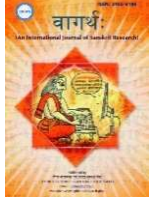




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Alamkāras in the Stotras of Utpaladeva

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The concept of *alamkāra* in Sanskrit poetics is marked with a comprehensive approach to arts. Bharatamuni says that there are two aspects of creativity in art — *svabhāva* and *alamkāra*. (NŚ, XXXIII.6.) The former indicates natural acquisitions and the latter extraordinariness attained through practice and devotion. In a dramatic performance they culminate into the renderings of *lokadharmī* and *nāṭyadharmī*, and in literature into *svabhāvokti* and *vakrokti*. By etymology the term *alamkāra* (making perfect) stands in agreement with this approach. *Amarakośa* has given four meanings of the term *alam-*, i.e. *bhūṣaṇa* (decoration or embellishment), *vāraṇa* (negation or elimination), *paryāpti* (sufficiency) and *śakti* (power). (*alam bhūṣaṇaparyāptiśaktivāraṇavācakaṁ* — *Amarakośa* III.3.252; *Mā sma mā alam ca vāraṇe* — *Amarakośa*. 3.4.11.). They are related to surface structure, deep structure and deeper structures in an art form. They are not isolated. The process of beautification (*bhūṣaṇa*) starts from the outer structure and basically related to the form, but it is always linked to the content. This linkage necessitates the activity of elimination or exclusion (*vāraṇa*) and both these processes of *bhūṣaṇa* and *vāraṇa* work together to bring in *paryāpti* (sufficiency). Thus, a piece of art attains the state of fulfilment through *bhūṣaṇa*, *vāraṇa* and *paryāpti* and in this attainment lies its *śakti*.

The *alamkāra* involves this fourfold view of *alam*, resulting in a holistic view of art. The triple process of *bhūṣaṇa*, *vāraṇa* and *paryāpti*, with the fourth element of *śakti* embedded as an inherent force, tends to make an artistic creation extraordinary and this extraordinary nature of art is *alamkāra*. The *ācāryas* (masters of literary theory) have termed it as *alambhāva* or *alamkāra-bhāva*. Abhinavagupta says: *lokottīrṇena rūpeṇa avasthānam iti ayam eva asau alamkārabhāvaḥ*. Remaining in

the state of extraordinariness is essence of *alamkāra*. (*Locana* on *Dhvanyāloka*, Varanasi edn., p. 499.)

In this completeness, each and every category in an art piece would compete with the other ones in an ascending order for creating excellence. It is this ascendance of various components of poetry that Kuntaka terms as *parasparaspardhādhiroha* (*vakratāvividhaguṇālamkārasampadamparaspara-spardhādhirohaḥ* — *Vakroktijīvitam*, p. 10.) — a process in which various components of poetry vie with each other to enhance the charm of poetry and to make it reach the peaks of excellence. This manifestation of *alambhāva* or *alamkāra-bhāva* in literature or a piece of art encompasses all the three levels of human existence, i.e. *ādhibhautika* (empirical), *ādhidaivika* (psychic) and *ādhyātmika* (spiritual). The creative process under *bhūṣaṇa*, *vāraṇa* and *paryāpti* functions on these three levels respectively. Therefore, *alamkāra* in literature and art must unfold a holistic view of life that functions on all these three levels, and it would reveal the extraordinary nature as discussed above only after completing its functions on all these three levels. Abhinavagupta, commenting on the very first *kārikā* of the NŚ, says that the use of *anuprāsa* (alliteration) in the compound *pitāmahamaheśvarau* (meaning Brahmā and Śiva) is to please both these gods. That means that besides devotion, the beauty of expression is also required to be blessed with *anugraha*. The concept of *alamkāra* thus tends to make an art form an abode of divine.

