

Vaisesika Philosophy

Introduction -

The Vaisesika system was founded by Kanada. It is so named in view of the fact that 'Vaisesika' as a category of knowledge has been elaborately discussed in it. The founder of this philosophy, we are told, was surnamed 'Kanada' because he led the life of an ascetic and used to live on grains of corn gleaned from the field. He was also named Uluka. So the Vaisesika Philosophy is also known as the Kanada or Aulukya system.

The first systematic work of this Philosophy is the 'Vaisesikasutra' of Kanada. It is divided into ten adhyayas or books, each consisting of two ahnikas or sections, Prasastapada's Padarthdharma-sangraha, usually known as the Bhasya, reads like an independent exposition of the Vaisesika Philosophy. Further, we know from two

commentaries on Sankara's Samratka Padesya
that Ravana, King of Ceylon, wrote a
commentary on the Vaisesika-sutra.
Udayana's Kiramanvali and Enidhana's Nyaya
- Kandali are well known and excellent

commentaries on Prasastapada's work.
The later works on the Vaisesika combine
this system with the Nyaya. Of these

Sivaditya's Sapta-Padarthi
Langakii Bhaskara's Tarka-Kaumudi

and Visvanatha's Bhasyaprichcheda with
its commentary Sidhanta-muktavali are
important.

The Nyaya and the Vaisesika are
allied systems of Philosophy (Samanatanttra).
They have the same end in view, namely,
liberation of the individual self. According
to both, ignorance is the root cause
of all pain and suffering, and liberation,

which consists in their absolute cessation, is to be attained through a right knowledge of reality.

There is, however, some difference between the two systems on two fundamental ~~po~~ points -

1/ While the Nyaya accepts four independent sources of knowledge, namely, Perception, inference, comparison and testimony, the Vaisesika recognises only two, viz. Perception and inference, and reduces comparison and verbal testimony to Perception and Inference.

2/ Secondly, the Naiyayikas give us a list of sixteen Padarthas which, according to them, cover the whole of reality and include those accepted in the other system. The Vaisesikas, on the other hand, recognise only seven Padarthas

and comprehend all reality under them.

These seven categories of reality are
(a) dravya or substance, (b) guna or quality,
(c) Karma or action, (d) Samanya or
generality (e) visesa or particularity,
(f) Samavaya or the relation of inherence
and (g) abhava or non-existence.

The Vaisesika Philosophy is an elaboration
and a critical study of these seven
categories.

Padartha literally means the object
denoted by a word. So by padartha we
propose to mean all objects of knowledge.
~~At~~ Now, according to the Vaisesikas,
all objects, denoted by words, may be
broadly divided into two classes,
namely, being and non-being (abhava
and abhadra). Being stands for all
that is or for all positive realities,