

Tenets of *Vaisheshika* philosophy in *Ayurveda*

Review article

Archana I^{1*}, Praveen Kumar A², Mahesh Vyas³

1. Ph.D Scholar, Dept of Basic Principles, 2. Ph.D Scholar, Dept of Dravya Guna,
3. Associate professor, Dept of Basic Principles,
I.P.G.T. & R. A., Gujarat Ayurveda University, Jamnagar

Abstract

Ayurveda is the ancient science of life, which is developed by integrating various other systems of knowledge like philosophy, arts, literature and so on. In this regard the verse “*Sarva Parishadamidam Shastram*” told by Chakrapani, the commentator of *Charaka Samhita*, a great lexicon of *Ayurveda* much suits here. Even though *Ayurveda* is an applied science it incorporates the philosophical principles which are so modified that these principles have become *Ayurvedic* in nature and considered as *Ayurvedic* principles. Among the six orthodox schools of philosophy, *Vaisheshika* system is also one and *Ayurveda* has taken the fundamental principles of this school of thought which are helpful in its applied aspects.

Key words: Philosophy, *Vaisheshika*, *Ayurveda*, *Padartha (Category)*, Health

Introduction:

The scope of philosophy is extensive and wide spread. It includes all the efforts to accomplish the total knowledge i.e. the beginning, development and destruction of the universe. The discussion of the same is the main subject matter in all the branches of philosophy. There are totally six *Astik Darshana*/orthodox philosophies namely *Sankhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Purva meemansa* and *Uttara Meemansa/Vedanta*.(1) Each philosophy describes its own principles by giving various proofs and logics. For example *Sankhya* mainly aim at understanding of

the 25 elements (2), *Vaisheshika* consider 6 *Padarthas/categories* (3) and so on. The central premise of these *Darshana* is to understand creation in total with the help of the *Tatvas/elements* and thereby getting eradication from all type of miseries (4).

Vedas are the root source of all the knowledge. Thus even these philosophical systems are also having the fundamentals of Veda. First credentials of *Ayurveda* are found in the *Vedas*, the world's oldest existing literature as it is the *Upaveda* of *Atharvaveda* (5). The Vedic philosophies are the result of the quests regarding the truth of life and creation. *Ayurveda* is a practical incorporation of concepts of these important Vedic philosophical systems along with excellent measures of health care. In the philosophies we can see the fundamental principles of physical and metaphysical aspects of human body and the nature. But *Ayurveda* mainly aim in understanding of the treatment aspects through which man can attain health as it emphasis healthiness for attainment of the *Purusharthas* (6). For this

*Corresponding Author:

Archana I,

Ph.D Scholar,

Dept of Basic Principles, I.P.G.T. & R. A.,
Gujarat Ayurveda University, Jamnagar;

Mob: 09408564467;

Email: drarubhat@gmail.com

reason the main theme of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of a healthy person and treating of the diseased (7). Thus philosophy presents fundamentals where as the science contains applied aspects of these fundamental principles. *Ayurveda* being an applied and practical science is fully based on these philosophical principles. The fundamental principles of philosophy are the concrete of *Ayurveda* for its practical application. The theories explained by *Vaisheshika* system are thus forms the basics in *Ayurveda* with regard to the metaphysical concepts. Here is the brief description of the principles accepted by the *Vaisheshika* philosophy along with its applicability in *Ayurvedic* science.

Brief history of Vaisheshika Darshana:

Kanada is considered to be the founder of this Philosophy. He has been called by various names like *Uluka*, *Kaashyapa*, *Kanabhuk*. Thus this philosophy is also called as *Kanada Darshana/Uluka Darshana*. As this philosophy mainly emphasis on explanation of *Vishesha* (particular variety/individuality/specialty) of the objects it is called as *Vaisheshika*. The total number of verses in *Vaisheshika Sutra* is 370 which have been divided into 10 chapters each of which is further divided into 2 *Ahnikas* (parts) (8), (9).

