

RASA SIDHANTA

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Abstract -

The history of Rasa begins from Rg veda where it is generally used in the sense of the juice of the soma plant. It also denotes water milk, flavour and taste and essence. The Taitiriya Upanisad describes it ' raso vai sah ' rasam hyevayam labdhvanando bhavati' which describes the Supreme Reality. It is very likely that the earlier thinkers in literary criticism took this Rasa to mean the aesthetic pleasure.

Valmiki stands at the threshold of the development of the theory of Rasa and he is believed to be the father of the theory of Rasa. But it was definitely formulated in its first time by Bharata in his Natyasastra. Hence Bharata may justly claim the title of the Father of Sanskrit literary criticism. During the period between Bharata and Anandavardhana the theory of Rasa gained little favour among the literary critics. Before discussing the theory of rasa in detail we have to go through briefly some of the definitions of poetry.

Key Words: - Rasa, Rgveda, Taitiriya Upanisad, Valmiki, Bharata, Natyasastra, Sanskrit, Anandavardhana, Poetry.

What is poetry? The earlier definitions support sound and sense as equally important in poetry. Some others give more importance to sound alone. Bhamaha , Mammata, Vidyanatha , Vagbhata and Hemacadhra give equal importance to sound and sense. Bhamaha says - **Shabdarthau**

Sahitau Kavyam¹. Mammata defines poetry - **Tadadosau Shabdarthau Sagunavanalamkrti Punah Kwapi²** But Dandin gives more emphasis on sound – "sariram tavadistarthavyavaccinna padavali" Jagannatha defines poetry thus **Ramaniyarthapratipadaksh sabdah kavyam³.**

Like human beings the kavya possesses body and soul. If words are the body of poetry, what is the soul of poetry? To this question several scholars have given various answers. Vamana says that Riti is the soul of poetry. According to Anandavardhana dhvani is the soul of poetry. Kuntaka says that vakrokti is the soul of poetry and includes dhvani under vakrokti. The Rasa School of Bharata made rasa the soul of poetry or drama. Anandavardhana extends the concept of the rasa theory and lays down that rasadhvani is the best poetry. Viswanatha defines poetry thus "vakyam rasatmakam kavyam".

There are eight schools in Sanskrit poetics viz rasa alankara guna riti dhvani vakrokti aucitya and anumana. The view of Mahimabla is that dhvani is in under anumana. As he had no followers, he need not be considered as a founder of a school in order to understand the relative positions of rasa with other theories, they have to be examined and discussed here.

The Rasa School:

The earliest exponent of the Rasa School is Bharata. Kavya and natya are regarded as synonyms. The relation of rasas to poetry in general was not systematically dealt with till the Dhvanyaloka was composed. But it would not be correct to say that writers on poetics were not at all cognizant of the employment of rasas. The Kavyadarsa describes how the figure 'lrasavat' is depended on one of the eight rasas. Dandin was aware of the between sthayibhava and rasa. Bhamaha was also aware of rasas. But he did not treat them as the most essential element in poetry. He says that a mahakavya should be endowed in rasas. Vamana also says⁴ "diptarasatvam kantih" Rudrata is the first writer to treat of rasas in his work kavyalankara. Even in Natyasastra, rasa is not the principal subject,

¹Bhamaha - Kavyalankara, I -16

²Mammata - KavyaPrakasa I - 4

³Jagannatha - Rasagangadharam - I

⁴Kavyalankarasutravritti

but it is dealt with therein because of its relation to dramatic representation. The Natyasastra says that without rasa nothing can be done in drama. The Abhinavabharati remarks that one rasa runs like a thread in rupaka. According to the kavyamimamsa, Bharata dealt with rupakas and Nandikeswara with resas. But the present Natyasastra deals with both these subjects. Nandikeswara's work on rasas has not come down to us.

The Alankara and Guna Schools:

The foremost representatives of the Alankara School are Bhamaha and Udbhata. Dandin, Rudrata and Pratiharenduraja may also be held to belong to this school. It is not to be supposed that they were unaware of the theory of rasa. Udbhata defines rasavat in which he refers to the technical terms stayibhava, vibhava sansari (vyabhicari) bhava and then names the nine rasas. Dandin also defines rasavat and he is quite aware of these rasas and their bhavas. Although these writers are well aware of the existence of rasa, they had not found out how to apply the theory to kavya. To them alankaras seemed to be the most important part in kavyas, so much so they made rasas subordinate to alankaras and defined such figures as rasavat. Bhamaha and Dandin hardly made any distinction between alankaras and gunas. Dandin regards the ten gunas as alankaras. Bhamaha, Dandin and others were not aware of the theory that pratiyamana sense is the soul of poetry. They did not employ the words dhvani and aprastutaprasamsa, samasokti and aksepa. All the rest of dhvani they would have included under paryayokta. Bhamaha and Dandin spoke of vakrokti or atisayokti as all-important and as lying at the root of all figures. Bhamaha divided alankaras into those of sobda and of had the same distinction. Udbhata, Vamana and Rudrata enumerate. Bhoja divides alankara into those of sabda, those of artha and those of both.