The nature and choice of *alamkāras* in metaphysical poetry or in a *stotra* would differ from their use in secular literature — *śṛṅgārakāvya* or *vīra-kāvya* (romantic or heroic poetry). In metaphysical poetry or in a *stotra*, use of *virodha* or

virodhābhāsa (contradiction) *alamkāra* may be more meaningful than mere employment of *alamkāras* like *Upamā* (simile). It would seem contradictory in itself that the poetry that tends to remove all contradictions of life, itself abounds in the use of contradiction. Contradiction becomes effective to describe the Reality that cannot be encompassed in the ambit of ordinary language. In such cases it culminates into a paradox. This happens in many of the *Upaniṣadic* sayings. For example:

*Pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyate.
Pūrṇasya pūrṇamādaya pūrṇamevā vaśiṣyate.
(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad)*

It is full, that is full. Being full, it is enjoined with full. From full, taking out full from the full, full itself remains.

Or

*Tad ejati tan nejati tad dūre tad u antike.
Tad antarasvasarvasya tad u sarvasyabāhyataḥ.*

That moves, that moves not. That is far off, that is very near. That is within all this and That is without all this — *Īśa Upaniṣad* (*pitāmahamaheśvarau iti kramah chekānuprāsārthaḥ*). *Virodha* as a figure of speech occurs in the statements regarding coexistence of two opposite attributes in one stratum. Mammaṭa has adumbrated ten varieties of *virodha* on the basis of permutations and combinations of contradiction between *jāti* (universal), *guṇa* (quality), *kriyā* (action) and *yadṛcchā* (substance) (KP, X.110-11a: 407-08.). These ten varieties encompass a cosmic view of *virodha*. Some theoreticians have upheld the view that *Virodha* and *Virodhābhāsa* are two different *alamkāras*, with the distinction that the contradiction stands unresolved in the former whereas it is just apparent in the latter and finally resolved. In fact, be it *virodha* or *virodhābhāsa*, the contradiction in this *alamkāra* is not real. In the terms of Vedānta, it is a *prātibhāsikasattā*.

Sometimes the descriptions of transcendental reality requires the combination of *Śleṣa* (pun) or *Rūpaka* (metaphor) with *Virodha*. Such combinations then assume a unique character. The *Śleṣa* or the *Rūpaka* must then come as subservient to *Virodha* in such cases. This type of combination, termed as *aṅgāṅgī-bhāva* by the masters of literary theory, would invest a poem, especially a *stotra*, with a unique character, making it distinct from the other forms of literature.

Instances of such use of *Virodha Alamkāra* abound in Utpaladeva's *stotras*. He employs this *alamkāra* to bring out the extraordinary nature of metaphysical experience. For example:

*ātmā mama bhagavadbhaktisudhāpānayuṁvāpi san.
lokayātrārajorāgatpalitairivadhūsarāḥ. — Bhaktivilāsa*

My soul, even being young by drinking the elixir of devotion to the Lord, appears as if dusty with grey hair, due to the *rāga* (colour, attachment) of the *rajas* (dust, *rajoguṇa*) during the course of the journey in this world.

This is an example of *Virodha Alamkāra* based on contradiction between *guṇas* (qualities). Youth and the old age

are two opposite *guṇas*, they are shown to be present in one entity (the *ātman*). This makes the poem an example of contradiction. But this contradiction is substantiated by *Śleṣa* in the word *rajorāga* — to suit the double context of the *lokayātrā* (journey in this world).

In difference to the view that *ātman* is *nirguṇa* (devoid of qualities), Utpaladeva apparently juxtaposes youth and old age simultaneously in one substratum, bringing out the sound effect of devotion to the Lord (*bhagavad bhakti*). The *ḥ*- suffix *śatṛ* joined to the root *as* (to be) in the words *yuvā 'pi san* emphasizes over the continuity of youth through devotion, whereas the word *iva* (as if) added in the statement on the old age suggests that the contradiction is not a part of the Reality. Despite the apparent contradiction of youth and old age manifesting in *ātman* simultaneously, Utpaladeva has carefully phrased this situation to bring out a resolution. The contradiction is further resolved due to subtle use of *utprekṣā* in *palitairivadhūsarāḥ* (appears as if dusty with grey hair). The *ātman* is neither young nor old, it appears like that during the course of the journey in this world.