Tenets of Vaisheshika philosophy:

In this philosophy, the main emphasis is on 'Padarthas/Category'. Nevertheless, *Rishi Kanad* has commenced his sacred treatise with 'Dharmajignyasa' (inquiry into *Dharma*) – "*Athato Dharma Vyakhyasmamah*". This is because in order to understand the true nature of substances, knowledge of *Dharma* is a fundamental prerequisite. Here *Dharma* means not any religion but it refers to *Nishreyasa siddhi* – attainment of salvation by *Abhyudaya* (knowledge in total). Understanding of the real nature of the object is called *Dharma*. *Kanada*, tries to

analyze the things and then lays down that final liberation follows the right understanding of things. His method is that of generalization. According to him the complete knowledge of an object in the universe can be obtained by its two qualities viz. *Ashesha Jnana* and *Vishesha Jnana*. *Ashesha jnana* refers to the complete knowledge of the object starting from its beginning till its end if it is destructed along with its knowledge of presence. The *Vishesha Jnana* refers to the specific knowledge or special knowledge of that object. Thus by these two types of knowledge, an object can be understood completely. The *Sadharmya Vaidharmya* (positive and negative point) of an object is important to know about it. He says the *Veda* sutras are the instruments to attain the real knowledge of the object (10).

Maharsi Kanada in his '*Vaisheshika Sutra*' has tried to classify all the existing objects in to six *Padarthas*/Categories. He has done it in such a way that each and every object of this universe gets a place in one of these six *Padarthas* and nothing remains excluded from these. One who wants to achieve the goal of '*Nishreyasa/ultimate salvation*' has to get thorough knowledge of these six elements viz. *Dravya/Objects*, *Guna/qualities*, *Karma/action*, *Samanya/generality*, *Visesha/specificity* and *Samavaya/inherence* (11).

Dravya:

Dravya is the one which can perceive the action, the one which can change according to the action or one which can produce other things. It is inhered with action and property. *Kanada* divides them into nine classes- *Prithvi* (earth), *Jala* (water), *Teja* (light), *Vayu* (air), *Akasha* (ether), *Kala* (time), *Dik* (space), *Atma* (soul) and *Manas* (mind). These are the nine substances, each existing as an entity. There is no substance, material or spiritual, outside these nine (12).

Guna:

The second category is *Guna* or quality. It resides in *Dravya*, (but still has its own identity), itself having no quality (*Guna*), no any action or is different from action (*Karma*) According to *Kanada* there are only 17 qualities and no more. These are *Roopa* (color), *Rasa* (savor or taste), *Gandha* (odor), *Sparsha* (tangibility), *Sankhya* (number), *Parimana* (dimension), *Prithkatva* (individuality), *Samyoga* (conjunction), *Vibhaga* (disjunction), *Paratva* (priority), *Aparatva* (posteriority), *Buddhi* (intellect), *Sukha* (pleasure), *Dukha* (pain), *Ichha* (desire), *Dvesha* (aversion) and *Prayatna* (volition) (13)

Later on the *Bhashyakara Prashastapada* added 7 more qualities to the existing like *Gurutva* (gravity), *Dravatva* (fluidity), *Sneha* (viscosity), *Sanskara* (self-productiveness), *Adrushta* [*Dharma* (merit) and *Adharma* (demerit)] and *Shabda* (sound) (14).

Karma/Action:

The one which depends on one *Dravya*, devoid of any quality and does not require any others to produce *Samyoga* (combination) and *Vibhaga* (separation) etc actions is called as *Karma*. He mentioned 5 types of *Karma* - *Utkshepana* (Elevation or throwing upwards), *Apakshepana* (Depression or throwing downwards), *Akunchana* (contraction), *Sanprasarana* (dilatation) and *Gamana* (motion in general) (15).

Samanya and Vishesha:

The fourth and fifth categories are *Samanya* (generality) and *Vishesha* (individuality) respectively. Both these are the matter of intellect and one expects *Buddhi* (Intellect) for the knowledge of these both entities.

The one which is present in many is called *Samanya* and the specificity of that is called *Vishesha*. The qualities which

are observed in many people or in many places are called *Samanya*. The qualities which are specific in some people or in one place are considered as *Vishesha*. For example the people are commonly called as *Manushya jati/Humanity*. Here the word *Manushya/man* denotes generality. In this *Manushya Jati* if we specify *Brahman Jati*, *Kshatriya Jati* etc then it is considered as *Vishesha*. To understand this *Samanya* and *Vishesha* of objects *Buddhi* plays an important role (16), (17).

Samavaya:

The sixth category explained by *Vaisheshika* is *Samavaya* (Inherence). The knowledge of "It is in that" is considered as inherence. It is explained based on the cause and effect theory. Here the effect and cause are considered as *Avayava* – *Avayavi* (whole and its parts), *Guna* and *Karma* in *Dravya* (quality and action in substance), *Nitya Dravya* and *Vishesha* (universal in the particular) etc. Inherence is the state where the object cannot be separated without destroying one of them (18).

