

# LINGUISTIC ASPECTS REFLECTED IN DHVANYĀLOKA

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In India, all the schools of Indian Philosophy and the system of Grammar had already discussed elaborately the nature of word and the relations of word to that which is expressed. Gradually the Rhetoricians also have tried to explain the functioning of linguistic behaviour in their own ways. Among the great scholars who have given extra-ordinary contributions to the linguistic study, Bhatūhari, Kumarīlabhatta and Ānandavardhana come in prominent place. In this field, Sanskrit Rhetoricians have followed ancient Indian Grammarians and Mīmāṃsakas to strengthen their views and have made their own specific contributions also.

Though the linguistic concepts of different systems differ from one another, it was commonly held by all the systems that words denote primarily a conventional meaning and secondarily an implied one. The theory of primary and secondary meaning developed by the Mīmāṃsakas and the Naiyyikas in ancient India was further extended by Ānandavardhana, the great Ālaṃkārika in the latter half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century to include emotive and other associative socio-cultural meanings under linguistic meaning. Besides these two functions, Ānandavardhana accepted a third potency for language, namely suggestion (Vyañjan). In his opinion, Rasa is the content of poetry; and suggestion (Vyañjana)/Dhvani, the method of communication.

Dhvanyāloka, the most important, influential and well known work of Ānandavardhana set the proper foundation for literary criticism and inspired all later poets and critics in India. His main contribution in the field of semantics is the establishment of the Dhvani Theory. He took the cue from

Bhartrhari and developed his theory of Vyañjana or suggestion. Under the term 'artha' or meaning, Ānandavardhana included not only the cognitive, logical meaning, but also the emotive elements and the socio-cultural significance of utterances which are suggested with the help of contextual factors. Ānandavardhana accepted the suggestive power (Vyañjana) for language which is essential to convey the intended meaning of the poet. It was Ānandavardhana who for the first time pointed out clearly that emotional experiences can never be communicated merely by naming them; ie by repeating the terms referring to them, but have to be conveyed indirectly through the suggestive power of language, by describing the situational environment, by portraying the characters, their actions and reactions.

Ānandavardhana's Dhvani-Theory concerns itself with the grammatical-philosophical problem about the function of words and their meaning. Normally, words have only two types of meaning. One is direct, primary and conventional meaning; and this meaning have universal acceptance and is called sañketitārtha. The other is idiomatic meaning in particular expression sanctioned by usage and it also designated as Lakṣyārtha. Among these two, the first one is the power of denotation known as Abhidhā. Almost all verbal transactions can be operated by significative power of Abhidhā itself which produces primary meaning from the word directly. When the sañketitārtha is incompatible or where the primary meaning is obstructed, there works another power of word named as Lakṣaṇa. In ordinary parlance, there is no other function of words and these two functions serve our purpose very well.

From the above deliberation it is clear that with the help of different vyāpāras or śaktis, words convey the different types of meaning. The word 'gaṅga' of the expression gangayam ghoshah is supposed to convey its primary meaning as the current of the waters with the help of Abhidhā Vyāpāra; its secondary meaning as 'the bank of the river' with the help of

Lakṣaṇa Vyāpāra and the idea of the coolness and sanctity comes not from the ‘bank’ but from the ‘Ganges’ with the help of Vyañjan Vyāpāra.

Ānandavardhana opines that in literature, the above mentioned two functions viz. Abhidhā and Lakṣaṇa are found to be totally inadequate since the purpose of literature is not mere intelligibility or the education of the reader. The dictionary or lexicon meaning of a word analysed by the Grammarians and Philosophers has no aesthetic charm and attraction i.e. mere knowledge of grammar and lexicons is not enough to ensure a right understanding of poetry. If poetry also were predominantly addressed to the intellectual knowledge of grammar and dictionary should have proved quite sufficient for a right understanding of it. But poetry abounds in emotive suggestions and hence it is that a sound literary taste is necessitated in the critic. Therefore in the field of poetry, no amount of learning will matter without a proper aesthetic sensibility<sup>1</sup>. But with the help of Vyañjan, the whole context attains beauty and dimension. Therefore to evoke certain emotions which are universally present in human beings, there needs a new power of expression which is designated as Vyañjan or suggestion by Ānandavardhana. He accepted Abhidhā and Lakṣaṇa accepted by all schools, to this he added the third function Vyañjana to explain aesthetic enjoyment. This power of Vyāpāra of the words involved in the communication of an idea other than the primary and secondary meaning, it is known as Vyañjana and the additional meaning is called as Vyangya. In the first udyota of Dhvanyāloka itself Ānandavardhana establishes the existence of a meaning other than the Vacyartha and Lakṣyārtha with the help of so many illustrations and in the third udyota, he establishes the Vyañjan function as distinct from the Abhidhā or the denotative function. He accepted the suggested meaning depends on contextual factors and there is no one-to-one correspondence between an expression and the possible suggested meanings. The primary meaning is the dictionary meaning. But the suggested meaning

may change from context to context. The same expression may suggest different ideas to different persons in the same situation.

