

An Introduction to Indian Literary Theory
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Lecture- 46
Theory of Dosa or Poetic Blemish: Bhamaha's View

Hello everyone,

In the previous video lecture, we saw the doṣas mentioned by Bharata. In this lecture, we are going to see the doṣas listed by Bhāmaha. In *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*, Bhāmaha mentions fifteen *kāvya-doṣas*, namely apārtha, vyartha, ekārtha, sasamśaya, apakrama, śabdahīna, yatibhrṣṭa, bhinnavṛtta, visanddhika, deśavirodha, kālavirodha, kalāvirodha, lokavirodha, nyāvavirodha and āgamavirodha. Let us take a look at all these doṣas in detail.

At this juncture, I would also like to point out that when we cover all these fifteen doṣas mentioned by Bhāmaha, we will be finishing the fourth chapter of *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*, as well. Now, let us see the first doṣa mentioned by Bhāmaha which is apārtha. According to Bhāmaha, apārtha is the absence of meaning due to the lack of connection between sentences. Here, Bhāmaha says that mere grammatical perfection is not enough to generate meaning in a sentence. For example, Bhāmaha says, sentences like ten pomegranates and six pancakes, etc. do not make any sense. We have seen this example previously in connection with Vāmana's idea of guṇa where Vāmana said that mere adherence to grammatical perfection is not enough to generate sense in a sentence. Here, Bhāmaha is presenting it as a doṣa. Noam Chomsky has given a similar example to denote a sentence that is grammatically well-formed, but semantically nonsensical. The example given by Chomsky is "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously." This sentence is grammatically perfect, but it does not make any sense.

The second doṣa mentioned by Bhāmaha is vyartha. Vyartha is the presence of conflicting meanings. Bhāmaha says, the doṣa called vyartha arises, when "the first meaning is opposed to the second one, thereby producing a contradictory effect." The following is an example of vyartha given by Bhāmaha, "Oh my friend! Do exhibit anger towards your lover. Do not become soft to him. Women who follow the wishes of their husbands do not forfeit their love". In this example, the speaker says that the lady love should show her anger towards her lover. Then later, the speaker advises her that a woman who follows the wishes of her lover

never loses her love. In the first line, the speaker asks the lady love to show her anger towards the lover and in the second line, he asks her just to follow the words and wishes of her lover and remain calm in his presence.

The third doṣa mentioned by Bhāmaha is ekārtha. This is a doṣa that we have already seen in Bharata. Ekārtha is tautology or punarukti. Bhāmaha defines ekārtha in the following words, "Where two statements convey the same meaning, it is a case of ekārtha." He is of the view that no purpose is being served through the repetition of ideas. It only creates boredom. Bhāmaha says that if the meaning is very clear in the very first utterance, then why does one need to repeat it? But at this point, Bhāmaha reminds us that ekārtha cannot be considered a nitya-doṣa or an eternal fault. As far as Bhāmaha is concerned, the doṣa ekārtha can become acceptable in the expression of emotions like fear, sorrow, jealousy, etc.

The next doṣa is sasamśaya or doubt. According to Bhāmaha, "that state of mind is called 'doubt,' in which after hearing certain common attributes of two objects, without presenting any differentiating qualities, the mind feels unable to fix itself on any one of the two as the object that is meant."

In other words, "When properties common to two things are heard but their particular ones are not heard, there arises a doubt as to whether the description applies to the one or to the other." Actually, we are not sure what is the ill of this doṣa. The same is the case with the example given.

