

A Summary of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*

In the most recent known version of the *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra* with Candrānanda's commentary, the text is divided into ten chapters (*adhyaīya*), with chapters one to seven further subdivided into two subsections (*āhnika*) each. Chapters eight to ten contain only one section each. Although there is no clear table of contents for the *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra*, Candrānanda's interpretation suggests that all ten chapters introduce various aspects of the six main entities (*padārtha*): substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*), action (*karman*), commonness (*sāmānya*), particularity (*viśeṣa*), and inherence (*samavāya*). The first four chapters primarily deal with substances, the fifth chapter focuses on action, and the remaining chapters address qualities. Additionally, the second section of the first chapter discusses commonness and particularity, while the seventh chapter's three sūtras explain inherence.

Sūtras Nos. 1.1.1–3

The first three sūtras of the first chapter are significant as they aim to delineate the ultimate goal of the Vaiśeṣika system. These sūtras are as follows: 1.1.1) “Now, we shall explain *dharma*.” 1.1.2) “*Dharma* is that by which elevation and bliss are attained.” 1.1.3) “The authoritativeness of tradition is because of his words [God].” Candrānanda explains the first sūtra as being said by Kaṇāda (the founder of Vaiśeṣika) when approached by a Brāhmaṇa who reflects the Chāndogya Upaniṣad statement: “Pleasure and unpleasure do

not touch the one who is without a body.” A Brāhmaṇa inquires Kaṇāda about the means of reaching this state without the body, to which Kaṇāda responds that the means is *dharma*. After further questions about this *dharma*, Kaṇāda consents to proceed by uttering the first sūtra.

The second sūtra defines *dharma* by specifying its results: either elevation to heaven or ultimate bliss. Candrānanda describes elevation to heaven as acquiring a desired body in the paradise of Brahma and the removal of misfortune. In contrast, ultimate bliss is defined as the state of absence of particular self-qualities (including pleasure and unpleasure), which is liberation. Kaṇāda also specifies that these characteristics of *dharma* are known from the Vedas.

Finally, the third sūtra provides the basis for the Vedas’ authority, stating it is because they are a revelation from God, whose names include Hiraṇyagarbha, Bhagavān, and Maheśvara. The first three sūtras demonstrate two main points. First, the Vaiśeṣika system was firmly rooted in the Vedic tradition and originated within the Brāhmaṇa community. Secondly, its ultimate aim was liberation from worldly life in two forms: the lesser form, living in heaven with a perfect body and continued vitality of positive bodily experiences (still within *saṃsāra*), and the ultimate form, the life of the self (*ātman*) without a body, devoid of experiences (the state of final liberation or *mokṣa*).

The fourth sūtra, although not present in Candrānanda, is preserved in a much later version by Śaṅkara Miśra and is notable for its programmatic statement delineating the essence of Vaiśeṣika teaching. The fourth sūtra of Śaṅkara Miśra states: “The ultimate bliss [is provided by] the truthful knowledge, which springs from the particular *dharma* based on the similarities and differences of substance, quality, action, commonness, particularity, and

inherence *padārthas*.” This sūtra explains that ultimate bliss results from the right knowledge of the similarities and differences of the *padārthas*, which are the principal entities of the Vaiśeṣika system. However, the knowledge arises with the assistance of some specific *dharma*, which Śaṅkara Miśra explains as good works and ethical action. This sūtra effectively summarizes the Vaiśeṣika system’s essence by highlighting that it deals with investigating the *padārthas* through understanding their similarities and dissimilarities. In this investigative process, ethical action (i.e., following *dharma*) is indispensable, as it contributes to attaining the knowledge of *padārthas*.

Sūtras Nos. 1.1.4–29

The sūtras enumerate the substances, qualities, and actions recognized by the Vaiśeṣikas (sūtras nos. 1.1.4–6). They provide a unified definition for substance, quality, and action (sūtra no. 1.1.7), and then specify and clarify the differences between each of the three (sūtras nos. 1.1.8–13). Following this, separate definitions for the *padārthas* of substance, quality, and action are provided (sūtras nos. 1.1.14–16). The remaining sūtras (nos. 1.1.17–29) further specify points regarding the causality of substance, quality, and action: substance is the inherent cause of substance, quality, and action (sūtra no. 1.1.17); qualities are the non-inherent causes of substance, quality, and action (sūtra no. 1.1.18); and action is the non-inherent cause of conjunction and disjunction qualities (sūtra no. 1.1.19). Finally, there is further specification of action regarding substance and quality (sūtras nos. 1.1.20–21) and an explication of causality concerning substance, separate qualities, and action (sūtras nos. 1.1.22–29).

