

The Jaina Contribution to Indian Poetics

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I

A number of studies are available giving an idea of the number of Jaina authors on *Alaṅkāraśāstra*. The object of this paper is not to add to their number by mechanically cataloging them in a historical order. I would like to highlight a few points which are solid contributions by Jaina thinkers to the mainstream of Indian thought on poetry and which are in the nature of new watersheds or new turns given to conventional ideas.

II

It is long known to scholars that the earliest reference to nine *rasas* of “*kāvya*” (*nava kāvyarasa*) is to be found in *Aṇuogaddāra*, an early canonical text. It is also realised that the first mention of *śānta* under the name *praśānta* (Skt. *praśānta*) is to be had here ; and *Velanao* (Skt. *vrīḍanaka*) is reckoned here in place of *bhayānaka* (Vide, Āgamodaya Samiti Series Edition, p. 134). But what is not usually emphasized is the fact that *Kahuno* (Skt. *Karuna*) is used here in a special sense, viz. that of *Karuṇā*, i.e. pity or compassion and not in the usual sense of ‘sorrow’ (*śoka*). The word has a masculine ending as it agrees in gender with its substantive in masculine gender, viz. *rasa*. But its meaning was not ‘sorrow’ as it was commonly understood in the tradition of Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra*. That is why, while listing the names of *rasas* in the chapter on *Nāṭya* in his famous lexicon *Amarakoṣa*, the Buddhist lexicographer states the following synonyms all of which refer to ‘pity’, ‘pathos’, ‘compassion’ etc. and not even one which means ‘sorrow’ or ‘suffering’ :

Kāruṇyatī karuṇā-ghṛṇā
kṛpā dayā-anukampā syāt
anukrośo’pi (Loc. cit. VIII. 226)

This new tradition is corroborated by the first Jaina author in Kannada on poetics, viz. *Kavirā-jamārga* (9th century A.D.), who more than once, uses the expression *karuṇā-rasa* instead of *karuṇa-rasa* ; and who recommends the literary quality of *Mṛduta* or ‘softness’ of heart’ as most appropriate for its delineation in poetry. That he was following the Jaina tradition is clear also by his use of the name ‘*praśānta*’ instead of *śānta* in his enumeration of *rasas* (Loc. cit. II. 100). The example cited for *karuṇā rasa* by this author, (Nṛpatuṅga or his protege, Śrīvijayadeva, as sometimes averred) describes the love-lorn condition of a heroine and calls upon the hero to show pity on her (III. 191) ; there is no question of eternal ‘sorrow of bereavement’ consequent upon death of the beloved here.

The Jaina shift in emphasis from downright misery of characters to situations involving human sympathy or pity is a major turn from the perspective of literary criticism.

It is a major turn because it changes the very goal of literature too, centred on man. The Jaina view of worldly life or *saṃsāra* is such that it encourages the rise of renunciation (*vairāgya*) conducive to *prāśānta-rasa* on the one hand and to pity (*karuṇā-rasa*) on the other. 'Poetry for poetry's sake' is ruled out ; only poetry for religion's sake gets priority. The Jainas have an infinitely vast story-literature in Sanskrit, Prākṛta, Apabhraṃśa and modern Indian languages. But they are always *dharma-kathās* or religious stories or legends ; and they inculcate the highest spiritual value in a sugar-coated way through. This point is made explicit in the very invocatory verse of Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṇuśāsana* :—

*Akṛtrima-svādu-padām
paramārthābhīdhāyinīm
sarvabhāṣāparīnatām
Jainīm Vācamupāśmahe*

In explaining the above verse in his auto-commentary, Hemacandra further observes :—

*Vairāgyopajananamitivr̥ttam prastūyate
ityavadātakathanena vairāgyaheturvād
dharmakathāyāḥ parama puruṣārthābhi
dhāyaktvaṃ asti.*

The religious myth or story or poem contributes indirectly to the achievement of the *summum bonum* or ultimate enlightenment as it engenders a sense of revulsion to worldly pleasures. This view may be puritan ; but that is the Jaina view of man. Man deserves pity of the wise or the Enlightened saints for his indulgences due to ignorance ! This reminds us of the famous English remark :—"Life is a tragedy to those who think and a comedy to those who feel !"

III

The Jaina idea of the Goddess of learning or Sarasvatī also deserves our consideration. We have already seen her description by Hemacandra as *sarvabhāṣā-parīnatā* or embodiment of all languages on earth. Māṇikyacandra, the Jaina author of the earliest commentary, viz. *Saṅketa* on Mammaṭa's *Kāvya-prakāśa* makes this, much more explicit. According to him, the speech of Arhat Himself is that Sarasvatī, not any other goddess associated with any individual god as in Hindū mythology. She dwells in the mouth of Arhat and is the Mother of all humanity. Without her grace, nothing can dawn upon the minds of even the learned ! Hence though people widely differ on the issue of praiseworthy divinities, there is an exceptionally complete consensus among one and all about the praiseworthiness of Sarasvatī ! Nor is it surprising, because *She* upholds Wisdom :—

*Stutyam tannāsti nūnam
jagati na janatā yatra bādhām vidadhyāt
anyonya-spardhino'pi
tvayi tu nuti-vidhān vādino nirvivādāḥ
yat tadcitraṃ na kiṃcit
sphurasi matimatām mānase viśvamātāḥ
brāhmi tvam yena dhatse
sakalanayamayam rūpam arhanmukhasthā
(Op. cit. Mysore edn., 1974, p. 7)*