Bharata mentioned four alankaras and ten gunas. Hence he must have made a distinction between them. Dandin included gunas under the word alankara in their wider sense. Bhamaha defines three gunas and dandin ten. The Dhavanyoloka established the relation between the gunas and alankara. Just as bravery and the like are the gunas of the soul, and bracelets are ornaments put on the body, so the gunas are the gunas of rasa. Madhurya is pre-eminently appropriate to vipralambhasrngara

and karuna, ojas to raudrarasa and prasada is common to all rasas. When the predominant rasa is srngara, anuprasa does not help. To employ yamaka in srngara is a great mistake, particularly in vipralambha. Most of the writers such as Mammata hold that the gunas are the qualities of the soul of poetry like bravery, that they are permanently associated with rasa and figures of speech are like ornaments on the body. Most of the alankarikas follow this position.

The number of alankaras has varied from time to time. Bharata mentioned only four. There are ancient writers who described only five or eight. Bhatti, Dandin, Bhamaha, Udbhata and Vamana speak of 30 to 40. Mammata defines 61. Ruyyaka about 75 the Candraloka 100 and Kuvalayananda⁵.

The doctrine of gunas was an ancient one. The inscription of Rubradaman refers to some gunas. In the Natyasasta gunas and alankaras occupy a subordinate position, while rasa occupies a prominent place. Dandin gives gunas great prominence. Vamana in his own way makes a distinction between gunas and alankara. He speaks of 10 sabdagunas and 10 arthagunas. Dandin mentions 10 gunas but makes no difference between sabdagunas and Mammata and Hemacandra reduced the gunas to 3 and the rest are included in them.

The Riti School:

Vamana is the foremost representative of Riti School. Dandin also devotes considerable space to Riti. He does not employ the word riti at all. Instead, he uses the word marga throughout. Vamana boldly asserts that riti is the soul of poetry. Riti is the special arrangement or combination of words. He speaks of 3 ritis – vaidarbhi, gaudiya and pancali.

The Riti School marks a real advance over the alankara school. Though it did not reach the real essence of poetry, it approached very near it. Vamana's attitude towards Rasa is similar to that of Dandin. They both give a small place to it in their works, but there is essential difference. Following Bhamaha, Dandin brings the Rasa under the

⁵Kuvalayananda - 115

Alankaras. Vamana treats them as the essential feature of the guna. It is the Rasas that give brilliance to poetic style.

The Vakrokti School:

The word vakrokti has been used in literature from ancient times with several meanings. Vakrokti is a striking mode of speech and differing from the plain, matter of fact ordinary mode of speech. Bhamaha used the word in the same sense. He required Vakrokti to be present in all alankaras. The poet gives expression to striking combination or relations of things, which are beyond the reach of ordinary men, Kuntaka used the word vakrokti mainly in this sense, but he goes too far in making vakrokti the soul of poetry. His definitions of vakrokti as⁶ vaidagdhyaobhangi bhaniti ' seem to be borrowed from other writers. The vakrokti of Rudrata and Ruyyaka is much narrower in scope than the vakrokti of Bhamaha. Dandin and Kuntaka theory is really an offshoot of the alankara school.

The Dhvani School:

The dhvani theory is only an extension of the rasa theory. It introduced reason to the field of poetry. Rasa is always suggested and not the Dhanyakka said that the best poetry is that which contains a charming vyangya sense. Only the words which have particular qualities and manner, and contain a charming vyangya constitute kavya.

The dhvani divided vyangya sense into three varieties, viz rasa, alankara and vastu. Under the first are included not only the nine rasas, but all the bhavas and their abhasas also. Vastudhvani means that a mere fact is suggested by words that express another sense. Alankaradhvani suggests an imaginative thing, which would assume the form of a figure of speech. Dhvanyaloka says that(1) 'rasa eva vastuta atma. Vastvalankaradhvani tu sarvatha rasam prati paryavarsyete iti vacyadutkrstau tau ityabhiprayena dhvanih kavyasyatmeti samanyena uktam'. The dhvani seems to hold like Wordsworth that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings *'sokah, slokatvamagatah'.