The sūtras identify nine types of substances: earth, water, fire, air, ākāśa, direction, time, the self, and mind; seventeen types of qualities: color, taste, smell, touch, number, dimension, separateness, conjunction, disjunction, posteriority, priority, cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, and internal effort; and five types of action: upward movement, downward movement, shrinking, expanding, and horizontal movement. Substance is the fundamental entity in which both qualities and actions inhere. Some substances are called causal substances (*kāraṇa dravya*), contributing to the production of effect substances (*kārya dravya*). Furthermore, qualities also produce other qualities, but actions do not produce other actions. Substance as both cause and effect is uncontradictory¹², while qualities regarding particular qualities can be contradictory or non-contradictory.

Sūtras No. 1.2.1–18

The sūtras in the second section of the first chapter, apart from the initial two (sūtras nos. 1.2.1–2), which deal with the nature of cause and effect, discuss commonness and particularity, as well as closely related notions of being and ultimate particularity (sūtras nos. 1.2.2–18). The first two sūtras of the second section emphasize a distinctive doctrine of Vaiśeṣika, stating that even if the effect is absent, it does not imply the absence of causes. In other words, the effect does not coexist with the cause (e.g., the pot is absent in the clay). In contrast, another famous school of Indian philosophy,

12 E.g., the qualities of pleasure and pain are in contradiction with the qualities of desire and aversion because the latter bring forth the former and then disappear. In contrast, qualities like separateness and taste have no mutual relation and thus are not contradictory.

Sāṃkhya, advocates that the effect is already inherent in the cause (in some respect, the pot could be thought of as already existing in the clay).

Other sūtras introduce the padārthas of commonness and particularity. Both are described as dependent upon cognition (sūtra no. 1.2.3: *sāmānyam viśeṣa iti buddhyapekṣam*). Candrananda explains that our knowledge is shaped by the cognition of inclusion (*anuvṛtti*), when one cognizes, for example, a different cow here and there, and understands them to be in common through substance-ness or cow-ness, and also by exclusion (*vyāvṛtti*), when one distinguishes between one thing and another. The padārthas of commonness and particularity validate the cognitions of inclusion and exclusion, respectively.

Thus, substance-ness, quality-ness, and action-ness can serve as both commonness and particularity. For example, substance-ness is common to many substances, but at the same time, substance-ness also functions as particularity because it excludes substance from quality and action. Furthermore, besides the commonness and particularity of substance, quality, and action, there are innumerable types of lesser commonness and particularity, like cow-ness, pot-ness, color-ness, movement-ness, etc.

Two other crucial notions put forward by Vaiśeṣika are being (*bhāva*, *sat*, or *sattā*) and ultimate particularity (*antyaviśeṣa*). Being is the highest commonness, which does not admit any particularity. In other words, being is common to substance, quality, and action, and it does not exclude any entity, in contrast to lower commonness like substance-ness, which excludes quality and action. Ultimate particulars inhere in eternal substances like the atoms of earth, water, fire, and wind, as well as *ākāśa*, time, direction, mind, and the self. The atoms serve as causal substances that constitute the effect substances, such as mountains, rivers, the sun, and gusts of

wind. For example, one mountain is different from another because both are formed by heaps of unique atoms, each with ultimate distinguishing particulars.

Sūtras Nos. 2.1.1–29

The second chapter primarily addresses the first five substances – earth, water, fire, air, and *ākāśa* – each possessing distinct qualities. First, the five qualities are enumerated (Sūtras Nos. 2.1.1–5). The subsequent two sūtras explain how earth and fire substances can attain liquid qualities when in conjunction with fire (2.1.6–7). The remaining sūtras discuss the inferences regarding air and *ākāśa*, as neither of these two are perceptible substances (2.1.8–29).

The existence of air is inferred based on its possession of the quality of touch. According to the Vaiśeṣika system, a quality cannot exist without a substance; it must inherently reside within it. Other perceptible substances, such as earth, water, or fire, cannot always account for the perception of touch because, in some instances, touch is not accompanied by smell, taste, or color, as would be the case with earth, water, or fire. Therefore, these instances of touch are attributed to an underlying air substance.

The existence of *ākāśa* is inferred based on its possession of sound, which is a perceivable quality. Other indicators for inferring *ākāśa*, such as movements of entering and exiting, are not accepted because *ākāśa*, being omnipresent, is not considered a cause of action.