Paramanuvada (Theory of Atomism):

The view of the *Vaisheshika* concerning creation is called atomism or *Paramanuvada*. Atomism postulates the cycle of creation and destruction of the non-eternal or temporary substances of the universe. When the non eternal substances made into small pieces, at one point we cannot break them further. This unbreakable part is considered as *Paramanu/Atom*. All the elements in the universe are having the *Avayavas*/fractions and are continuously undergoing in the process of production and destruction. For eg. Thread is the part of cloth; mud is the part of pot and so on. These thread, mud etc are again made up of their own fractions. Thus this series of partition continues till that particular stage where there is no further splitting. That last proportion which is *Sukshma* (tiny),

Indriyatita (which cannot be perceived), *Niravayava* (not having any parts) and *Nitya* (eternal) is termed as "*Paramanu* (Atom)". It is of four type's viz. atom of each earth, water, air and fire. This *Paramanu* is eternal.

The combination of two *Paramanu* gives 1 *Dvayanuka* (dyad), three *Dvayanukas* combine together to form one *Trayanuka/Trasarenu/ Truti/triads*. The *Paramanu* is *Nitya* (eternal) while *Dvayanuka* is *Anitya* (non eternal). But these both are having *Anuparimana*. When it comes to *Trasarenu* it is *Mahatparimanayukta* and is seen. 4 *Trasarenu* combine together to form one *Chaturanuka* and this combination continues to produce the creation. Basically the *Paramanu* either (big or tiny) is *Nitya* (eternal) and *Nishkriya* (no movement). The cause for their movement (*Parispandana*) is by the *Adrushta* (accidental/natural). *Vaisheshika* says that the attraction of iron towards magnet, flowing of liquid from bottom to top in a tree, the first movement of atom all are due to *Adrushta* or by the *Karma phala/deeds* (19), (20).

Peelupaka Vada/theory of Chemical change:

Peelupaka is an important concept laid by *Vaisheshikas*. *Peelu* means *Paramanu* or atoms, and *Paka* means the *Parinama* (transformation). Hence *Peelupaka* means occurrence of *Pakaja Kriya* (process of transformation) in atoms under the influence of Heat. The *Vaisheshikas* note that *Paramanus* always combine, separate and recombine under the influence of heat and light. The observed difference between one substance and another, or in fact, between all substances in regard to their colour, consistency, roughness, smoothness, etc., is held to be due to what is known as *Pakabheda* or difference in chemical reactions. Thus *Peelupaka* means the chemical change that occurs in *Rupa* (color), *Rasa* (taste), *Gandha*

(smell) and *Sparsha* (tactile). "It is heat and heat alone that can cause transformation in respect of colour, taste, smell or physical characteristics of *Paramanus*. Stated in brief, the *Vaisheshika* School hold that "there is decomposition of homogeneous atoms, transformation of atomic qualities and finally their recombination, all occur under influence of heat. *Paramanu* cannot exist independently in nature (21).

Vaisheshika theories in Ayurveda:

The initiation of *Ayurveda* itself starts with the explanation of *Shatpadarthas* (six categories) of *Vaisheshika* system as *Shat Karanas* (six causes) for the maintenance of health and curing of the disease but the order being changed from that of *Vaisheshika* viz. *Samanya, Vishesha, Guna, Dravya, Karma and Samavaya* (22).

Samanya: It is the cause for increase of all the substances in all the time (23). It is also considered that the one which cause the oneness (24) and the similarity in the objects is considered as *Samanya* (25).

Vishesha: The one which is opposite to *Samanya* is the *Vishesha* (26). The one which causes decrease in the substances (27) or the one which is the cause for separation is called *Vishesha* (28). To differentiate one drug from the other, *Vishesha* is helpful.

Guna: It is the one which is inherent in substance and itself is not having any actions (29). This explanation resembles the definition of quality described by *Vaisheshika* system. *Vaisheshika* mentions totally 17 *Gunas* where as *Ayurveda* accepted totally forty one qualities which are very helpful for the maintenance of health and treatment purpose of view (30).

Dravya: *Ayurveda* defines *Dravyas* as the one in which the quality and actions are inhered (31). It resembles the definition of subjects given by *Vaisheshika*. As like *Vaisheshika*, *Ayurveda* too accepts the existence of nine *Karana Dravyas* (objects of creation) viz. *Akasha* (ether), *Vayu* (air),

Teja (light), *Jala* (water), *Prithvi* (earth), *Atma* (soul), *Mana* (mind), *Kala* (time) and *Dik* (space) (32). *Ayurveda* further classifies the *Dravya* based on the *Panchabhoutic* configuration and that's why we can find various classifications of drugs (33).

