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THE CONCEPT OF *AUCITYA*.
ACCEPTABILITY AND APPLICABILITY
IN MODERN SANSKRIT

Taking start from *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana the concept of *Aucitya*, regarded as the secret of a Poetical creation emerges as a full-bodied Theory in the speculations of Kṣemendra who gives an extended scope to the concept and says that in induction of all Poetical elements the principle of Propriety is to be followed, because this is an essentiality in the process of Aesthetic Realisation.

In regard to the scope of the Principle of Propriety Kṣemendra states that it is to be followed in the matters of presentation of characters and situations, event and emotions in such a way that the connoisseur becomes able to accept them as realities and does not experience any uneasiness in acknowledging them as living characters and plausible situations, true events and real emotions. Kṣemendra hastens to state that this Principle is to be followed further in the matter of induction of literary excellences and incorporation of Poetic embellishments, as also in the matter of incorporation of compounds and selection of metres. Kṣemendra following Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, maintains that *Rasa* constitutes the centre of gravity of Poetic Art, and this prompts him to declare the supreme importance of the Principle of Appropriateness, which is responsible for the creation of the much – wanted state of ‘suspension of disbelief’ in the mind of the appreciator. It is projected that when all poetic elements are incorporated in accordance with the Principle of Propriety the specimen of lit-

erary document emerges as a synthetic whole, as a result of which *Rasa* manifests itself in its full splendour. Indian Theory states that while *Rasa* is experienced in a specimen where there is complete integration of images and elements it fails to get itself experienced in a document, where images and elements are disintegrated. The Theory of Appropriateness as adumbrated by Kṣemendra, therefore, is an extension of the Theory propounded by Ānandavardhana, and Abhinavagupta, – the only difference between the two lying in the fact that while Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta lay emphasis on the element of emotion, that constitutes the content of experience, Kṣemendra emphasises the technique of organising the characters and situations, emotions and effects, as also the art employed to effect a harmonious blending between the charmingness of expression and charmingness of content.

The concept of Propriety changes through passage of time. As a matter of fact due to impact with western ideas Indian society has already changed its attitude in regard to certain pet beliefs and ideas, considered as sacrosanct till the other day. As Sanskrit literary artists are composing their creations on the model of writings of contemporary artists, both Indian and Western imbibing fresh ideals and spirits, their concept of Propriety is undergoing a sea-change. This change is evident not only in selection of plots which in recent times are centering round lives of members of the weaker sections of society, but also in employment of techniques and metres, which in most cases have come out of their tight jacket discharging fresh air and fresh spirit. A perusal of the dramas of Pt Sreejib Nyayatirtha and the poetical creations of Ramkaran Sharma, Abhiraja Rajendra, Harshadev Madhav, Rebaprasad Dwivedi and many others testify to the veracity of this statement. In spite of all these new innovations they have retained the core content of Propriety, which constitutes the essential factor necessary for making the thought-currents presented in a literary document acceptable to the community of connoisseurs through creation of verisimilitude.

Pt Sreejib Nyayatirtha draws the plot of his plays from contemporary life and society mainly to attract the attention of the society to its evils and pitfalls with the objective of changing the social structure. In his play entitled '*Śata-Varṣikam*' Nyayatirtha criticises the desire of the man to conquer space and universe, and shows how technological

advancements can lead to destruction of the good planet Earth itself. In the play 'Kṣutkṣemīyam' in a similar manner, a lusty lash of satire is hurled at the functioning of Judiciary, which pronounces judgements depending on the evidence of a hopeless record keeper, who makes false entries in the record book, and sometimes even mutilates pages. In order to create satires of this types Nyayatirtha naturally has to leave the beaten track and to come out of the structure of old dramaturgy.