Sūtras Nos. 2.2.1–43

The first two sūtras explain incidental (or imposed) qualities that may appear in earth and water (2.2.1–2). Following that,

the unique qualities of earth, water, and fire (2.2.3–5) and the inferential marks of time (sūtras nos. 2.2.6–11) and direction (2.2.12–18) are discussed. Next, the nature of doubt is explained (2.2.19–23). Finally, the remaining sūtras address the problems related to the definition of sound and whether it is eternal or non-eternal (2.2.24–43).

According to these sūtras, substances have both established and imposed (or incidental) qualities. For example, cloth may have a flower scent, or water may be hot, but these are not their intrinsic qualities (also called inferential marks). According to the sūtras, the established quality of earth is smell, of fire is heat, and of water is cold. The inferential marks of time and direction are explained similarly. The inferential marks of time include the cognitions of posteriority, priority, simultaneity or non-simultaneity, and slowness or rapidness. The inferential marks of direction include cognitions related to the north, east, south, etc., as well as the communication conventions applied in daily life.

An interesting passage is a detour about doubt, which is considered a variant of the quality of cognition. Internal and external types of doubt are distinguished. In the end, the nature of sound is discussed. Sound is a fundamental concept in Indian philosophy, as it reveals the essence of the Vedas, and sometimes it is deemed to be nothing but the Vedas themselves. The leading school specializing in the exegesis of the Vedas, Mīmāṃsā, has especially emphasized the centrality of sound and its eternity. In contrast, these sūtras of Vaiśeṣika, while not denying the Vedas, downplay the importance of sound, not treating it as an independent source of knowledge and arguing it to be non-eternal.

Sūtras Nos. 3.1.1–14

The sūtras of this section are devoted to arguments proving the existence of the self. The self is an essential entity in Vaiśeṣika as it is the cognizer of *padārthas* and the subject of liberation. The arguments in favor of the existence of the self are presented in these sūtras as follows. The objects and the sense organs are universally known (3.1.1: *prasiddhā indriyārthāḥ*), and they indicate something beyond themselves (3.1.2: *indriyārthaprasiddhir indriyārthebhyo'rthāntaratve hetuḥ*). Thus, sense organs apprehend objects, but who apprehends the sense organs, which act as instruments? Since the Vaiśeṣikas argue that both objects and sense organs are unconscious, there must be someone else responsible for overall cognition. The response is that this entity is nothing but the self. Thus, the self is the locus of the process of cognition, which occurs as a result of the conjunction of objects, the sense organs, the mind, and the self. Finally, an argument in favor of the self is the perception of activity in the body, which presupposes an agent or doer (the one who uses the body), supported by the internal effort to take action, whose locus is the self.

Sūtras Nos. 3.2.1–17

The current section defines the last substance not yet mentioned from the list of substances, the mind (3.2.1–3). After that, the following sūtras introduce some additional arguments to prove the existence of the self (3.2.4–14). Finally, three sūtras are devoted to discussing whether there is one single self or plurality of them (3.2.15–17).

The mind is inferred to exist based on the presence or absence of knowledge when the conjunction of the object, the sense organs,

and the self occurs (3.2.1: *ātmendriyārthasaṃnikarṣe jñānasyābhāvo bhāvaśca manaso liṅgam*). It means that the non-appearance or appearance of knowledge (cognition) is primarily due to the mind's operation. As the embodied selves are always in contact with some objects through the senses, the mind is responsible for attending to some information and not paying attention to others. Thus, the mind plays the role of information processing and attention. The mind is also inferred to be one because, at the same time, one can not do or cognize plurality of things (3.2.3: *prayatnāyuga-padyājñānāyuga-padyāccaikaṃ manah*).

The next topic is the resumption of dealing with the arguments to prove the existence of the self. The inferential marks of proving the self are as follows: inspiration, expiration, the opening and closing of the eyes, biological life, the movement of the mind, modification of the sense organs, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, and effort (3.2.4: *prāṇāpānaimeṣonmeṣajīvanamanogatīndriyāntaravikārāḥ sukhaduḥkhe icchādveṣau prayatnaścetyātmaliṅgāni*). However, the opponent's opinion is introduced in the next three sūtras, which gives three counterarguments against the self's inference. First, when one meets a person, one comes to know that particular person, e.g., Yajñadatta, but not the existence of some invisible self (3.2.6). Secondly, these marks are too general. They could equally well indicate some other cause other the self, like *ākāśa*, etc. (3.2.7). Thirdly, it is very likely that the existence of self is accepted only on account of tradition (3.2.8: *tasmādāgamikam*).