Karma: The definition of *Karma* (action) explained in *Ayurveda* is much similar to that of *Vaisheshika* School of thought. Action is the one which is responsible for *Samyoga* (Combination) – *Vibhaga* (separation) etc actions, which reside in the *Dravya* and do not need any other factor to do its work. The synonyms like *Kartavya/Karma/Kriya* are given for it (34). *Karma* (action) explained in *Vaisheshika* is only five and is mainly help in the explanation of the *Srushti Prakriya* (creation) but in *Ayurveda*, the term action is referred mainly for any kind of treatment which helps in attainment equilibrium of the body (35).

Samavaya: *Ayurveda* consider *Samavaya* as the inseparable relation between two things. The qualities like smell etc of ether etc five elements are inhered in them and cannot be separated. It is an eternal relation. Where there is a drug, the action and qualities are inherently present in it (36).

Paramanu Vada/Atomic theory:

In *Ayurveda*, the reference of *Paramanu Vada* is found while explaining the innumerability of body parts. According to atoms, the body parts are innumerable as these atoms are also innumerable, tiny and cannot be perceived by naked eyes. The cause for combination and separation of these atoms are nothing but *Vayu* (wind), *Karma* (deeds) and *Swabhava* (nature) (37).

Peelupaka(chemical change):

The digestive process explained in *Ayurveda* resembles to that of *Peelupaka*

(chemical change) of *Vaisheshika*. During the process of digestion, the *Bhutagni* (heat of five elements) helps in the digestion of food articles in to minute part and help in production of minute parts of the body which is nothing but *Peelupaka* (38).

Discussion:

In *Vaisheshika*, the complete knowledge of the six categories is to understand the creation there by attaining the Salvation but in *Ayurveda* these are the main cause for the effect which is nothing but *Dhatusaamya/harmony of body elements*. *Dhatusaamya* occur in the body, a part of creation. Thus in *Ayurveda* also the knowledge of elements is to understand the creation. If one has the complete knowledge of these *six categories*, he will be in healthy condition which is said to be the key for attaining all the *Purusharthas* (deeds of human). However, in *Ayurveda* the order of these elements is changed according to the treatment point of view because all the principles in *Ayurveda* mainly depend on the theory of *Samanya* and *Vishesha*. *Dhatuvaishamya* (Unequilibrium of the body tissues) is of two types, it may be either *Vruddhi* (increased) or *Kshaya* (decreased). Hence in the condition where there is decrease in the body constituents, one has to administer the drug and diets which are having *Samana gunas* (equal qualities) to them and when they get increase one has to give drugs and diet which are *Viruddha Gunayukta* (opposite qualities). And it is also necessary to maintain the state of those which are in equilibrium. Thus keeping in mind the importance of *Samanya & Vishesha* starting from the reproduction till the end of life, *Acharyas* gave first preference to these two categories by placing them first in the series of counting of *Padarthas* (categories).

The qualities in *Ayurveda* are mainly used in treatment aspects but not to

explain the object of the creation as like that of *Vaisheshika*. For this reason it mainly stress upon the Guru (heavy) etc twenty qualities and *Paradi* qualities. Any drug in *Ayurveda* is administered for treatment purpose either internally or externally after proper analysis of its qualities. Thus the *Gurvadi* qualities which are also considered as *Sharirika Gunas* (qualities of physic) are given much significant. The importance of *Paradi* qualities is found while administering the drugs, to assess its dose, while preparing the drug etc. In Applied science the relevance of the *Karana Dravyas* (causing factors) like *Avyakta (Unknown)*, *Mahat (intellect)*, *Ahankara (ego)* etc are not as vast as those of *Karya Dravyas* (productive substances). Thus when we converse about the term *Dravya* (substance) in applied science it should be considered as *Karya Dravya* not the *Karana Dravya*. These substances are mostly deal with treatment being the emphasis as these are most important in treatment. The classification of substances in *Vaisheshika* stops at the level of *Karana Dravyas* but *Ayurveda* further classifies the substances from the combination and permutation of *Mahabhutas* and thus we have many types of classification of drugs like *Chetana Dravya* (mobile matters), *Achetana Dravya* (immobile matters); *Sthavara* (animal origin), *Jangama* (plant origin), *Parthiva* (earth origin); *Ahara Dravya* (food articles), *Oushadha Dravya* (medicinal drugs), *Jeevaniya* (dugs which give life energy), *Brumhaniya* (drugs which stouten) , *Vidarigandhadi* etc.

