

वागर्थः (An International Journal of Sanskrit Research)

Abhijnāna: A first written SATIRE

Dr. Pankaj K. Mishra, Associate Professor, Dept. of Sanskrit, St. Stephen's College, Delhi- 110007 E-mail: pankaj.k.mishr@gmail.com

Keywords: Connoisseur readers, Satire Abhijnana, Kalidasa, clairvoyants.

I. INTRODUCTION

Realization and apprehension are the two pivotal impressions which are cast by the Poets on their connoisseur readers (सहृतय पाठक) and spectators (सामाजिक) through their works. Technically, these are known as रस and उपदेश, respectively, where former appeals the hearts and latter sharpens the mind.

The intellect does not get restrained within the creation of the words which are fluid and infused with proper sentiments. It rather, brings forward the soothing and acceptable notions about the life. Along with being an artist the poet is a thinker too, who deals with the solutions of the worldly problems and analyses the contemporary beliefs, simultaneously. But, this skill of the poet lies in disguise since he does not want the flow of the sentiments to be obstructed. He employs the plot and the characters as per his desire. He creates his thoughts apparent through his Poetic skills which enable him to delineate his opinion emphatically and sentiments which make his ideas easily comprehensible. In the world of the poetry the poet is the ruler who can delineate the world the way he desires.

अपारे काव्यसंसारे कविरेक: प्रजापति:. यथास्मै रोचते विश्वं तथैव परिवर्तते.

II. INTENDED EFFORT OF POET

For an enlightened poet like Kālidāsa, it is not possible to indite the texts for sheer pleasure. In fact, he wants to convey something through his works. And what he wants to convey through his works is not a trifle and cliché theory, but a stream of thought depicting his own real self, which not only delineates the contemporary consciousness but also proposes the moral values which are ever-lasting and which enlightens the common people and the apostate scholars. As far as AbhijnānaŚākuntalam is concerned, it is a testimony of the poet's matured writing which is perfect and embellished [1]. It is a beautiful blend of romance and fairy-tale with the elements of comedy. It must impel according to the poet's intellect. And, hence, it can be asserted that all the facts viz. establishment of the moral boundaries through the betterment of the character of Duşyanta of Mahābhārat or by showing cruel consequences of willfulness of Śakuntalā by the advice of Śārngarava to go through the essential enquiries* before meeting in private, extenuate. Duşyanta wasn't divine like Rāma or Kṛṣṇa whose deviation from the moral conduct could have influenced the contemporary world. He was a king, desirous of worldly pleasures, for which the moral boundary has no boundary at all. [2]

On the canvas of love, AbhijnānaŚākuntalam, the beautiful play of Kālidāsa is a divine graffito of emotional conflict, where his heroes and heroines are well draped with the delicate cloth of emotions, which is woven by the loom of union-separation and reunion and which is certainly not the story of his highness or holiness. The conspicuous theme of this play of the great poet is to exhibit the multiform or pluralistic nature of love and emotions. According to Keith, *Kālidāsa excels in depicting the emotion of love from the first suggestions in an innocent mind to the perfection of passion*. Still, it is difficult to establish AbhijnānaŚakuntalam as a text of love and emotion.

III. CONFLICT WITHIN

The fact, that the play is inextricably related with the conflicts, is clearly fathomable. This is the conflict of departure of a daughter from hermitage and no hope of immediate returning [3]. This is the conflict of ignoring wives' love and seeking beloved's love [4] and also this is the conflict of desired and non-desired soul. Scholars are seen engaged in these emotional conflicts. Their literary and even the biased visions do

not visualize the hidden message given by the poet. According to me the message is that the ruler, who is there to provide welfare means to the subject and the honoured, who is always worshipped by the subjects, should not misuse the power and dignity, which they possess [5].

IV. SUSPECTED DIGNITY

The dignity of the great king Duşyanta becomes constringent in the protection of his self-righteousness (भद्रे! प्रथितं दुष्यन्तस्य चरितम्). He is already married. He does not have less than four wives, directly or indirectly mentioned in the play. Besides, after neglecting his so called wives, the bee-natured king surrendered his heart to the tender hearted lady, who is of the age of his daughter, and whose clan and kinship is not known [6].