In response to the counterarguments, the Vaiśeṣikas adduce a further argument. The argument of Vaiśeṣikas is that the word "I" (*aham*) excludes all other objects and that the only referent of the word "I" remains the self (3.2.9: *ahamiti śabdavyatirekānnāgamikam*). Since the word "I" is also used with the above referenced inferential

marks, these are suited to infer the self's existence. The opponents' (most likely the Buddhists) counterargument that this "I" indicates the body and not the self (3.2.10–11). The Vaiśeṣikas reply that the imposition of the word "I" to the body is dubious (*sandigdhas*), as it may equally indicate the self. But the fact that the word "I" is not used to refer to everyone's bodies as the word "body" does; it refers to something other, which is the self.

The opponent replies that "I" does not necessarily indicate the self, which is imperceptible. The Vaiśeṣikas answer that there remains specific information about others that cannot be retrieved from others' bodies, e.g., one cannot apprehend other people's pleasure or pain; therefore, "I" cannot refer to the body but the self. The last question dealt within the sūtras pertains to unity or plurality of the self. The opponent puts forward the thesis that the self is one because we cannot know other people's mental states, such as pain, pleasure, and so on, and therefore can only know our own self. The Vaiśeṣikas respond that, by observing people's bodies, one may infer that different individuals can experience different mental states simultaneously and therefore have different selves. The latter point, together with the testimony of the Vedas about the plurality of selves, proves the manifoldness of selves.

Sūtras Nos. 4.1.1–14

This section discusses the nature of atoms, which are the smallest existing substances (4.1.1–5). The remaining sūtras address the perceptual conditions for substances, qualities, actions, and the concepts of commonness and particularity (4.1.6–14). The atoms of earth, water, fire, and wind are existent, uncaused, and eternal (4.2.1: *sad akāraṇavan nityam*). Their effects manifest as various

objects, which serve as inferential evidence of the atoms' existence (4.2.2: *tasya kāryaṃ liṅgam*). In other words, the observation of non-eternal entities such as rivers, trees, and clouds suggests the existence of something underlying and eternal. Since visible objects are non-eternal, they stand in contrast to the particular atoms, which are eternal (4.2.4: *anityamiti ca viśeṣapraṭiśedhabhāvaḥ*).

Moving to the next topic, for a substance to be perceivable, it must be large, meaning it has to be composed of more than one atomic substance and possess color (4.2.6: *mahaty aneka-dravyavat-tvād rūpāc c'opalabdhiḥ*). For example, a tree is perceivable because it is produced from many atoms and has the quality of color. In contrast, while most atoms possess color, they are imperceptible due to their small size. Air, though not small in measure, is invisible because it lacks color (4.2.7–8).

The perception of color is only possible when it is present in large substances that possess color-ness. The same applies to taste, smell, and touch: for these qualities to be perceptible, they must inhere in large objects, like trees or rivers (4.1.9–10). Additionally, other qualities such as number, dimension, separateness, conjunction, disjunction, posteriority, priority, and action are only perceptible when they inhere in large substances that have color. Their perception is possible only through the eyes. Finally, the knowledge of quality-ness and being can be perceived by all sense organs (4.1.12–14).

To clarify the conditions of perception, the Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra asserts that substances are perceived because they are large and have color. Color can only be perceived if it is inherent in larger substances with color-ness. Thus, to provide a general description of perception: when one approaches an object, one uses the sense organs (among which the eyes are most privileged) to perceive its

being, which leads to the apprehension of quality-ness. This allows for the perception of color and other qualities, such as dimension and number, which together enable the perception of substance-ness and, ultimately, the particular substance at hand, such as a tree.

Sūtras Nos. 4.2.1–9

The sūtras of the second section of the fourth chapter deal with the body. The Vaiśeṣikas claim that the human body is primarily produced from the substance of earth, while other substances serve only as its non-inherent causes. Besides bodies constituted by earth substance and born from the uterus (*yoni*), there are also non-uterine (*ayoni*) bodies produced directly from the conglomeration of atoms, assisted by particular *dharma*. The Vedic scriptures attest to such non-uterine bodies. For example, it is said that mythical figures like Aṅgiras were born directly from carbon (*aṅgāra*), and so on.