Karma in *Ayurveda* mainly suggests any action which is initiated to attain the equilibrium of the body parts. It is also called as *Karya*, *Kriya*, *Kartavya*, *Prayatna*, *Cheshta*. The treatments like *Panchakarma (five purifying procedures)*, *Shadvidhopakrama (six fold treatment)*, *Dwividhopakrama (two fold treatment)*, *Ashtavidha Shastra Krama (eight types of surgical procedures)* etc all are included as

Karma in *Ayurveda*. *Samavaya* (Inherent) is very useful in treatment aspect. *Ayurveda* mainly depends on the herbs and herbal preparations. They have the quality and action in them inherently. The mode of action of treatment is based on the qualities and the actions inherent in the drug used for it. Thus for the proper selection of the drug the knowledge of *Samavaya* is must be known by the physician. Even the theory of *Paramanu Vada* and *Peelupaka Vada* are accepted in *Ayurveda* based on the applied aspects of the system. *Vaisheshika* says *Adrushta* or the *Karma* is the cause for the combination or separation of atoms where as *Ayurveda* agrees the affect of *Vayu* (air) and *Karma* for this.

Conclusion:

By various sources it can be concluded that the fundamental principles of *Vaisheshika* philosophy is also found in *Ayurveda* in the form of applied aspects. These concepts are very much useful in attain the health and there by performing the four kinds of deeds viz. *Dharma (virtue)*, *Artha (wealth)*, *Kama (gratification)* and *Moksha (emancipation)*. *Vaisheshika* system mainly concerned the ultimate knowledge of six categories for attainment of deliverance as by their complete knowledge, the ignorance can be eradicated. The placement of these six categories by *Ayurvedic* sages is noteworthy as six causes for maintainance of health and curing the disease which shows their revelation as a physician rather than a philosopher.

References:

1. Baladev Upadhyayha, Bharatiya Darshana, 1st edition, Varanasi, Sharada mandir, 2011; 16-17
2. Ibid, 267-271
3. Ibid, 223
4. Ibid, 12-13
5. 5.Yadavji trikamji Acharya, editor. Sushruta Samhita with Nibandhasangraha commentary of

- Dalhanacharya, Varanasi, Choukamba Krishnadas Academy, 2004, 2
6. Yadavji trikamji Acharya, editor, Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Deepika commentary of Chakrapanidatta, Varanasi, Choukamba Krishnadas Academy, 2006, 6
 7. Ibid, 187
 8. Shriram Sharma, Vaisheshika Darshana with Hindi commentary, 1st ed. Bareli, Sankriti Sansthan publishers, 1995, 4
 9. Baladev Upadhyayha, Bharatiya Darshana, 1st edition, Varanasi, Sharada mandir, 2011; 214-215
 10. Shriram Sharma, Vaisheshika Darshana with Hindi commentary, 1st ed. Bareli, Sankriti Sansthan publishers, 1995, 4-6, 21, 41-42
 11. Ibid, 43
 12. Ibid, 44, 50
 13. Ibid, 45
 14. Baladev Upadhyayha, Bharatiya Darshana, 1st edition, Varanasi, Sharada mandir, 2011; 231
 15. Shriram Sharma, Vaisheshika Darshana with Hindi commentary, 1st ed. Bareli, Sankriti Sansthan publishers, 1995, 51, 45
 16. Ibid, 46, 57
 17. Baladev Upadhyayha, Bharatiya Darshana, 1st edition, Varanasi, Sharada mandir, 2011; 234-236
 18. Ibid, 236-238
 19. Ibid, 239- 242
 20. Shriram Sharma, Vaisheshika Darshana with Hindi commentary, 1st ed. Bareli, Sankriti Sansthan publishers, 1995, 133, 138
 21. Dingari Lakshmanachary, Ayurvedeeya Padartha Vijnana, 1st edition, Hassan, Manju Screen and Offset Printshop, 2005, 241
 22. Yadavji trikamji Acharya, editor, Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Deepika commentary of Chakrapanidatta, Varanasi, Choukamba Krishnadas Academy, 2006, 7
 23. Ibid, 9
 24. Ibid, 10
 25. Ibid
 26. Ibid
 27. Ibid, 9
 28. Ibid, 9
 29. Ibid, 13
 30. Ibid, 12
 31. Ibid, 13
 32. Ibid, 11
 33. Ibid, 138
 34. Ibid, 13
 35. Ibid, 14
 36. Ibid, 12
 37. Ibid, 339
 38. Lakshidhar Dwivedi, editor, Padarth vijnana, 2nd ed. Varanasi, Choukamba Krishnadas academy, 2007, 483-484.