The one and only desire of Duşyanta is that the lady should be endowed with physical beauty. When he beholds Sakuntalā for the first time, he develops voracious desire to relish her beauty. Her ravishing beauty casts a magnetic charm on him. After observing the angelic radiance of that teen [7], he is immediately infatuated. On the other side, Hanspadikā, his second wife, a great singer, who is perhaps not endowed with ravishing beauty, couldn't receive the most deserved love from her husband, which she complains through a couplet.

Though amazed by her couplet [8] he also recognizes her complain [9]. But her grievances don't leave any impact on him. He doesn't even bother to go by himself to placate his ignored wife. He sends Vidūşaka for that. It is well obvious that none other but a husband's praise can only please a wife. Lustful like bee and ardent desirous of physical beauty never understands the importance of inner beauty. Dr. Ratnamayī Dixit asserts that "a man infatuated by one's beauty can never do justice to his wives; however, dear they might have been to him before."[10]

WOMEN IN ABHIJNĀNA

In this particular play, women are always being hurt by the evil conduct of the masculine. It is always expected from women that they shouldn't cross the लक्ष्मणरेखा drawn by the lawmakers. And the supervisors of this लक्ष्मणरेखा are none other than so called religionists Kaņva, Durvāsas, Śārngarava, and Mārīća and their patron, the great king. Due to the disregard in guest hospitality [11], Śakuntalā had to bear the curse of Durvāsas. Here it isn't necessary to analyze whether the curse is substantially related to their offence or not, but it is very much essential to examine closely some questions like:

- a) Can't a lady ever spell a man's name other than her husband?
- b) Can't a lady resolve her problem through Self-thinking?
- c) Can't a lady get absorbed in the memories of her husband?
- d) Is a lady nourished only for the service of the others?
- e) Is a lady never allowed to make even one single mistake in her life, and
- f) Did Durvāsas get angry because of the inhospitality or because of the fact that he was ignored by a woman?

It is difficult to answer these questions, but, it is true that the subject of the curse should be the king who intentionally ignored Śakuntalā. As far as poetic discourse is concerned, the unreal accidental incident of the curse, which forbade Duşyanta from identifying Śakuntalā, is an example of the lone impediment in the smooth flow of sentiments.

VI. RESPONSIBILITY OF DUŞYANTA

Coming to the poetic discourse, the unreal accidental incident of the curse of Durvāsas, which forbade Duşyanta from identifying Śakuntalā is an example of the lone impediment in the smooth flow of sentiments. This has been proclaimed by Ānandavardhana that

अनौचित्यादृते नान्यद्रसभंगस्य कारणम् औचित्योपनिबन्धस्तु रसस्योपनिषत्परा.

As long as the incidents and the characters go according to the concept of appropriateness (ओीचित्य), the sentiments, oozing out of the texts, appeal the readers. What else could have been more inappropriate (अनोचित्य) than to not recognize the person, who was completely robbed off everything, in the name of marriage, and to intimidate her by claiming her to be characterless?

After getting that valuable ring (the loss of which has been forcibly claimed to be the reason behind Duşyanta's ignorant behavior) from the fisherman, he remembers Sakuntalā and sheds remorseful crocodile tears for her. He recollects the time spent with her, but any kind of anxiety to know where she has gone, whether she is alive or not, is not seen in him. Even a normal person tries his best to find his kith and kins. But we don't see any kind of uneasiness in Duşyanta to know about her or to get her back. However, one of the heroes of Kālidāsa, Pururavas, after getting insanity in separation of Urvassi, when she became a creeper, laments and wanders forest to forest to search for her. Similarly, the restlessness of "Yakşa" and the desire to meet "Yakşiņī" is enough to touch the heart of any paramour. But Duşyanta doesn't even send a messenger to search for Sakuntalā. He himself, a Cakravartin, friend of Indra. could have searched for Sakuntala from palace to forest, from heaven to hell, but he isn't making any effort to get her back.

In the sixth act, while remembering Śakuntalā, the fret of queen Vasumatī to the king, leaves question marks on his love. On one hand the ditched/rejected lady is fighting for her existence, is living a lonely life to hide her malignancy, on the other hand the king, who is brainy, hearty, having sacred mind [12] and internal senses [13], who knows the essence of humanity, is afraid of Vasumatī only because she will know the secret of his love for Śakuntalā.