Sūtras Nos. 5.1.1–18

Chapter five addresses the subtleties of action. Sūtras 5.1.1–12 primarily discuss actions that are assisted by internal effort, while sūtras 5.1.13–18 focus on actions not caused by internal effort. For example, an action involving the hand occurs as a result of the conjunction of the hand with the self, assisted by internal effort. Actions such as those involving a pestle occur due to the conjunction between the hand and the pestle, also assisted by effort. In contrast, other types of action can be produced by the impact (*abhighāta*) of an upward-moving mortar in a bowl, which in turn causes the hand to move. In this case, the primary cause of action is the moving mortar, which prompts the pestle and, consequently, the hand to move. In these instances, the action of the

pestle or mortar is ultimately due to the initial action from the hand (body) and the self, assisted by internal effort.

Further examples of actions involving effort are provided by specifying the causes involved in their production. For instance, when the conjunction with the hands is severed, the pestle falls to the ground due to its weight. Additionally, actions such as casting an object afar originate from an impulse, which in turn is aroused by desire (5.1.7–10). Another specific action discussed is the movement occurring in a fetus within the mother. According to sūtra 5.1.11, the movement of the fetus is due to the conjunction of the body with the self, assisted by effort, and preceded by the motivation to live (*tad ātma-śarīr' aika-deśa-samyogāj jīvana-pūrvaka-prayatnā'pekṣād bhavati 'ti sa-pratyayam*).

Moreover, even the tossing of a burnt hand is explained by the effort preceded by the motivation to live (5.1.12: *tathā dagdhasya visphoṭanam*). All preceding actions are accounted for by the quality of internal effort inherent in the self. The remaining examples of actions occur due to other causes. For example, the falling of limbs in a sleeping person is due to weight (5.1.13). The movement of grass results from conjunction with the air (5.1.14). The movement of a needle towards a magnet is explained by an invisible cause (5.1.15, indicated by Candrānanda as *dharma-adharma*). An arrow's movement is initially caused by an impulse and later propelled by its inherent tendency (5.1.16–18).

Sūtras Nos. 5.2.1–28

The section continues to discuss actions not caused by internal effort, this time focusing on actions occurring in various substances: in the earth (5.2.1–2), water (5.2.3–12), fire, air, atoms, and mind (5.2.13–15), actions related to the self (5.2.16–20), the rejection of

darkness as a substance and its activity (5.2.21–22), and finally, the remaining *padārthas* that do not possess action (5.2.23–28). The actions of the earth occur as a result of impulse, impact, and conjunction with the conjunct (5.2.1: *nodanād abhighātāt saṃyuktasaṃyogācca pṛthivyāṃ karma*). For example, the impulse of feet on mud produces its action due to conjunction with the feet (*pādādibhir nudyamānāyāṃ pañkākhyāyāṃ pṛthivyāṃ karma jāyate*). The impact of a chariot on the ground, causing movement, is due to the disjunction from the moving chariot's wheels. Finally, the movement of a piece of earth occurs due to its conjunction with another lump of earth that has already been moved by feet. An earthquake's action is caused by the movement of adverse wind, which is produced by an unseen cause, indicating good or bad fortune (5.2.2. Commentary by Candrānanda: *yat khalu viruddhakriyavāyusaṃyogāt sarvasyāṃ pṛthivyāṃ kampādi karma prajānāṃ śubhāśubhasūcanāyotpadyate tat sarveṣāmeva śubhāśubhasūcanād viśeṣeṇādrṣṭakāritam*).

The explanations of water's actions involve rain, flowing in rivers, water circulation in trees, freezing, thawing, and the appearance of thunder in water clouds (5.2.3–12). The regular actions of fire and air occur similarly to those of earth (5.2.13). However, abnormal actions, such as upward flaming fire causing damage, sideward winds causing storms, or the initial movement of atoms and the mind, occur due to unseen causes related to *dharma-adharma*. These calamities reflect the belief that moral action, encapsulated in *dharma-adharma*, is a guiding factor. That is, the cumulative moral-immoral behavior of living beings ultimately causes natural calamities. *Dharma-adharma* also plays a role in the production of living and non-living bodies by facilitating the movement and accumulation of atoms.

The following passage is significant because it discusses actions related to the self, resulting in yoga, which is the means to salvation.