The next doṣa we are going to see is apakrama. Apakrama is the absence of order. Bhāmaha says, "Krama is that where the things attributed follow the order of the first statement. A statement which does not follow the order set by the first statement is said to have the doṣa apakrama" (IV 20). The following is an example of apakrama that Bhāmaha gives. "May Śiva and Viṣṇu protect you--they who wear respectively a crown and the moon; who are of the colour of the dark cloud and snow, and who carry the disc and the trident" (IV 21). In this example, the order is set in the very first sentence. The first person mentioned in the first sentence is Śiva and the second one is Viṣṇu. But this order is completely messed up in the second statement. We know that Śiva wears the moon and Viṣṇu, the crown. Ideally, to conform to the order set by the first statement, in the second statement the moon should have been mentioned first and then the crown the second. The same is the case with the colour of

the god. Śiva has the complexion of the snow and Viṣṇu's complexion dark like the cloud. Here also, to follow the krama set by the first statement, the white complexion of Śiva should have been mentioned first, and then that of Viṣṇu. Finally, the order in which weapons of the two gods are mentioned is also faulty. First, the poet should have mentioned the trident and then the disk. But they are mentioned the other way round.

Now the next doṣa is śabdahīna. What is śabdahīna? Śabdahīna is the ungrammatical use. Bhāmaha defines śabdahīna in the following words, "that doṣa is called śabdahīna in which words are used against the injunction of the sūtrakāra and padakāra. This is so because such use is not found amongst the disciples of eminent teachers" (IV.22). Here the word sūtrakāra refers to Pāṇinin and padakāra refers to the author of pādapāṭha. Now let us take a look at the next doṣa mentioned by Bhāmaha. The next doṣa that Bhāmaha mentions is yatibhṛṣṭa. Yatibhṛṣṭa is the fault of deviation from the rules of metrical pause.

The next doṣa is bhinnavṛtta. According to Bhāmaha, the fault called bhinnavṛtta occurs, when the rules of metrical caesura have been ignored. Bhāmaha observes that, "the defect "wrong metre" or bhinnavṛtta consists in either the distribution, in improper places, of long and short letters or of their absence or their abundance." In other words, Bhāmaha is of the view that there are three situations that can possibly lead to bhinnavṛtta. First of all, the distribution of long and short letters in improper places. Secondly, the absence of caesura and finally, the abundance of caesura.

The next doṣa is called visanddhika. visanddhika is the absence of conjunctions or the necessary euphonic combination. After visanddhika, Bhāmaha mentions the doṣa called deśavirodha. Deśavirodha are the statements that are against the known facts about places. The following is an example of deśavirodha that Bhāmaha mentions:

"By the side of the caves in the Malaya mountains, the agaru tree grows, the deodars bend under a load of their fragrant blossoms" (IV 30).

Here the Malaya mountains are in the south of the tropics. Both Agar and deodar are found in the Himalayas. But as opposed to this general knowledge about the places, the poet says that the deodar and agar trees are found in the Malaya mountains. This is an example of the doṣa called deśavirodha.

Now, let us take a look at the next doṣa called kālavirodha. Kālavirodha is the inappropriateness of time. According to Bhāma, time is divided into six divisions by the six seasons. Kālavirodha is the transposition of the peculiarities of one season as occurring in another. The following is an example of kālavirodha: "The mango trees being in full bloom brighten the forest and render fragrant the winter winds which carry cold spray" (IV.32). It is an example of kālavirodha because the mango trees do not bloom in the winter season. But here in this example, the mango trees are said to have bloomed in the winter season. The next doṣa that Bhāma deals with is kalāvirodha or the poetic fault arising out of the lack of technical knowledge about arts. Bhāmaha defines kalāvirodha as follows, "The word *kala* includes both technical knowledge and technical skill in arts" (IV.33).

The next doṣa is called lokavirodha or the statements that go against the common knowledge about the ways of the world. According to Bhāmaha, the world is divided into the immovable and the movables. The term, world, here stands for the experience of the working of these two worlds. Whatever is contrary to the experience of these two is called loka-virodha. The following is an experience of loka-virodha:

"Out of the ichor flowing from the cheek of those elephants, there arose a frightful river whose torrent carried away elephants, horses and chariots" (IV.37).

