



Original Article

Maharshi Kanad's Vaisheshika Darshan: A Scientific Inquiry

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Abstract

Sages and saints truly glorified the land of Bharatbhumi (India). Not only in the field of art and culture, Indians left lasting impact in the field of science and engineering. World knew it as Golden Bird as it has rich sources of natural resources and geographically suitable climate for trade. Rich resources attracted many invaders who looted and tried their best to destroy its rich culture and heritage. But hats off to all those Indians who sacrificed their lives to protect and to transfer its rich heritage to the successors. MoE of Indian Government have taken important decision of starting IKS division to nurture Indian knowledge system. KS Wiki is a good step in this direction. Present paper highlights the key contribution of Maharshi Kanad (Rishi Kashyap) in the field of Physics. It also compared the famous atomic models of west with the Vashashika Darshan of Kanad which clearly throw light the fact that these theories are developed by Indian sages much before the west gave it to world. It also unfolds the laws of motion (known on the name of Sir Issac Newton) through shlokas (verses) given by Kanada in Vashashika Darshan. This paper certainly help the researcher to explore the physical concept with a new point of view which was not gotten any credit in spite of capable of explaining weird physical concepts.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge System, IKS WiKi, Maharshi Kanad, Vaishashika Darshan, Atomic Models

Introduction

The ancient Indian knowledge system was enriched in art, culture and scientific knowledge and tradition. Foreign invasion tried a lot to defame India's glory and aimed to abolish its rich heritage. By stealing its resources, destroying its libraries (like Nalanda Pustakalaya), Gurukuls (schools) and filling Indians with a sense of insecurity as well as inferiority. Centuries long slavery threw India in a place where Indian themselves are unaware about the deeds of their ancestors. They are forced to see the world with the glasses of others. Which in turn resulted in a condition where they learnt whatever taught by west and slightly forgetting India's glorious past. Maharshi Kanad is one of those whose work has not got proper recognition in spite of the fact that they proposed famous 'Vashashika Darshan' which includes the atomic model and laws of motion along with many other aspects of modern Physics.

Maharshi Kanad

Maharshi Kanad (around 6 th century BCE) also known as Rishi Kashyap was a great Indian sage who proposed the Vashashika school of Philosophy in which he gave ideas about atomic models, laws of motion, gravity etc.

Kanad and atomic model [1]

Much before John Dalton (1808) who is enjoying the honour as Father of Atomic Theory, he proposed that every substance (padartha) is made of tiny particles (kana) which he called as parmanu (particle which cannot be destroyed, cannot be further divided, cannot be seen with naked eyes. Moreover, different combinations of such tiny particles is responsible for formation of different substances around the world. According to him, parmanus are of four types: prathvi (earth), agni (fire), jal (water), vayu (air). These four types of parmanus, having unique characteristics properties, give birth to different padarh (substance) He classified the substance as dravya, guna, karma, samanya, vishesh and samvay.

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Further he explained padartha as eternal (shashwat) and non-eternal (ashashwat).

Kanad and Gravity [2-4]

Credit of discovery of Gravity mainly goes to sir Issac Newton of 17th century but Indians have discovered this concept much earlier. Maharshi Kanad (around 6 th century BCE), a Vedic philosopher, given this concept of modern Physics much earlier in his indigenous work known as 'Vashashika Darshan'. According to him, Gurutva (Sanskrit word) is main factor which is responsible for falling of things on earth.

Sutra 5.1.7 (Vaishashika darshan) talks about 'GURUTVA' as a responsible factor for falling of the body.

The related Sanskrit preposition from Vaishashika darshan is as follows:

"Sanyogabave gurutvat patanam"

Here, Sanyogabave can be broken into two words.

Sanyog=contact

Abhav= absence

On combining these two words sanyog and abhav, the meaning appears as a whole is as follows:

Sanyogabave= absence of contact force

And

Patanam= falls

This sutra 5.1.7 implies that the body falls if there is no counter force to stop it and the phenomenon which is responsible for it is known as 'GURUTVA'.

Sutra 5.18 (Vaishashika darshan) talks how

motion will be if there is no force acting on a body.

The related Sanskrit preposition from Vaishashika darshan is as follows:

"Nodanavisheshabhavat nordhavam n tiyyarakggamnam"

Here, Nodanavisheshabhavat can be broken into three words.

Nodan =upward thrust

Vishesh=specific

Abhavat= absence

Nordhavam=no upward

n tiyyarakggamnam=no oblique motion

On combining these words Nodan, vishesh, abhavat, Nordhavam and n tiyyarakggamnam

the meaning appears as a whole is as follows:

If there is no specific upward thrust, there will be no possibility of upward motion and oblique motion.

Kanad and Laws of motion [5-7]

Much before sir Issac Newton Kanada had proposed the laws of motion in Vashashika Darshan. Maharshi Prashastpad wrote commentary on Vaishashika Darshan in which he explored the laws of motion previously described in Vaishashika Darshan. Aforementioned sutras talk about how motion will be if there is no force acting on a body. The related Sanskrit preposition from Vaishashika darshan is as follows:

Sutra: Vegah nimitta visheshata karmanojayte.

Which produces the same meaning as Newton's first law. (The state of a body remains unchanged when affected by no external force acting on it.)

Sutra: Vegah nimitta visheshata karmanojayte niyatdik kriyaprabandh hetu.

Which produces the same meaning as Newton's second law (how momentum of a body changes with time when affected by net external force.)

Sutra: Vegah sanyog visheshvirodhi.

Which produces the same meaning as Newton's third law of action and reaction.

Description of these laws of motion is also found in NG Dongre's famous book 'Physics in ancient India'.

Kanad and Elasticity [8]

Kanad talked about akunchan (contraction) and prasaran (expansion). He used the word sthiti stapak samskara which is analogous to concepts of elasticity of modern Physics. Padartha (substance) when undergo external force changes there position and revert back to its position due to sthiti stapak samskara (elasticity). He utilised the famous bow arrow example to explain this process.

Sutra 1.1.7 (Vaishashika darshan) talks about ELASTICITY as a responsible factor for akunchan and prasaran of the body.

The related Sanskrit preposition from Vaishashika darshan is as follows

Utkshepanam avkshepnam akunchanam prasaranam gamanmiti karmani.

Here, Utkshepanam avkshepnam akunchanam can be broken into three words.

Utkshepanam =upward thrust

avkshepnama=downward motion

akunchanam= compression

prasaranam=expansion

gamanmiti =linear

karmani=actions

On combining these words, types of motion classified by kanad through his atomic model that every substance is made up of matter and atoms takes and release energy in akunchan and prasaran (bow and arrow analogy)

Conclusion

Not only in India even in foreign, scholars are very keenly studying the contribution of Maharshi Kanad's. A man who has given sutras which explains scientific concepts efficiently.

That's a different story that Indigenous work has not received that much credit and fame in today's world, long period of slavery and continuous attacks may be a significant reason for that. Government of India through its MoE is working for providing proper respect and credit to indigenous work. IKS Wiki is a good step in this direction. Modern physics theories and laws are already available in some form in Indigenous work. This literature is full of infinite possibilities. Indian sages and scholars worked on different fields like astronomy, mechanics, geometry, mathematics, chemistry, medicine etc and proved there excellence Their contribution is incomparable. It is really strange to believe that people of that time has developed such scientific texts and creations which seems impossible even today. The work of Maharshi Kanad needs proper

recognition. This work is an attempt to bring his work in front of all the scholastic community.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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