राजा- वयस्य! उपस्थिता देवी बहमानगर्विता च। भवानिमां प्रतिकृतिं रक्षतु।

विदूषक- आत्मानमिति भण। यदि भवानन्त:पुरकूटजालतो मोक्ष्यते तदा मां मेघप्रतिच्छन्दे प्रासादे शब्दापय।

Fortuitously, he met Śakuntalā in the hermitage of Mārīća; it was him being heirless that caused his reunion with her.

It seems, as if, Kālidāsa, with the help of these अनौचित्य, tends to speak out the fact which is related to each and every person of the society and is the mystic doctrine of the society of every age.

VII. CLAIRVOYANTS

Here, the ascetic claims are also in the periphery of ironic scrutiny. As a matter of fact, the great poet Kālidāsa was in deep agony in the contemporary environment with the moral downfall of Seers and Sages. They started changing course from their deeds. They accepted destructions from regular creations. The very presence of these clairvoyants like \overline{ava} , \overline{gafkii} , \overline{uit} etc. in the plot entails the fact that they have been employed to put the heinous deeds of the king under a veil.

Hence, it is necessary to elaborate these clairvoyants individually.

Kulapati Kaņva, in the role of father, lost his touch while he went to propitiate the adverse fate threatening Śakuntalā's happiness which could be confronted in future [14]. Alas! He couldn't see that Śakuntalā was going to be humiliated by her husband himself. The sojourn journey of Somatīrtha by Kaņva is nothing but a futile effort. Kaņva's disciples did not come off very well too. Śārngarava is an angry, arrogant and a tactless person. One can see him develop into a Durvāsā in time. We are surprised to see that he does not convey the message of Kaņva to the king in the sage's own words.

Another ascetic, Rājarşi Durvāsā could not be controlled by anybody [15], as etymology and critics defend him. My simple question is: what is the use of his austerity and supernatural power, when the uses of all these qualities are neither for the advancement of people *nor for creativity*. He couldn't see anyone's happiness. Even for a little negligence, he starts cursing so that the cursed person should keep on moaning on his/her destiny for life long. He couldn't see the beam but only mote in other's eyes. Undoubtedly, Ŗşi like Rājarşi Durvāsas, who is having unfavorable divine sight, cannot be an example or ideal for any civilized society.

And the third one is Rşi Mārica, who is giving shelter to Śakuntalā for her life but couldn't dare to speak to Duşyanta to accept Śakuntalā as his wife. He, audaciously, without any repentance, told the King that the moment Menakā flew in from Apsaras-pool and came to Aditi, bearing Śakuntalā, grief stuck on the account of her repudiation, I knew from meditating upon it that this unhappy girl, your partner in religious rites, had been repulsed by you under the influence of Durvāsa's curse. And that the effect of the curse would cease as soon as you saw this Ring [16].

Kulapati Kaņva, Durvāsā and Marica, being Krantadrashta, should have known the reality even before it turned up. They turn their faces away from the plight of the innocent teen Śakuntalā. Kaņva shed off his responsibility by sending his daughter to her husband's place. Durvāsa, should have found out the concrete solution to the problem. Instead he hands over the curse and Marica tries to give a valid reason for Duşyanta's ignorance. A message, given by the poet, is that the seers and ascetics are merely puppets in the ruler's hands. They act as per the wishes of the king.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS PUT BY THE POET

And, hence, in the last act of the play, to make the Munis and the contemporary King remember of their desired code of conduct, Kālidāsa had to write in Bharat Vākya (final benediction) that प्रवर्त्तनां प्रकृतिहिताय पार्थिव:, सरस्वती श्रुतमहत्ता महीयाताम् (may kings ever work for the good of their subjects, may the utterance of those blessed by the word be ever honoured). It entails the fact that with the speech of Durvāsas and degrading influence of Kaņva, Durvāsa and Mārica, Kālidāsa wasn't happy. Otherwise, the spokesperson of public-welfare*(राजा प्रकृतिरज्जनात्) [17] the great Kālidāsa wouldn't have spoken to develop meaninglessness of word to those intellectuals.

In fact, the great poet Kalidāsa neither wants to establish ideal love in his play, nor he is conscious towards the encashment of emotional conflict. However, he has presented an unparalleled example, how a man can misuse the rights and power to malign the dignity of a woman *for carnal gratification only*.