I am not sure why Bhamaha says that this statement is an example of a defect called loka-virodha. It is actually an example of hyperbole or atīśayokti. It is true that in reality it is not possible to have a frightful river out of the ichor of elephants. The same is the case with the next example that Bhāmaha gives in this respect. "The froth issuing from the mouths of the galloping chargers made the path-ways in all directions knee-deep with water" (IV. 38). This situation also does not arise in real life. That is to say, it is not possible for the froth arising out of the mouths of the galloping horses to flood the field. Though it is technically an example of loka-virodha, this can also be considered an example of hyperbole which Bhāmaha holds in high esteem.

The penultimate doṣa or defect or doṣa that Bhāmaha mentions is nyāyavirodha or the poetic blemish that arises out of the statements contradicting the observations in śāstras. Bhāmaha says, "Nyāya refers to the treatises that deal with three goals of life, namely dharma, artha

and kāma" Here, the fourth goal that is mokṣa is omitted. The following is an example of nyāyavirodha that Bhāmaha mentions:

"Having described King Vatsa as desirous of conquest, an as long-sighted as the aged, to describe such a wise one as being devoid of spies is an example of this defect".

I will explain this story, in a nutshell, to understand this passage properly. Here, I will be reproducing the summary of the story given in Naganatha Śāstri's translation of Kāvyaṅkārā. The story goes like this. The King of Ujjain had a daughter. The king thought that no bridegroom would suit her except king Vatsa. But Vatsa was his mortal enemy and could not be approached. So, he set out to find out a way of getting Vatsa into his power. Vatsa was very fond of hunting. One peculiar hunt in which he was specifically delighted was to entrap elephants by playing a melody on a magical lute, given to him by Vāsuki, the snake king. Knowing this, the king of Ujjain prepared a dummy elephant and concealed a number of warriors in it. The mahout of this dummy elephant was the general of the army Sālaṅkāyana. By this device, he decoyed Vatsa and captured him. Bhāmaha further describes: This king Vatsa did not realize the true nature of the false elephant which contained within itself a number of warriors and which had as its mahout Sālaṅkāyana the general of the enemy camp. Here, Bhāmaha says that it is surprising to note that the king who is wise and intelligent and good at the strategies of war did not have any spies to inform him of the impending danger in the form of the elephants. Also, the king could not understand the general of the enemy camp who appeared as the mahout. In addition to all these, Bhāmaha observes, "Even a child is able to distinguish between an actual elephant and a stuffed one. Is it difficult? How then does it happen?". Bhāmaha notes that the description of the king in this way is highly inappropriate and against the nyāya dictums.

The last doṣa that we are going to see is āgamavirodha. Āgama is constituted by Dharma Śāstra and the imitation of the conduct prescribed therein. Āgamavirodha is an action that is against the dictum mentioned in śāstra. Vāmana will later define this doṣa in detail.

Since, we have covered all the dosas, now its time to wrap up the class.

Before we call it a day, let us see all the doṣas in a nutshell. The first doṣa mentioned by Bhāmaha was apārtha. Apārtha is a doṣa that arises out of the absence of collective meaning. The doṣa called vyartha comes into being when contradictory meanings are put together.

Ekārtha is a tautology. Sasamśaya is the generation of doubt. The doṣa apakrama is the absence of order. Sabdahīna is the ungrammatical use. Yatibhṛṣṭa is the fault of deviation from the rules of metrical pause. According to Bhāmaha, the fault called bhinnavṛtta occurs, when the rules of metrical caesura have been ignored. Visanddhika is the absence of conjunctions or the necessary euphonic combination. Deśavirodha is inappropriateness of place. Kālavirodha is the transposition of the peculiarities of one season as occurring in another. Kalāvirodha is the poetic fault arising out of the lack of technical knowledge about arts. Lokavirodha is the statement that goes against the knowledge arising out of one's experience. Nyāyavirodha is the poetic blemish that arises out of the statements contradicting the observations in śāstras related to dharma, artha and kāma. Agamavirodha is an action that is against the dictum mentioned in śāstra.