The Dhvanyaloka divided kavya into three- dhvanikavya, gunibhutavyangya and citra. In the last it included all alankaras of word and sense. But the Dhvanyaloka is careful to point out that a true poet

⁶Vakrokijeevitam 1 - 10

should never waste his powers over composing poems that have no relations to rasas. It assigns to gunas and alankaras their proper position (gunah sauryadivat, alankarah katakadivat) The dhvani school regarded them as of secondary importance. They are only the external appearance of poetry. It holds that we must look deeper into the inner meaning, viz the emotional atmosphere. When dhvani or rasa is said to be the soul of poetry, it is virtually employing the language of the Upanisad. There is a remarkable similarity between the aesthetic experience and the spiritual experience. It is, therefore that Mammata speaks of rasa as brahmasvadamiva.

The Aucitya School:

Ksemendra puts forward a theory that aucitya (appropriateness) is the soul of poetry. By aucitya he means a certain poetic harmony or fitness of things. Anandavardhana held that the absence of aucitya is the one impediment to the realisation of aesthetic pleasure and pointed out the necessity of aucitya in rasa. Ksemendra said that the presence of rasa contributes to aucitya. He extended this principle not only to the alankaras and gunas, but also to word, sentence, poem, verb, case, gender, number etc. His conception of aucitya is very comprehensive. He accepts nine rasas.

The Rasa-sutra:

There are several works that expound the theory of rasa such as the Natyasastra, the Abhinavabharati, Saraswতিকান্তাবহারানা, Srngaraprakasa, Dasarupaka, Srngaratilaka, Bhavaprakasana, Rasatarangini. The pivot round which the whole rasa system revolves is the sutra “vibhavanubhava vyabharisamyogat rasanispatih. Two features are to be noted in this sutra⁷:

- 1) The word sthayi does not occur in it and
- 2) it is somewhat vague as to the meaning Of the two words ‘samyoga’ and ‘nispati’.

There are four interpretations made by Lollata, Sankuka, Nayaka and Abhinavagupta. Their views are respectively called utpattivada,

⁷Dhvanyaloka- I - 5

anumitivada, bhuktivada and abhivyaktivada. Pandita Jagannatha also attempted to interpret the rasa sutra in his own way.

There are certain permanent and dominant basic moods in the minds of all spectators or readers. They are ordinarily dormant, but when appropriate stimuli are employed, they are roused and evolve into a pleasurable state of mind. These permanent moods are called sthayibhavas. The permanent moods are eight. Viz rati, hasa, soka, krodha, utsaha, bhaya, jugupsa, and vismaya. Some add a ninth one 'sama'.

Anubhava is defined as "anubhavo vikarastu bhavasamsucanatmakah" (Dasarupaka) on which Dhanika says "sthayibhavan anubhavayantah samajikan sabhruviksepakataksadayo rasaposakarino anubhavah" Eight of the anubhavas are called satvikabhavas. There is a difference of opinion as to why they are called satvikas. Satva means a sympathetic heart and satvika means 'satvena nirvrta' (Dasarupa) The external movements of the eye, eyebrows, glances, smiling face convey the emotion of love and hence are called anubhavas.

Bharata mentions forty-nine bhavas "Nanabhinayasambadhan bhavayanti rasaniman Yesmattasmadamibhavahvijneyanatyaktrbhih." Vibhavas are of two types viz alambana and uddipana. Alambana is the hero and the heroine. The exciting circumstances (causes) such as moonrise, spring, flowers, bower are Uddipनाविभवसः. There are thirty-three secondary moods such as nirveda, glani, sankha etc. These are called vyabhicari or sancaribhavas. Bharata describes them at length. "vididham abhimukhsna rasesu carantiti vyabhicarinah."⁸

The Application of Rasa Theory:

Rasa can be understood only by sahrdayas. The only proof of its existence is the carvana or asvada. We may apply the theory of rasa to the adikavya, Ramayana. When Valmiki was powerfully affected by the spectacle of the death of one of a pair of the loving kraunca bird at the hands of the hunter, the sage's imagination was stirred and he burst forth into an passionate song. The story is narrated in the Balakanda. The

⁸Natyasastra VI - 34

parting of the loving pair means the fall and death of the female bird are the vibhavas of karuna rasa. The lamentation and piercing cry of anguish uttered by the surviving male partner are the anubhavas of karuna. These powerfully moved the dormant mood of sympathy and pathos in Valmiki's heart. A moment it beat in unison with the sorrow of the bird (tanmayibhyava). Then there was an overflow of that powerful feeling in the form of measured verse 'ma nisada' .