Thus it is that we can appreciate Namisādhu (writer of a prestigious commentary on Rudrata's *Kāvya-lankāra* when he postulates 'ultimate wisdom' (*samyagjñāna*) as the *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta-rasa* (Op. cit. XVI. 15). This idea came to be adopted later by the highest Hindū authorities also like Abhinavagupta. Bhoja in his *Sarasvatikanṭhābharaṇa* (*Kāvya-mālā* series, Bombay, 1925, p. 524-5) regards a *dhīra-śānta* (Lit. 'heroically tranquil') type of hero in this light itself when he postulates *dhṛti* or "steadiness of heart" as the ruling sentiment fostered by reflection of the highest Truth :

*Kasyacidupaśāntaprakṛteḥ
dhīra-śānta-nāyakasya
vastutattvālocanādibhiḥ uddīpyamānaḥ...*

This is why the Jaina pontiff (chief priest) pālyakīrti is quoted by Rāja-śekhara in his *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* (Gackwad Oriental Series Edn., 1934, p. 46) as saying that 'to a lover sporting in his beloved's company and passing the whole night like a moment, the moon might appear cool ; while to another man love-lorn and suffering pangs of separation from his sweetheart, the same moon light be veritably a scorching fire like a comet. But to a monk like me, who has no wife, and no separation either, the moon is but a round mirror in shape, neither hot nor cold :—

*Yeṣāṃ vallabhayā samam
kṣaṇamiva sphārā kṣapā kṣīyate
teṣāṃ śītataṛaḥ śaśi
virahimāmulkeva santāpakṛt
asmākaṃ na tu vallabhā
na virahah tenobhayabhramśinām
indū rājati darpaṇā
kṛtirayaṃ noṣṇo na vā śītalah*

IV

Jaina writers like Māṇikya-candra also furnish authentic information about lost works in Indian poetics. We know that all works on poetics before Bhāmaha's *Kāvya-lankāra* have been lost by the ravages of time. When Bhāmaha refers to a view of earlier thinkers as in—

*Rūpakādimalaṅkāraṃ
bāhyamācakṣate pare... (I. 14)*

"Others observe that figures of speech like metaphor are 'external', because they hold grammatical accuracy of nouns and verbs to be the first norm of figurative beauty !". How are we to know who these 'others' are ? Māṇikya-candra in his *Śaṅketa* (*Kāvya-prakāśa*, Mysore edn., pt. I, p. 485) states unambiguously :—

*Gauḍa-matametat
'This is the view of Gauḍas'.*

That this is not a wild surmise, but a statement of fact is proved by Bāṇabhaṭṭa's testimonia to this very view :—

*Gauḍeśvakṣaraḍambaraḥ
(Harṣacarita I.7)*

Similarly, when Mammaṭa quotes a Prākṛta Gāthā (Kāvyaaprakāśa, VII. 218, Mysore edn., pt. II p. 80)—
Jam parihariuṁ tīrai...

Mānikyācandra, like a modern scholar, adds the source in all detail :—

Ānandavardhaniya-pañcabāṇalīlākathāgāthhheyam

In one word, he has told us that it is a verse in Prakrit *gāthā* metre ; the name of the poem is *Pañca-bāṇa-līlā* ; and that it belongs to the literary form of *Kathā* or verse-poem. The value of such precise information to research scholars is inestimable.

V

Jaina writers have also given us very objective literary judgements. We might cite here one impartial judgement of the prestigious biography of Harṣa by Bāṇabhaṭṭa who is usually adored as an incarnation of Sarasvatī Herself ! Mānikyācandra states that having introduced the topic of Harṣa's warlike glory in the work, Bāṇa had no business to stray far away into a long irrelevant excursion on his autobiography. This has spoilt the unity of the work :—

*Harṣākhyāyikāyām 'jayati jvalad...' ityādinā Harṣotkarṣavad-vijaya-bījamupakṣīpya
anupayogi-Bāṇānvayasya Varṇanam.*

(Loc. cit., II, p. 177)

VI

We might close this article by indicating a line of critical survey of concepts, thoroughly attempted only by Jaina writers, on Poetics, like Hemacandra and Mānikyācandra. The development in the concept of *guṇas* from Bharata to Mammaṭa, undergoing substantial variations in Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, Udbhaṭṭa, Vāmana and Mangala—is laid bare at great length in the works of both these authors. Judging from the style of this first-hand material, it appears as if they have given us the lost chapter of Rājasekhara himself on the subject of *guṇas* from his *Kāvyaṁīmāṁsā*. It is only a hypothesis, yet to be proved on more solid evidence.

Yet the foregoing considerations would show how the contribution of Jainas to the development of Indian poetics is both substantial and significant.

जैनाचार्य एवं जनभाषा

जैनाचार्य जहाँ भी गये, उन्होंने वहाँ की जनभाषा को अपनाया और उसे प्रभावकारी माध्यम के रूप में समृद्ध किया। उनके लिए भाषा एक माध्यम मात्र थी। उन्होंने भाषा को अभिव्यक्ति का माध्यम बनाया। उनका उद्देश्य, सामाजिक जन-मानस को सद्-आचरण के लिए शिक्षित करना था ताकि समाज को स्थिर आधार मिले। इसीलिए उन्होंने अपनी शक्ति को ऐसे साहित्य के निर्माण में लगाया जो समाज के आचार-विषयक स्तर और नैतिक मूल्यों को उन्नत करे।

— स्व० डॉ० आ० दे० उपाध्ये