IX. FRESH INTERPRETATION/CONCLUSION

In this view, undoubtedly his plays are revolutionary in the world of literature. In other words, the great poet Kālidāsa has created a revolutionary play in which the negative aspects of the King has been described. Evidently, on the contrary, his statement and reality of राजा प्रकृतिरज्जनात्, the great poet has proposed the theory of राजा रतिरज्जनात्. Only this statement carries and is capable to carry the feelings, emotions and trusts of this great play Abhijnān.

Perhaps, it is first written SATIRE by any poet in literary world, where human follies and vices are held up to scorn and ridicule.

Accordingly, this is not the Abhijnān of Śakuntalā, this is not the Abhijnān of putra Sarvadaman, this is not the Abhijnān of the ring and this is not the Abhijnān of the seer or sages. Contrary it is the Abhijnān of the king's behavior, it is the Abhijnān of emotional brutality by ascetic pupil on women, and it is the Abhijnān of disrespect of relationship on the cost of royal shelter where an innocent woman's voice can be translated as:

> I have been stabbed in The back by those I needed the most I have been lied to by Those I love And I have felt alone When I couldn't Afford to be But at the end of The day I had to Learn to be my own Best friend because

There's going to be days Where no one is going to Be there for me But myself.

REFERENCES

[1]. Wouldst thou spring's blossoms and the fruits of its decline,

Wouldst thou see by what the souls enraptured feasted, fed,

Wouldst thou have this earth and heaven in one sole name combine,

I name thee oh Śakuntalā and all at once is said.

- [2]. इदमुपनतमेवं रूपमक्लिष्टकान्ति प्रथमपरिगृहीतं स्यान्न वेत्यव्यवस्यन् भ्रमर इव विभाते कुन्दमन्तस्तुषारं न च खलु परिभोक्तुं नैव शक्नोमि हातुम्. - पञ्चमोऽङ्कः, 19
- [3]. भूत्वा चिराय चतुरन्तमहीसपत्नी दौष्यन्तिमप्रतिरथं तनयं निवेश्य भर्त्रा तदर्पितकुटुम्बभरेण सार्धं शान्तं करिष्यसि पदं पुनराश्रमेस्मिन्.- चतुर्थोऽङ्कः, 20
- [4]. दूरीकृता खलु गुणैरुद्यानलता वनलताभिः- प्रथमोऽङ्कः
- [5]. प्रवर्त्ततां प्रकृतिहिताय पार्थिवः, सरस्वती श्रुतमहतां महीयाताम- षष्ठोऽङ्कः
- [6]. अपि नाम कुलपतेरियमसवर्णक्षेत्रसम्भवा स्यात्। अथ वा कृतं सन्देहेन.- षष्ठोऽङ्कः
- [7]. Sakuntala, a young girl- bala, the word the king refers to her by, is a girl of sixteen- The Loom of Time, Chandra Rajan, Introduction, Pg. 92, Penguin Books India (p) Ltd. Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi, 1100017, India
- [8]. अहो रागपारिवाहिनी गीतिः- पञ्चमोऽङ्कः
- [9]. सकृतकृतप्रणयोऽयं जन:- पञ्चमोऽङ्कः
- [10]. Women in Sanskrit Dramas, p. 113, Meherchand Lacchmandas, Daryaganj, Delhi- 6, Dec. 1964
- [11]. आ: अतिथिपरिभाविनि- चतुर्थोऽङ्कः
- [12]. यदार्यमस्यामभिलाषि मे मनः- प्रथमोऽङ्कः
- [13]. प्रमाणमन्तःकरणप्रवृत्तयः- प्रथमोऽङ्कः
- [14]. बैखानस- इदानीमेव दुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय नियुज्य दैवमस्या: प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमातीर्थं गत:-First Act Abhi.
- [15]. एष दुर्वासा: सुलभकोपो महर्षि:I
- [16]. कोऽन्यो हुतवहाद् दग्धुं प्रभवतिl चतुर्थोऽङ्कः
- [17]. यदैवाप्सरतीर्थावतरणात् प्रत्यक्षवैक्लव्यां शकुन्तलामादाय मेनका दाक्षायणीमुपगता तदैव ध्यानादवगतोऽस्मि

दुर्वाससः शापादियं तपस्विनी सहधर्मचारिणी त्वयाप्रत्यादिष्टा नान्यथेति. स चायमंगुलीयकदर्शनावसानः – षष्ठोऽङ्कः I

[18]. राजा प्रकृतिरञ्जनात् Raghu