Thus the Balakanda states the origin of the classical Sanskrit sloka and also contains the germs of the rasa theory. The Raghuvamsa echoes the words of Balakanda and so does Dhvanyaloka. It abounds in elaborate with the objective episode that stirred his heart. The situation as idealised by the sage's vision due to his sensitive mind gave rise to poetic outburst. Then the poet is commonly full of the transcendental (alaukika) mental experience. Every reader cannot appreciate or experience it. He must also possess sufficient mental equipment and visualise in his own mind the situation as expressed by the poet (kaveh srotuh samano anubhavah" Kavisahridayakhyam vijayate) The poet cannot communicate to every reader the emotional situation. He can only awaken in the man of taste (sahridaya) an emotional state similar to what he depicts in the poem.

All editions of the Ramayana make the hunter kill the male bird and it is the female that laments, but the Dhvanyaloka and Locana make the female die by the arrow. The Kavyamimamsa of Rajasekharan also supports the interpretation the Dhvanyaloka.

The Interpretations of Rasasutra:

We shall trace now briefly the growth of the theory of rasa at the hands of Lollata, Sankuka, Nayaka and Abhinava. The original works of Lollata, Sankuka and Nayaka are not yet available. We have to rely upon the summaries of their doctrines furnished by their adverse like Abhinava and Mammata.

Lollata's view:

After Bharata, the earliest to put forward a theory of rasa was Lollata. According to him Rasa, in the primary sense, belongs to the character. The actor identifies himself with the character and exhibits the sthayibhava of the character, which is intensely developed through vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabhicaribhavas. The sthayibhava thus

intensified is called rasa. The spectator ascribes rasa to the actor because he imagines himself for a moment to be the very same character. The spectator is charmed by this and feels delight. This delight is not the spectator's aesthetic appreciation. As the rasa is produced in the character, this view is called utpattivada' The word 'samyogat' means sambandhat' By vibhava, the sambandha is janya- janakabhava; by anubhava, it is gamya-gamakabhava by vyabhicaribhava, it is posya posakabhava. The word 'nispatti' means 'utpatti'.

Sankuka's view:

Samkuka thinks that rasa is a matter of inference. He criticises Lollata for holding that sthayibhava, when intensified, becomes rasa. For the existence of sthayibhava cannot be known at all without vibhavas etc. The actor imitates the character. The spectator apprehends the actor as the character. He does this by inferring the sthayibhava character in the vibhavas (causes), anubhavas (effects) and vyabhicaribhavas. This inference of sthayibhava is called rasa. That is why Bharata does not mention the sthayibhava in his sutra. Sankuka speaks of rasa from the standpoint of the spectator. In this respect, his theory is an improvement upon Lollata's. In Sankuka's view, the spectator infers the rasa imitated by the actor. The actor experiences feelings identical with those of the character and makes the spectator forget for the time being the difference between the actor and the character. As the rasa is inferred logically, it is called anumitivada. It is based on 'citraturaganyaya' The word 'samyoga' means 'gamya-gamakabhava sambandha', and 'nispatti' means 'anumiti'.

Bhattanayaka's view:

The next writer to put forward a better view of rasa is Bhattanayaka. He refutes the view that rasa is a matter of inference. According to him, rasa is neither known through the means of knowledge, nor produced, nor manifested. What really constitutes the realisation of rasa is based on the three functions of word- (1) abhidha (2) bhavana of bhavakatva and (3) bhojakatva or bhoga. All linguistic expressions has the first one. It is in the second that the language is differentiated from ordinary expression and passes on to poetic expression. This aspect (bhavakatva) is achieved in kavya by the gunas, alankaras etc. Dramatic representation possesses

the second and third aspects. Here bhavakatva is achieved through the four varieties of abhinaya.

There are two difficulties in the way of the realisation of the rasa (1) the individualistic elements of sahrdaya, actor and character and (2) the painful emotions which remain painful. These difficulties can be solved with the help of the bhavakatvavyapara. The sahrdaya through his imaginative sympathy (bhavana) identifies himself with the character and loses his individuality. The individual love of the character, the actor and the sahrdaya is submerged through their unification. This is called 'sadharanikarana' After this the third function (bhojakatva or bhoga) operates. This function kindles the instinct in the sahrdaya to develop to the climax of self-luminous bliss. Bhattanayaka's concept of bhoga has been taken from the Samkhya philosophy. The bhoga arises by the supremacy of the satvaguna over the rajas and the tamas' Hence it must invariably be pleasant. Thus this view solves the two difficulties raised above. According to Nayaka 'samyoga' means 'sadharanikarana' resulting from bhavakatvavyapara .The word 'Nispatti' means 'bhukti' so it is called bhuktivada.