Śleṣa as an *alamkāra* is of two types — *Śabda-śleṣa* (based on word) and *Artha-Śleṣa* (based on the meaning). Here Utpala has used the former, as the double meaning of the word *rajorāga* can be conveyed only through the use of this particular word.

The *ācāryas* like Mammaṭa also uphold the view that *Śabdaśleṣa* culminates into simile. The *rajas* or dust gathered due to the journey in this world thus becomes comparable to *rajoguṇa*. This fusion of *Śabda-śleṣa* and the *Upamā* with *Virodha* here creates deep structures of metaphysical and philosophical speculations. The very imagery of *ātman* being continuously invested with youth, and yet appearing as an old person, is suggestive of the fact that the journey in life does afflict the *sādhaka* (devotee) with its tinge of colours, but the grace of the Lord will continue to be showered on him.

Utpala makes skilful use of *Virodha* with other *alamkāras* to bring out his philosophy in many other stanzas in *Bhaktivilāsa-Stotra*. *Virodha* in such cases stands as *aṅgī* or main figure of speech whereas *alamkāras* based on similarity or pun come as the *aṅgas* or subservient to *Virodha* to substantiate the premises of the poet. Let us take up another example:

*jayantibhaktipīyūṣarasāsavavaronmadāḥ.
advitīyāapisadātvaddvītyāpiprabho. — Bhaktivilāsa*

Victorious are they who are intoxicated by *bhaktipīyūṣarasāsavavara* (the best quality essence of the wine of the nectar of devotion). They are *advitīya* (single, unique) and even then, they are always *tvaddvītyā* (accompanied by you).

There is a metaphor in *bhaktipīyūṣarasāsavavara* (the excellent essence of the wine of the nectar of devotion). The effects of the intoxication of wine can terminate the discretion and the discriminatory powers of a person. Here the *bhaktipīyūṣarasāsavavara* leads to the termination of duality. The complexity of dualism and non-dualism going together is emphasized by the use of *virodha alamkāra*. Here too, *Śabda-śleṣa* and *Rūpaka* support *Virodha* to project the uniqueness of

experiences arising out of devotion to the Lord. In the same way, the experience of seeing the Lord when there is complete annihilation of all objects of knowledge has been brought out in the following stanza:

*nāthavedyakṣayekenanadrśyo 'syekakahsthitah.
vedyavedaikasāṅkṣobhe 'pyasibhaktaihsudarśanaḥ.*

— Bhaktivilāsa

Lord, who will not see you as the One standing alone, after the complete annihilation of all objects of knowledge? After all the subject and object are merged together, you are to be sighted easily.

If the seer and the seen are merged together, how can the Lord be seen easily? This contradiction in the statement cannot be resolved unless the stanza is considered to be having a tinge of BhāvikaAlaṁkāra. The quality of a literary discourse leading the connoisseur to a clear perception is Bhāvika Alaṁkāra. The happenings of past and things to happen in future are portrayed so vividly that the reader is able to see them. Defining *Bhāvika Alaṁkāra* in his *KāvyaAlaṁkāra*, Bhāmaha says:

Bhāvikais that quality of a literary discourse where things of past and future are perceived as if by eyes. It is caused by variety, sublimity and dramatic quality of a narrative as well as by the clarity of words.

*Tad bhāvikamitiprāhuḥprabandhaviṣayamguṇam.
Pratyakṣaivadrśyanteyatrārthābhūtabhāvinah.
Citrodattādbhūtārthatvamathāyāḥsvabhinīyatā.
Śābdānākulatā ca ititasyahetumpracakṣate.*

— *KāvyaAlaṁkāra* III.53-54

Daṇḍin understands *bhāva* as the intention of the poet. The theme is grand, and speech and expressions match it, so that everything becomes subservient to the intention of the poet.