Sūtra 5.2.16 explains that qualities in the self, such as pleasure, pain, and so on, appear due to the conditions of perception involving the self, mind, outer sense organs, and objects (5.2.16: *ātmendriyamano' rthasaṃnikarṣāt sukhaduḥkhe*). The next sūtra defines yoga as a state of suspended perception: “Yoga is the absence of pleasure and pain in one having a body, when the mind, resting in the self, does not support [perception]” (5.2.17: *tadanārambhaḥ ātmasthe manasi saśarīrasya sukhaduḥkhābhāvaḥ sa yogaḥ*). The principal action in yoga is breath control, which occurs due to the involvement of internal effort and the conjunction of breath with the self (5.2.18: *kāyakarmaṇātmakarma vyākhyātam*). This likely relates to the next sūtra, which discusses the mind’s movement from the body and within the body due to an invisible cause (*dharma-adharma*). If that cause is absent, there is no conjunction between the mind and the self, and thus the body does not manifest—this is liberation (5.2.20: *tadabhāve saṃyogābhāvo'prādurbhāvaḥ sa mokṣaḥ*). The remaining sūtras refute the opponent’s proposition that darkness is a substance. They also indicate that the substances of *ākāśa*, time, and direction are exceptions and do not possess action. Similarly, qualities and actions do not move since they inhere in substances (5.2.23–25). Generally, only substances can be in motion, although qualities contribute to the production of actions as non-inherent causes, such as conjunction, disjunction, and weight.

Sūtras Nos. 6.1.1–18

The first section of this chapter deals primarily with the Vedas (6.1.1–3) and provides instructions regarding behavior that leads to the accumulation of *dharma* or *adharma* (6.1.3–18). Since *dharma* and *adharma* are crucial factors in the universe’s causal operations, this

chapter offers insights into understanding ethical actions linked to these concepts. In the first three sūtras, it is declared that the sentences of the Vedas are based on God's primordial wisdom and that the sages of the past, who composed the Vedas, had direct access to God's knowledge, making them incomparable to anyone else. Finally, the proof of God's wisdom is affirmed by His established recognition among the most prestigious *Brāhmaṇa* caste. The sūtras then emphasize the importance of meritorious acts, such as charity and hospitality, as means prescribed by the Vedas for enhancing *dharma* (6.1.4–7). It is further specified that associating with an immoral person who causes harm can lead to the accumulation of *adharma*, whereas giving charity to a noble person certainly accrues *dharma* (6.1.8–15). Lastly, the text discusses whether it is permissible for a *Brāhmaṇa* to defend himself by harming others in the case of an attack (6.1.16–18).

Sūtras Nos. 6.2.1–19

The second section of the sixth chapter continues discussing ethical activities and proper mental dispositions. The first sūtra suggests that if certain prescribed practices do not appear to have a visible purpose, their aim must be for an invisible result, such as elevation to heaven (6.2.1: *dr̥ṣṭānām dr̥ṣṭaprayojanānām dr̥ṣṭābhāve prayogo'bhyudayaāya*). The second sūtra enumerates specific activities that contribute to this elevation, such as bathing, fasting, residing at a master's home, observing constellations, prayer, and more (6.2.2). Sūtras 6.2.3–5 emphasize the necessity of a sincere mental attitude while performing these activities; actions carried out with trickery or deceit (*upadhā*) are invalid and result in *adharma*. Sūtras 6.2.6–11 explore issues related to purity and self-restraint, concluding that practices of self-restraint are integral to leading a pure life.

Sūtras 6.2.12–16 specify the causes for the arising of desire. Finally, the last three sūtras explain that *dharma* and *adharma* are closely connected to the qualities of desire (*icchā*) and aversion (*dveṣa*), which determine the events of life and birth. When the qualities of *dharma* and *adharma* are exhausted, the movement of the mind ceases, preventing the conjunction of the mind (which is atomic in nature) with the self and the body. This cessation is known as liberation (6.2.17–19). Thus, the second section of the sixth chapter clarifies that while many ethically righteous activities produce *dharma* and lead to elevation to heaven, they cannot bring about total liberation, which is achieved through other means, such as yoga practice and mastering the essence and function of *padārthas*.

Sūtras Nos. 7.1.1–32

Chapter seven continues the discussion of various qualities. Sūtras 7.1.1–3 provide an introductory reminder about the previously stated number of qualities, their definitions, and the distribution of these qualities across different substances. Sūtras 7.1.4–6 discuss the special status of the qualities associated with earth. Sūtras 7.1.7–8 address the eternity or non-eternity of qualities depending on the eternity or non-eternity of the substances they inhabit. In the subsequent sūtras, 7.1.9–13, it is pointed out that the qualities of earth are ultimately produced from chemical change (*pākajā*), while the qualities of water, fire, and air are always due to the inherent qualities in the atoms. Lastly, sūtras 7.1.14–32 are dedicated to the topic of dimension.