Abhinavagupta's view:

The next and the last theory that satisfactorily and conclusively solved all the difficulties, was formulated by Abhinavagupta. He holds the view that rasa is abhivyakta. Rasa becomes abhivyakta by the power of vyanjana. He thinks that love and other moods are dormant in the mind of sahrdayas. These moods are roused by the stimulus of vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabharibhavas, and reach the state of rasa. This rasa realisation (rasapratiti) can be analyzed and described. He gives up the bhavakatva (sadharanikarana) and bhoga of Nayaka and brings them under vyanjana and rasapratiti (or rasasvada or rasacarvana) respectively.

According to Abhinava, soul is immortal, and all souls, particularly of the sahrdaya, have in them implanted certain instincts (sthayibhavas) When there is a clear representation of vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabharibhavas, this instinct (vasana) is developed to a thrill or joy. This is called rasa.

Rasa realisation is said to be alarukika (transcendental) Firstly because it is not produced by the ordinary causes Vibhavas anubhavas and

vyabhicharibhavas are regarded as the causes of the realisation of rasa. If they are the causes, are they karakahetus (causes) which produces the rasa) or are they jnapakahetus (causes which reveal things) They are neither of these. Rasa is not karya, because the rasapratiti (effect) does not exist, once the vibhavas (causes) etc are withdrawn. Rasa is not jnapya, because rasa does not exist before the vibhavas. The vibhavas only suggest the rasa. Hence rasapratiti is alaukika.

Secondly, rasa is transcendental by its psychological nature also, Rasapratiti is blissful knowledge. But this knowledge is neither 'nirvikalpaka' nor 'savikalpaka' The former knowledge has no definiteness and has no relations. But rasa is related to vibhavas. The latter is definite and is related to name, jati etc. but rasa is indefinable and a blissful experience. So rasa is different from those two varieties of knowledge. Hence it is alaukika.

Further, rasa is unique, because it is different from Yogic realisation. The process of the experience of rasa is pleasant unlike that of Yoga. The yogin realises the Absolute Brahman, while the sahrdaya realises some peculiar bliss involving differences. Yogic realisation is neither life nor death. It is perennial and eternal. But the realisation of rasa occurs only in life. It does not continue for long. Therefore, the resapratiti is unique and alaukika. As all rasas are pleasurable, even the karuna leads one to the realisation of joy. When the mind is completely absorbed in an emotional scene, it attains certain equilibrium. This balance of mind free from any disturbance, is called bliss. Pain is felt only when the balance of mind is disturbed. Thus on a philosophic basis one can establish how a tragic scene is pleasurable. According to Abhinava, the word 'samyoga' means 'vyangya -vyanjakabhava sambandhat' and nispatti means abhivyakti .

The Number of Rasas:

The controversy over the number of rasas still exists. Bharata mentions only eight rasas . Kalidasa , Vararuci ,Dandin and Bhamaha accept this number. But Udbhata recognises santa as the ninth rasa. He is probably the first writer who introduced santarasa. Most of the writers such as Lollata, Rajasekhara, Ananda, Abhinava, Tota, Nayaka, Kuntaka and Ksemendra accept it . Ananda holds as its sthayin neither nirveda nor

sama but trsnaksayasukha. He quotes Mahabharata as example. Some holds nirveda as its sthayin. Bhoja holds dhrti as the sthayin of santa. Abhinava accepts it as the greatest rasa. But Dhananjaya and Dhanika, both refute it. Some say that the rasas are given as eight only in natya and later santa is permitted in kavya Jagannatha and Madhusudana Sarasvati accept bhakti as a rasa. A few writers say that preyas, Vatsalya, priti, sneha, bhakti and sraddha are rasas.

Rasa-synthesis:

Rasa- synthesis means to reduce rasas to one prakrti and the rest as its vikritis. Bhavabhuti suggested such a synthesis in karuna. He says that there is only one rasa, karuna and it assumes different forms even as the same water assumes the forms of a whirl bubble etc. karuna is the prakrti, the other rasas are its vikritis .Ananda explains that the Ramayana is an epic of karuna. Bhoja was a monist and a pluralist combined. Rasa is only one to him, and that is srngara or ahamkara or abhimana. Abhinava considers santa as the one fundamental rasa and the other rasas are its modification. It has been recognised by all writers that rasa as such is one. Rasa is a rasa. It has no othername, it is one like the Brahman. Hence Bharata also uses the singular number, says Abhinava; 'na hi rasadrte kascidarthah pravarttate'.

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