*Bhāvaḥkaverabhiprāyāḥkāvyēṣuāsiddhisamsthitah.
Parasparopakāritvam sarveṣāmvastuparvanām.
Viśeṣānāmvyarthānāmakriyāsthānavarṇā.
Vyaktiruktikramabalādgabhīrasypīvastunaḥ.
Bhāvāyattamidamsarvamiti tad bhāvikamviduḥ.*

— *Kāvyaadarśa* II.364-65

Later authors have viewed Bhāvika as unfolding of the vision of past and future leading to realization. Ruyyaka says that the past and the future become alive before our eyes through Bhāvika— they become perceptible and we stand witness to them (*Alaṁkāra-Sarvasva, sūtra 80, p. 328*). Appaya Dīkṣita defines it as *bhūtabhavyārthasākṣāddarśanavarṇanam* (direct vision and narration of the past and the future). Āśādhara Bhaṭṭa in his commentary on *Kuvalayānanda* defines *bhāva* in Bhāvika as *sākṣātkāra* (vision) — *bhāvāyasākṣātkārāyaprabhavati iti bhāvikam*. Ruyyaka also says that there are two types of correspondences in poetry — subjective and objective — *hṛdayasaṁvāda* (empathy) and *vastu-saṁvāda* (objective visualization).

In *Rasavadalaṁkāra* we have *hṛdaya-saṁvāda* and in *svabhāvokti* there is *vastu-saṁvāda*. But in Bhāvika it is neither

vastu-saṁvāda nor *hṛdaya-saṁvāda*; it is clear perception. The masters of literary theory have used the term *sākṣātkāra* for the experience of poetry having *bhāvikaalaṁkāra*. The same term is used in Śaivism and Vedānta to define the mystic experience. The mystic poems as that of Utpala lead to a perception beyond time and space, and thus they illustrate *bhāvikaalaṁkāra*.

Asaṅgati (incongruity or disconnection) is another important *alaṁkāra* of the group of *alaṁkāras* based on contradiction. It is used for situations involving non-applicability of the rules of cause and effect, etc. Asaṅgati is often used to bring a sense of *saṅgati* (connection). Śobhākaramiśra has enumerated eight types of *asaṅgati* is enveloping a vast spectrum of time and space. They are: (i) the effect manifests elsewhere, (ii) the effect that should have been at two different places manifests at one place; (iii-iv) the effect manifests earlier, or manifests with the cause, (v) the effect manifests much later; and (vii-viii) the effect belonging to this world is found in another world and vice versa. (*Alaṁkāra-Ratnākara, sūtra 55, p. 96*)

Utpaladeva explores the disconnections or connections between the causes and the effects through *asaṅgatialaṁkāra* with a view to establish the uniqueness of metaphysical experiences. The following stanza from his poem is a good example of *asaṅgatialaṁkāra* —

*Citramnisargatonāthaduḥkhabhījamidammanah.
Tvadbhaktirasasamsiktamniḥśreyasamahāphalam.*

— Bhaktivilāsa 24

Strange as it is, O Lord, that my mind — a seed of sorrow by nature — has yielded the great fruit of salvation.

The *asaṅgatialaṁkāra* here joins hand again with a complex metaphor, wherein the mind is the earth, sorrow is the seed sown in it, *bhakti* (devotion) is the rasa (water, bliss) and *niḥśreyasa* (salvation) is the *mahāphala* (great fruit).

In fact, we do not find singular usages of *alaṁkāras* in this type of poetry, as one *alaṁkāra* would be joined invariably by other members of its group or the other group. This becomes necessary due to the complexity and unique character of the experiences that are to be delineated in devotional and mystic poetry. *Rūpaka* assumes a distinct character, supported by an *alaṁkāra* like *Vyatireka*. The following stanza combines a number of *alaṁkāras* to bring out the unparalleled nature of Lord Śiva:

*Vśvendhanamahākṣārānulepaśucivarcase.
Mahānalāyabhavateviśvaikahaviṣenamah.*

— *Sarvātmaparibhāvana*

Salutations to you, O Big Fire, consuming the offering of the whole Universe, and with your body having become pious by smearing the ashes of the firewood of this world.

