

## **An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory**

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**Lecture- 41**

**Guna or Poetic Merit: Bhoja**

Hello everyone,

In the previous video lecture we saw the theory of *guṇa*, as it was conceptualized by Ānandavardhana. We saw that Ānandavardhana's contribution to the theory of *guṇa* was really remarkable in the sense that he reduced the number of *rasas* to three, namely *mādhurya*, *ojas* and *prasāda*. He also connected the idea of *guṇas* to *rasa* and held that *guṇas* are dependent on *rasas*, although they reside in *śabda* and *artha*. He held the view that while *alaṅkāras* are like ornaments such as bracelets, *guṇas* are like the qualities such as courage. According to Ānanda, *mādhurya* is associated with emotions like *śṛṅgāra*, *hāsyā* and *karuṇā*, while *ojas* is related to the *rasas* like *raudra*, *vīra* and *adbhuta*. He was of the view that *mādhurya* and *ojas* were distinctly different from each other, while the quality called *prāsada* could occur with any *rasa*. We also saw that while describing the theory of *mādhurya*, Ānandavardhana disagreed with Bhāmaha's opinion that *śravayatva* or the quality of being pleasing or soothing to the ear is unique to the quality called *mādhurya*. We also saw Ānandavardhana's opinion that *saṃghṭana* or style and *guṇa* or poetic merits are two different entities. Now in this lecture, we are going to see another important theoretician in the history of *guṇa*. He is none other than Bhoja.

Bhoja is of the view that even if a piece of writing is endowed with *alaṅkāras*, it cannot qualify to become a poem, if it is devoid of *guṇas*. This means that Bhoja is giving more importance to *guṇas* and he is a follower of Vamana on the question of the relative importance of *gunas*. Bhoja's observation is worth mentioning in this context. Bhoja says, "That poetry which is lacking in *guṇas*, is not worth listening to, even if it is well adorned with *alaṅkāras*. Of the two— inherence of good qualities and inclusion of ornaments, the first one is more important". Bhoja in his *Srngaraprakasa* came up with 24 *guṇas*, on the basis of *śabda* or sound, *artha* or sense. Bhoja calls *śabda guṇas* as *bāhya guṇas* and *artha guṇas* as *ābhyantara guṇas*. He also mentions a category called *vaiśeṣika guṇas*. *Vaiśeṣika guṇas* are *doṣas* that turn out to be *guṇas* in some situations.

First, let us take a look at the śabda guṇas or bāhya guṇas. The first guṇa that Bhoja mentions is śleṣa. Śleṣa is that excellent quality by which words seamlessly merge with each other, in such a manner they appear as one word. Here, Bhoja is following the definition of Vāmana about śleṣa. The next guṇa that Bhoja mentions is prasāda. Here also, Vāmana's definition of prasāda is followed by Bhoja. According to Bhoja, prasāda is that kind of quality where the flexibility of structure co-exists with the compactness of word structure. In his definition of prasāda, Bhoja closely follows the definition of Daṇḍin and says that prasāda is the ability of a word to denote the meaning without much effort on the part of the listener or reader. For Bhoja, the quality called samata is the uniformity of words on the basis of the relation between letters forming the words. The next quality that Bhoja talks about is mādhyurya. Mādhyurya is the combination of words without long compounds. After Mādhyurya, Bhoja defines saukumarya. Saukumarya is the absence of harshness, due to the use of soft syllables. The next guṇa, arthavykati, is the completeness of the sentence. Here, Bhoja is reproducing Daṇḍin's definition of arthavykati. The next poetic merit, Kānti, is the richness of words giving rise to a dignity in the composition. According to Raghavan, here Bhoja follows the definition of Vāmana, since Daṇḍin does not have an aspect of kānti, which can be related to śabda. The quality called audarya, which he defines next, is the liveliness in the composition. In other words, it is that quality by virtue of which people feel that the words are dancing. It is called the vikaṭatva of words. In other words, the arrangements of words in such a manner that the number of letters in them gradually increases. Here, Bhoja follows the definition of Vāmana given in his Kāvyaśāstra. The next guṇa, udāttata, is the mention of worthy epithets. After udāttata, Bhoja mentions ojas. Ojas is the superabundance of compound words.

Then, Bhoja introduces a new guṇa called aurjitya. Aurjitya is the compactness of the structure. It is a new guṇa that Bhoja introduces. Raghavan points out that Bhoja creates this new guṇa out of the śabdaguṇa which Vāmana calls ojas. The next guṇa is preyas. It is an altogether new guṇa for Bhoja. This does not mean that it is a new concept altogether. Bḥamaḥ, Daṇḍin and Udbhata had defined preyas as an alaṅkāra. In their parlance, preyas was an affectionate utterance. Here Bhoja incorporates the same idea without any change of definition. So, Vāmana's idea of preyas is indeed an affectionate utterance.

The next guṇa that Bhoja defines is suśabdata. What is suśabdata? Suśabdata is the proper use of nouns and verbs in conformity with grammatical correctness. The next guṇa, samadhi, is the

transference of the qualities of one object to the other. For example, if we apply the qualities of a sentient entity to a non-sentient thing, it is called samādhi, according to Bhoja.

Then, Bhoja introduces a new *guṇa* called *sauksmya*. *Sauksmya* is a new *guṇa*. It is the use of words in which a subtlety of sense is involved. It is an expression that means one thing on the surface level but means something else suggestively or metaphorically. According to Raghavan, "Ratneśvara illustrates this *guṇa* by comparing it to the stone in which the form of horse, elephant, etc. which the sculptor is going to draw out, is in a new latent form."