To summarize the key aspects of this chapter, it is asserted that the qualities in earth substances are exceptional compared to

others because they change due to chemical reactions with fire. For example, when a pot is heated, its color, taste, smell, and texture change. In contrast, according to the Vaiśeṣikas, heating water or air does not essentially alter their qualities. The quality of measure distinguishes all substances in the universe according to their inherent size: smallness (*aṇu*), largeness (*mahat*), shortness (*hrasva*), longness (*dīrgha*), and infinite greatness (*vibhu*). All perceivable substances are large, while most non-perceivable material substances are small (except for triple atomic compounds, *tri-aṇuka*, which are still imperceptible). According to the sūtras, the notions of small and large in daily speech (*vyavahāra*) can still be used to indicate relative measure. For example, a tree is large in relation to grass, although technically, both the tree and the grass are composed of many atomic compounds and, with regard to these atomic compounds, they are both large. Smallness and largeness give rise to the measures of longness and shortness, which are viewed as variations of the former. Finally, the substances of *ākāśa*, time, direction, and the self are considered to be infinitely great, while the mind is of small measure.

Sūtras Nos. 7.2.1–31

This chapter begins with the treatment of the qualities of number and separateness (7.2.1–9). After that, it turns to the discussion of conjunction and disjunction (7.2.10–14), sound (7.2.15–24), and the qualities of priority and posteriority (7.2.25–28). The chapter concludes with the *padārtha* of inherence (7.2.29–31). The sūtras state that if color, taste, smell, and touch are different, unity and separateness must also be distinct qualities. The quality responsible for unity is number (*saṃkhyā*), which produces the cognition “this is

one,” while the quality responsible for the cognition of separateness is the quality of separateness (*prthaktva*). Furthermore, the cognition of two objects or the separateness of two objects is derived from the number one and the separateness inherent in a single object.

The sūtras on conjunction and disjunction explain that these relationships between substances exist because of the action of either one of the two substances, both, or another conjunction. For example, conjunction can occur between a flying hawk and a standing post when the hawk perches on the post. Additionally, conjunction can occur between two moving wrestlers when they clash. Finally, conjunction can occur due to another conjunction; when two fingers are conjoined, a new conjunction exists between them and the surrounding *ākāśa*. Disjunctions occur in the same three ways as conjunctions. Conjunction and disjunction do not exist in cause and effect relationships since a pot cannot exist without its parts. For instance, for a pot to disappear, disjunctions must occur between its various parts, not between the pot and its components. Another topic discussed is sound, specifically its role in explaining the phenomenon of words. It is maintained that while the expression “does not exist” can be used, it does not imply that non-existent objects exist; rather, it simply indicates that words and their corresponding objects are not in a direct relationship.

Priority and posteriority are two qualities that arise when objects appear simultaneously and in the same direction. Therefore, one can be aware of these qualities concerning space and time. According to the Vaiśeṣikas, the cognition of priority and posteriority in space is due to objects being in a common direction, whereas the existence of priority and posteriority in time is primarily due to the substance of time. However, their specific manifestations are always due to objects that exist contemporaneously. The cognition

of priority and posteriority in time is revealed through currently persisting objects.

Finally, the *padārtha* of inherence is explained as “the notion of here, which arises due to the cause and effect” (7.2.29: *iheti yataḥ kāryakāraṇayoḥ sa samavāyah*). In other words, inherence is a condition for certain objects to exist when they are in a cause and effect relationship. For example, yarn is the inherent cause of its effect, the cloth, and a tree is the inherent cause of the quality of its color. The difference between conjunction and inherence is that conjunction can only occur between substances, whereas inherence allows for relationships between substances and other *padārthas*.

Sūtras Nos. 8.1–17

This chapter addresses the topic of perception (8.1–13), its objects (8.14), and the perceiving sense organs (8.15–17). The first three sūtras provide an introductory overview of perception, referencing aspects already covered in previous sūtras (8.1–3). The fourth sūtra emphasizes that the perception of substance is the foundation of all perception, as qualities and actions cannot be perceived independently of a substance (8.4). Sūtras 8.5–6 highlight the importance of *being* and *commonness-particularity* in the process of perception. Substances are perceived through the recognition of commonness-particularity, meaning that one perceives a particular thing only through its association with a broader category. For example, while the cause of “tree-ness” is a specific tree, without the concept of “tree-ness,” the tree itself would not be perceived.