In organising 'objective co-relatives' i.e. characters and situations, emotions and their effects, Nyayatirtha maintains Propriety in all spheres, so that the connoisseurs are deluded to believe that the situations are real situations and the emotions also are real ones. In conformity to the practice of making Sanskrit simple Nyayatirtha avoids long compounds and employs short metres in order to make the structure of his plays comprehensible to the ordinary reader or spectator. Thus, though he does not maintain the Principle of Propriety in all sectors, he retains its core content, because without this a specimen of literary document is unable to establish itself as a successful and grand specimen of poetry.

Of the modern poets there are some, who follow the path shown by the ancients and being satisfied with the existing order of the universe they do not experience any uneasiness in the functioning of the world and gives expression to their profound faith in the moral order of the universe. These poets try to project the concert of the universe in their literary creations, and structure their poems on the model of the poems composed by great masters as Kālidāsa and the like. There are other poets, however, who do not believe in the moral order of the universe and do not accept the proposition that all is good in this world, because all the movements in the world are regulated by dictates of the God. The characteristic feature of the new revolutionary consciousness which is marked by distrust and pessimism, desire to give a face-lift to the society and establish the dignity of the human being on firm footing is remarkably present in their literary creations. While Rasik Behari and Rebaprasdad Dwivedi represent the first category of poets, Ramkumar Sharma, Abiraja Rajendra and Harshadev Madhav belong to the second category. Rashikbehari revives rhythmic pattern of the classical Sanskrit metres with force and vigour. Most of his poems centre round the characters and concepts of Vaisnavism like

Radhā and Krishṇa and devotion and withdrawal of the mind from sensuous pleasure. Rasikbehari is influenced to a great extent by the philosophy of Vaisnavism and consequently he accepts total surrender at the feet of the Almighty as the gateway to liberation. Naturally, his poems try to repeat the same images, that are traceable in ancient classical literature. In some of his poems, however, he has recast the episodes of the *purāṇas*, administering a dose of morality. The Principle of Propriety, thus, is maintained by him in all its aspects in the manner it has been maintained by his predecessors. Rebaprasad Dwivedi also is a believer in the moral order of the universe and the benign nature of its ways. He draws plots of some of his epics from Sanskrit Classics, but in some other epics he leaves the beaten track and draws plots from contemporary life and society. One such epic is the ‘*Svatantrya - Samhavam*’, which treats the history of freedom – struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The epic ends with a description of the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and laments on the great fall which Indian culture has suffered due to operation of the forces of disintegration and destruction. Rebaprasad organises the poetic elements following the line adopted by his predecessors and takes care to see that the Principle of Propriety is followed in all its areas. Rebaprasad however, avoids long compounds, possibly to make his poems more appealing to the modern mind.

Ramkumar Sharma draws the themes of most of his poems from contemporary life and society and tries to analyse both the greatness and deficiency of the modern society. The desire of the man to occupy the highest position without converting himself into a human resource, the loss of spiritual conscience, the desire to attain peace, both internal and external, the glory of humanity, all this gets suitable expression in Sharma’s poems. Sharma employs free metres and avoids compounds with meticulous care, as a result of which his poems become more enchanting to the modern mind. Since conventional metres and long compounds are absent in his poems the question of retaining appropriateness in these areas does not arise in his case. He, however, organises the excipients and ensuants in the desirable manner, and presents in a remarkable way the transient feelings which make most of his poems specimens of “*Bhava-dhvani*”.

Rajendra Misra is another modern poet who has been experimenting with various new forms in his Sanskrit writings. Rajendra also employs free metres and avoids compounds, he has been popular for his songs based on folk-metres in Sanskrit, particularly folk metres prevalent in Northern India. At times, his poems cast sarcastic flings at follies of individuals and societies, and sometimes sings *hallelujahs* to the glory of the Almighty and gives a clarion call to the posterity to practise total surrender. Rajendra thus, takes a middle path sometimes he gives expression to the old sentiments and his profound faith in the benign order of the universe; but sometimes he experiences uneasiness at the existing order of things and strikes the weakness of the society within lashes of satire. In organising situations and incidents, emotions and experiences, Rajendra, however, follows the norm of Propriety with meticulous care.