Rūpaka is the main *alaṁkāra* here, supported by *Virodha Alaṁkāra*. The metaphor of the world as a fuel incorporates the contradiction or *Virodha Alaṁkāra*, i.e. that the Lord is pious even when he smears his body with the ashes of this fuel. The metaphor of *mahānala* (great fire) is also suggestive of *Vyatireka Alaṁkāra*, as it implies that Lord Śiva exceeds an

ordinary fire. Again, the metaphor and *Vyatireka* in the second line are supported by another metaphor of *viśvaikahaviḥ* — that the world is a *haviḥ* (oblation) for the great fire that is Śiva. The whole stanza is also an example of Parikara Alamkāra. Parikara Alamkāra manifests by the appropriate use of adjectives. There are three adjectives used here for Lord Śiva — *viśvendhanamahākṣārānulepaśucivarcas*, *mahānala* and *viśvaikahaviḥ*. All of them suitably bring out the distinct nature of the Lord. Also, as the adjectives so suitably used to describe Lord Śiva are all suggestive of his extraordinariness and grandeur, the stanza is also characterized by *Udātta Alamkāra*. In fact, Utpala's poetry subtly breathes in the mixture of such *alamkāras* like *Parikara*, *Udātta* with *Rūpaka*. It is the vision of the divine that leads to the expressions structured with *alamkāras* like *Virodha*, *Parikara*, *Udātta*, *Rūpaka* and *Vyatireka* — with implications of *Atiśayokti*. Such specific combinations of *alamkāras* distinguish the poetry of mystics like Utpala from other types of literary compositions. The *alamkāras* employed in such poetry present a feast of contradictions that invariably and unmistakably culminates in the state of bliss. The contradictions then become the vehicles for a journey to travel beyond the mundane. A glimpse of the transcendental can be had through the scope created by contradictory statements, such as:

Sahasrasūryakiraṇādhiśuddhaprakāśavān.
Apitvaṃsarvabhuvavyāpakopinadṛśyase.

— *Praṇayaprasāda* 19

Having pure brilliance more than the rays of thousands of suns, you are not visible even when you pervade all the cosmos.

This leads us to distinguish the specific nature of *alamkāras* and the types of *alamkāras* that are used in the *stotras* of the philosopher poets, like Utpaladeva.

The following stanza 14 from *Sarvātma-Paribhāvana-Stotra* presents a combination of *Rūpaka* and *Udātta*:

Taṭṣṭuevapariḥkrāntaiḥlabdhāstāstāvibhūṭayāḥ.
Yasyatasmānamastubhyāmagādhaharasindhave.

Salutations to thee, O unfathomed sea Lord Śiva, just by loitering upon whose banks people get unaccountable prosperities. Here also *Udātta* is *aṅga*(subservient) to *Rūpaka*. In all such instances, *Atiśayokti* forms the base. Ultimately, the

saṅkara (commixture) of such figures of speech enables the poet to create divine aesthetics. The *saṃsṛṣṭi* (fusion) of *alamkāras* like *Rūpaka*, *Parikara*, *Vyatireka* and *Udātta* leads to a *samplava* — a confluence of diverse streams forming unfathomed sea — which Utpala terms as *rāgarasa*.

Tvaccidānandajaladhescyutāḥsamvittivipruṣaḥ.
Imāḥkatham me bhagavannamṛtāsvādasundarāḥ.
Tvayirāgarasenāthanamagnamḥṛdayamprabho.
Yeṣāmāḥṛdayāevate 'vajñāspadamīdṛśāḥ.

— *Praṇayaprasāda* 6-7

The drops of consciousness tricking from the Sea of Bliss that is You — why not will they be beautiful to me like nectar? O Lord, heartless are they whose hearts have not been submerged in the *rāgarasa* that You are. They are not subjected to the grace from you.

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