoms are of four kinds – earth, water, fire and air. The “Akasha” is combination of atoms (thus not atomic). The Ether (Akasha) works as a medium for the combination and the dissolution of the atoms. (The Ether is one and all pervading)
- The atoms differ from one another both in quantity and quality. Each atom has a particularity of it's own and exists as a separate reality. Qualities of atoms are eternal.

Atomism (Continued)

- Atoms of air are the finest of them all and has sense of touch
- Atoms of fire posses touch and color
- Atoms of Water posses touch , color and taste
- Atoms of earth posses smell,touch, color and taste
- Besides these Qualities all atoms has qualities of velocities, distinctness and number.
- The Atoms posses primary and secondary qualities (and are globular or spherical in shape)
- Atoms are as eternal as souls. They are inactive and motionless in themselves. During the creation, they are active and they remain inactive during the dissolution. They derive power from the unseen power (adrshita) of merit and demerit which resides in the individual souls
- The atoms are super sensible (sookshmam – beyond senses) and combine in geometrical progression (not in arithmetic progression!). They increase by multiplication (not by addition!) when motion is imparted to them by unseen power. There is exponential growth in the case of atoms when they combine by unseen power

Dyad (dyaṇukas) / Triad (tryaṇukas)

- A dyad (is a combination of two atoms) is minute, short and imperceptible
- There is also a triad which is a combination of three atoms
- A triad is a great (mahat) long and perceptible
- Combination of triads progress geometrically until they reach gross elements of earth, fire , water and air arise.

God and the World

- Vaishesika is not a materialistic philosophy as it accepts non material entities like Gods and Souls (Spiritual Substances). It also subscribes to laws of Karma. Laws of Karma is unseen power (adrshita)
- Vaishesika considers God as the efficient cause of this universe. God assisted by unseen power, produces or destroys the world.
- There is a pre-supposition regarding the moral order as well.
- The unseen power consists of the merits or the demerits of the unseen world. Soul bears the fruit of their action as enjoyment or suffering.
- Atoms are only the material cause of the world.
- Unseen power is unintelligent and needs God as a Controller. God does not create atoms or souls as they are co-present and co-eternal with the God.
- God simply gives motion to the atoms and gives original impetus for their combination and creation of the world.

Bondage and Liberation

- According to Vaishesika, Bondage is due to ignorance, leading to suffering. Vaishesika categorizes Action into meritorious (Dharma –allowed by Vedas) and non meritorious (Adharma). Merits and Demerits of the individual soul makes up the Unseen Power (adrsta - laws of karma). One has to reap the fruits of one's own action.
- Good Karmas result in pleasure and bad karmas in pain, this is the law of karma (unseen power)
- This Karmic Power, guided by God imparts motion to the atoms and leads to the creation of world for, enjoyment and suffering of the individual soul.
- The Soul will remain in Bondage, as long as it performs Action (Cessation of Actions can only provide liberation). Liberation comes when Individual soul realizes the truth about cessation of actions (knowledge), the action stop. When action stop, merits and demerits do not get accumulated (also old merits/demerits fade away). Thus soul gets separated from the fetters ("Changala" – Malayalam) of the mind and body. Slowly, soul realizes it's pure nature. Pure nature is "Nishkriya".
- Liberation is the cessation of all pain. It is the state of the substance which is devoid of all qualities such as pain, bliss ,including knowledge. These qualities are accidental characteristics of an individual. They are acquired by the soul when it gets embodied in a body. In liberation, it cease it to exist , as soul is not connected to the mind/body.

Bondage and Liberation (continued)

- The Vaishesikas characterizes liberation as cessation of all life, all consciousness, all bliss, including pain and other qualities
- Liberation is an indeterminate pure nature which is quality less. It signifies the individual soul which is pure substance without any quality and action. It also signifies the individual soul which retains its own individuality and particularity.

Summary

- Realistic Pluralism of Vaishesika is often criticized as common sensical (quasi scientific/systematic) view of the world.
- Vaishesika just gives some Catalogue of Categories and has not attempted to synthesize them. (It treats Categories as ultimate and objects as elements)
- Another issue which people find difficulty is the treatment of Categories like Quality and Action as being dependent up on the categories of substance.
- Categories like Universality , Particularity and Inherence cannot be treated as Substances as they are mental constructs (Concepts dependent upon thought)
- The Category of “Non-Existence” is relative , as it is only intelligible to being related to existence.
- The Category of Substance cannot be Absolute, as it cannot be known in the absence of it's Qualities and Relations (Actions). It reduces itself to nothing , in the absence of qualities and relations.
- In the context of above problems, the defence given by Vaishesika is not comprehensive. Thus it is more of a common sense thinking than a coherent Philosophy.

End