Though the importance of the suggestive power of language was known to all great poets and philosophers from very early times, it was Ānandavardhana; the 9<sup>th</sup> century poet-critic of Kashmir, who developed the theory of Vyañjanā or suggestive function as part of his Dhvani-theory and successfully applied it to poetry and dramaturgy. He also stated that the power of suggestion when transforms the literary expression into a reliable state cannot be comprehended in other recognized functions postulated by Grammarians and Philosophers.

For his theory of poetic suggestion, Ānandavardhana uses the term Dhvani and he says<sup>2</sup> that this term is taken directly from the Grammarians; just as the sounds of utterances reveal the integral linguistic sign(sphota), so also a good poem with its sound, as well as the literal sense, reveals, over and above the literal sense, a charming sense which has great aesthetic value. On account of this similarity of function, the term ' Dhvani' is applied to suggestive poetry when the suggested sense predominates over the literal sense.

Ānandavardhana starts his work Dhvanyāloka with the motto 'kavyasytm dhvani'<sup>3</sup> ie Dhvani is the soul of poetry. Then he tries to remove all confusion about the new concept and to give pleasure to the sensitive readers, he defines 'Dhvani' as that type of poetry where the expression and the literal meaning keep themselves subordinate and reveal the suggested meaning which is the most important. He has also stated that the soul of poetry is that suggested meaning (pratyamnrtha). Later he gives the full definition of Dhvani as that where the predominant suggested sense is revealed clearly. This element of suggestion or Dhvani which has so far been shown to posses a separate existence of its own outshining what is merely explicit, occupies the most prominent place in poetry. It may said to be the very soul

of poetry. So it is that we find even Valmiki, the first of poets, declaring that his pity at the sight of a pair of craucas which were forcibly separated from each other for ever, transformed itself into a verse<sup>4</sup>.

Ānandavardhana realized that taking the word away from its charm and glow, will mean nothing. A word has an area of meaning which is given to it by the context. Those who are not aware of the context in which a word used cannot fully grasp the inner meaning of a word which is termed as 'pratiyamana' by him and is accordingly similar to the charm and glamour of a beautiful damsel<sup>5</sup>.

While the function of denotation conveys only one idea and indication introduces different idea, the poetic function of suggestion leads to the comprehension of myriad meanings from one and the same expression according to the difference in the nature of the speaker and the person spoken to. This is why the power of suggestion is very powerful and capable of flashing different types of meanings of a word is passed into service by the poet as well as the respective reader; while other functions denotation and indication fail to deliver goods in communicating literary experience. Because of these reasons Ānandavardhana established the independent existence of the power of suggestion in addition to Abhidhā and Lakṣaṇa; and he also stated that the power of suggestion when transforms the literary expression into a reliable state cannot be comprehended in other recognized functions postulated by Grammarians and Philosophers<sup>6</sup>.

Ānandavardhana does not reject the earlier views of the Grammarians, Logicians and Mimamsakas. In addition to the primary and secondary significatory power of words accepted by them, he postulates a third potency for words and sentences which he calls the suggestive power as Vyañjan and in his opinion, in literature, it is this suggested meaning that is more important than the others.

Though the germs of the doctrine of Dhvani manifest themselves in the speculations of earlier theoreticians, Ānandavardhana is the first literary critic to give a full-bodied form to the concept and to enunciate a new principle of literary evaluation absorbing the concepts propounded by earlier theoreticians. On the basis of this theory, he declared that the soul of poetry was not style nor sentiment, but tone. Dhvani by which he meant that an implied sense was the essence of poetry. Later Ācārya Abhinavagupta wrote an elaborate and authoritative commentary *Locana*, on the *Dhvanyāloka*, wherein he has explained all the implications involved in the theory with several illustrations and he was able to overcome all opposition to the theory by rival schools. Gradually it becomes universal admiration and acceptance by later theorists.

**Notes.**

1. Ānandavardhana : *Dhvanyāloka*-1.7.
2. *ibid* -p.47.
3. *ibid*-1.1.
4. *ibid*.1.5.
5. *ibid*-1.4.
6. *Linguistic Thought in Ancient India*, p.49.