Harshadev Madhav is a modern poet in true sense of the term. He thinks that poetry should appeal first to intellect and thereafter to emotion. In the eternal controversy between intellectuality and emotionalism Harshadeva takes side of intellectuality and structures his poems in such a way that it becomes difficult for the common readers to penetrate into them and find out the real implications. The images created by Harshadev are discrete; like the painter suggesting a sublime theme with the help of certain disconnected patches of painting, Harshadev tries to project sublime theme with the help of certain images, which appear disconnected at the first sight, but on a deeper analysis reveal themselves as constituting a complete organised whole. The feeble moon-light peeping from the shrubs and trees, the parrot flying at the sight of the serpent, the dry and dead tree, these are assembled together to project a scene of total destruction, but at the same time, the function of suggestion is triggered into action in order to bring into light the sense that life is inherent in death and that creation is sure to follow destruction. As a matter of fact, Harshadev happens to be one of the most profound modern Sanskrit poets. He betrays the great influence exerted on him by modern vernacular Poetry and some of the images carved out by modern vernacular poets. Harshadev naturally is required to eschew compound and leave the straight jackets of the rules of metrics, but in order to trigger the function of suggestion into action he is required to organise other elements in accordance with the Principle of Propriety.

All this shows that the concept of Propriety is applicable in modern Sanskrit as well and that unless the Principle of Propriety is followed with meticulous care in the matter of organising 'objective co-relatives', a specimen of Poetic Art cannot establish itself as a specimen of grand and sublime poetry.

As a matter of fact, the concept of Aucitya is such an all-embracing concept that it is applicable not only to Sanskrit literature, but to all literary creations, the composers whereof are required to translate into practice the Principle of Propriety, particularly in the matter of organising events and situations, emotions and experiences, so that the literary documents become acceptable to the connoisseur through creation of much wanted "suspension of disbelief", projected by Coleridge as an essentiality for attainment of Aesthetic Experience.

It may be necessary at this point of time to explain the relation between the concept of Propriety and Aesthetic Realisation. In explaining the process of attainment of Aesthetic Relish, Indian Theoreticians have maintained that the appreciation of poetry conducts the reader to a higher plane of consciousness, reaching which he experiences his identity with all members of the association of the universe. When this happens the reader shares the joys and sorrows, not only of the characters presented but also of the entire universe. This, according to Indian Tradition, is the most blissful state of experience, in which the experiencer neither identifies himself fully with the characters nor experiences his detachment from the characters and incidents presented. This is a peculiar state of experience of 'identity-cum-difference' or to state more clearly, "involvement-cum-detachment", which is described as an inexplicable exercise. Indian Theoreticians, while explaining the concept of '*Rasa*' under the analogy of a fine beverage in which the tastes of all ingredients are blended together to bring into being a separate taste, say that the charmingness of the excitant and ensuent merge themselves completely in their endeavour to bring into being a new charmingness of Aesthetic Relish itself. This inexplicable nature of Aesthetic Relish goes to establish its all-embracing importance in the structure of poetry. The exercise of "involvement-cum-detachment", that is arrived at during the process of attainment of Aesthetic experience is a resultant of the process of Generalisation (*Sādhāranīkaraṇa*) which operates in the area of both the subject of

experience and its object. It is not without reason, therefore, that the process of attainment of Aesthetic Experience is described by Indian Theoreticians as a process of unique confrontation between the universalised subject and generalised object of experience. This unique confrontation, Indian theory thinks does not happen unless the principle of Propriety is retained at least in matters of creation of “Objective co-relatives” or to state clearly in the matter of presentation of the situations, the emotions and its effects. Literary Artists contributing to all specimens of literature, therefore, are obliged to follow the standards of Propriety in depiction of characters and situations and presentation of emotions and their effects.