Sūtras 8.7–13 engage in a somewhat complex discussion about whether perceptions occur in a qualified-qualifier causal relationship. For instance, in the perception of the color white (qualified),

one might assume that whiteness (qualifier) must be cognized first. However, in perceptions like seeing a pot and a cloth, there is no qualified-qualifier relationship because the two cognitions are not related. Even in complex perceptions, such as seeing a white cow moving, it is argued that there is no qualified-qualifier relationship. Thus, while the perception of color (white) and movement depend on the substance (the cow), these perceptions alone do not produce the knowledge of the cow.

Sūtra 8.14 reiterates that the primary objects of perception are substances, qualities, and actions (*artha iti dravyaguṇakarmasu*). The five sense faculties—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin—are produced from the substances of fire, *ākāśa* (ether), earth, water, and air, respectively. The eyes perceive color, the ears perceive sound, the nose perceives smell, the tongue perceives taste, and the skin perceives touch.

Sūtras Nos. 9.1–28

The ninth chapter delves into the phenomenon of absence (9.1–12), a specific type of perception called “yogic perception” (*yogipratyakṣa*; 9.13–17), inference, verbal testimony (*śabda*; 9.18–21), remembrance (9.22), and dreaming (*svapna*; 9.23–24) as distinct types of cognition. The sūtras also propose a classification of cognition into correct and incorrect (9.25–27) and introduce another type of cognition: “vision of the accomplished ones” (*siddhadarśana*; 9.28).

Absence (*asat*) is understood as a kind of substance condition, contrary to existence (*sat*). Four types of absences are distinguished: prior absence, posterior absence, mutual absence, and absolute absence. Prior absence refers to the state of a substance before its production, while posterior absence refers to its state after destruction.

Mutual absence refers to the non-identity between two substances (e.g., a cow is not a horse). Absolute absence denotes the total impossibility of a substance's existence (e.g., a hare's horn).

The remaining sūtras discuss various types of cognition beyond ordinary perception. Generally, the sūtras differentiate between correct cognition, which accurately reflects reality, and incorrect cognition, which presents a distorted picture of reality. Inferential knowledge is gained when one infers the existence of one object based on another. For example, one infers the presence of fire from the presence of smoke or predicts rain from dark clouds. The knowledge gained through verbal testimony is akin to inference, as the state of affairs (objects) is inferred from the conventional meanings of words that refer to that state.

Remembrance is a type of cognition that arises due to the tendency (*saṃskāra*) of a previously experienced form of knowledge. For instance, the recollection of a particular substance can reappear even without immediate sense organ contact, as long as there is a mental tendency toward that substance. Dreaming is considered an incorrect type of cognition, arising when there is no sense organ contact but only a connection between the mind and the self. Although *saṃskāra* contributes to knowledge production, the primary causes of dreams are *dharma* and *adharmā* because even objects never before perceived can appear in dreams.

Lastly, the chapter explains “yogic perception” and “vision of the accomplished ones.” Yogic perception arises through a particular conjunction between the mind and the self, producing direct knowledge of the self. It also allows for the perception of otherwise imperceptible substances, such as atoms. Since substances are perceivable, their qualities and actions become perceivable as well. This particular conjunction is achieved only through yogic meditation.

The “vision of the accomplished ones” provides knowledge of any object in the past, present, or future, caused by the conjunction of the mind with the self, assisted by *dharma*.

Sūtras Nos. 10.1–21

The final chapter addresses the qualities of pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*duḥkha*; 10.1–2), the types of cognition related to doubt (*saṃśaya*) and ascertainment (*nirṇaya*; 10.3–4), as well as various methods of cognizing cause and effect (10.5–19). The chapter concludes by repeating sūtras 6.2.1 and 1.1.3. The chapter begins by discussing the qualities of pleasure and pain, which are inherent qualities of the self. These two qualities are mutually exclusive, as the presence of one triggers the absence of the other. Doubt and ascertainment are presented as two forms of cognition. Doubt is considered a type of incorrect cognition that hinders the process of acquiring knowledge, while ascertainment resolves this by producing firm cognition.

The final section of the chapter elaborates on the cognition of effects and causes from separate objects. For instance, there can be knowledge about an effect in terms of “it is produced,” “being produced,” “will be produced,” or “was produced.” In the case of “it is produced,” one recognizes it as an effect by perceiving any substance already present. When one perceives an effect as “being produced,” one understands that from some arrangement of materials—such as threads being sewn—a product like cloth is being made. Knowledge of the cause, in turn, arises from perceiving various effects. For example, by recognizing a tree, its color, and the movement of its branches, one can infer the existence of atoms as the underlying cause.