The next *guṇa*, *gāmbhīrya*, is again a new *guṇa* that Bhoja introduces. It is the quality of containing all concepts of *dhvani*. *Dhvani* is conceived of as a *guṇa* here. *Vistāra* is the analytic expression of idea. It is the proper expansion of an idea. *Samkṣepa* is the next *guṇa* that Bhoja mentions. It is the exact opposite of *vistāra*. According to Bhoja, it is a brief or condensed expression. *Sammitatva* is the use of exactly as many words as are required to understand the sense. Rāghavan points out that that *sammitatva* can neither be *vistāra* nor *samkṣepa*. It is the use of the right number of words to express an idea. The *guṇa* called *bhāvikatva* is an expression of deep emotion. It is related to *bhāva* and *rasa*. The *guṇa* called *gati* is an orderly sequence of ascent and descent. The next *guṇa* that Bhoja mentions is *rīti*. It is the maintenance of the original manner. Bhoja says that this can become a *guṇa* only under some circumstances. If it is carried out at length, then this can turn out to be monotonous. The last *guṇa* that Bhoja mentions is *praudhi*. *Praudhi* is the expression involving a depth or maturity of sense.

Now, let us take a look at the *artha-guṇas* mentioned by Bhoja. The first *artha-guṇa* that he mentions is *śleṣa*. *Śleṣa* is the quality of being well connected in the sequence of events. *Śleṣa* is the unity or the perfect commingling of many ideas in a poetic composition according to the order of events. *Prasāda* is the clarity of sense. *Samatā* is the non-relinquishment of the sequence of ideas. It is the description of the natural order of things, as found in the world. When this order is not properly maintained, it results in the *doṣa* called *kramabhaṅga*. *Mādhurya* is the placidity even under the influence of anger etc. Raghavan's observation is of particular importance in this context. Raghavan observes, "This has nothing to do with Vāmana's *artha mādhurya* which is *ukti-vaicitrya*. This *mādhurya* of Bhoja is more a *gunā* of the *nāyaka* or *nāyika* to be treated under *sāmānyābhinaya*." *Saukumārya* is the absence of harshness i.e. tenderness of ideas. *Arthavyakti* is a faithful description of the nature of things. *Ojas* is the emphatic assertion of a certain statement. *Kānti* is the conspicuous presence of *rasas*.

Audarya is the grandeur of glory. Udāttata is the nobleness of intention. Aurjitya is the expression of anger gone to excess. Daṇḍin refers to aurjitya as urjasvin. It is a haughty expression. We are not clear what Bhoja means by the quality preyas. All that we know certainly about this quality is that it is a virtue that arises out of love. Suśabdatā is the use of auspicious expressions for the inauspicious idea. Samādhi is the quality arising out of the one's ability to exhibit one's feeling artfully, by adopting some pretext. Saukṣmya is the comprehension of one's inner feelings from external gestures. According to Raghavan, this seems to be a case of dhvani of vastu or rasa, etc.

Gāmbhīrya is the expression containing technical ideas pertaining to śāstra. Vistara is a gradual manifestation of the intended sense. Samkṣepa is the brevity in which an extensive topic is expressed in a single sentence. Sammitatva is the suitability or exact matching of word and sense. Raghavan is of the view that this looks like a śabda guṇa, although Bhoja presents it as an artha guṇa. Bhāvika is vyājokti or dissimulating statement. The illustrative verse given by Bhoja explains this guṇa further. In the verse given by Bhoja, a 'loose' woman who goes to meet her lover is presented. Although, she is going to meet her lover, she makes her husband believe that she is going for some legitimate purpose.

Gati is the comprehension of one meaning from another. We can say that this is clearly a case of dhvani. Rīti is the sequence of actions from the very beginning. Ukti is the bringing out of the sense intended with some amount of delicacy so as to avoid any vulgarity. This is another kind of bhaṅgī-bhaṅti. Praudhi is bringing out of the intended meanings in short clauses consisting of finely chosen words and expressions.

Bhoja also lists 24 vaiśeṣikaguṇas. Vaiśeṣikaguṇas are in fact poetic faults or doṣas, which are capable of turning out to be guṇas on certain special occasions. Bhoja reserves 24 vaiśeṣikaguṇas for the pada or word, vākya or sentence, and sentence meaning. We are not going to deal with this category in detail now, since this is only an introductory course to the theory of poetics. These dosas turn out to be guṇas especially when they are used for imitative purpose. For example, grammatical incorrectness is a fault. But it turns out to be a guṇa, when the poet tries to imitate the speech of a child. If the poet follows grammatical correctness in this context, it will definitely be considered a fault. So, these are the major qualities or poetic guṇas that Bhoja is referring to in his Sarasvatikanthabharana and Srngaraprakasa.

Having seen all the major points that we need to discuss in connection with the theory of guna vis-à-vis Bhoja, we have seen that, in Bhoja's theoretical corpus, the number of gunas have increased from ten to twenty-four. Bhoja also follows the general pattern of sabda gunas and artha gunas. A new category of guna that we find in Bhoja is the guna called vaisesika guna. As we have seen vaisesika gunas are, in fact, dosas. But these dosas can sometime turn out to be gunas in the representation of certain characters. Since, we have seen this idea in connection with our discussion of aucitya, I do not wish to get into its details. In the next video lecture, we will see the theory of guna conceptualized by Agnipurana. Thank you!