_____
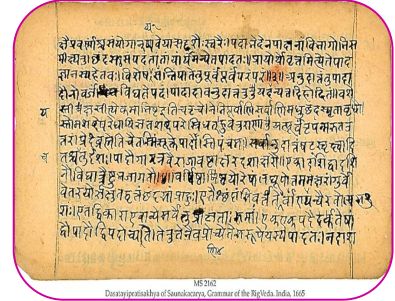
GRAMMAR AND VEDA IN REFERENCE TO BHARTṛHARI'S *VāKYAPADīYA*

Dr. Anisha
Lecturer in English
GMSSSS, Sector – 20, Panchkula.

ABSTRACT:

The study of grammar and philosophy of language have occupied central place in Indian thought from Veda onwards. Among the entire grammarian – philosophers; Bhartṛhari is regarded as an outstanding figure in the history of Indian thought. Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* was composed in the 5th century and became the most extensive work in the medieval period which represented the most fruitful epoch of Indian thought. Another name of the book is 'Trikāndī' as it has three volumes. The relation between words and their meanings, discussion of proper and improper words, relationship between sphoṭa and dhvani, epistemological value of grammar etc. are the main concerned subjects of *Vākyapadīya*. Bhartṛhari says that the word shapes the meaning and discusses sādhu (proper) and asādhu (improper) words in Brahmakāṇḍa of *Vākyapadīya*. He says that it is the function of the grammar to instruct about the nitya (stable) śabda. On the basis of eternal scriptures and reliable tradition, the cultured (Maharshi-s) - Pāṇini, Kātyāyan and Patanjalī have composed the science of grammar (śabdanuśāsan). According to the grammarians - to achieve the ultimate goal; the knowledge of appropriate word and its proper usage is essential. Bhartṛhari tells us about the relationship between Grammar and Veda; how Grammar is a means to understand sādhutav, vāk, kāvya (metre), traditional doctrines and consequently Veda-s. The present paper deals with Nature and Role of Grammar as said in Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* and about delineation of sādhu (proper) and asādhu (improper) words.

KEY WORDS: - *Vākyapadīya, Grammar, Veda, sādhu and asādhu.*

INTRODUCTION:

In ancient India, grammarians saw their task as establishing the foundations of the *Veda*-s, but their work often resulted in the development of their own philosophical systems. Patañjali, in his *Mahābhāṣya*, explains that the study of grammar (*vyākaranam*) was meant to maintain the truth of the *Veda*-s, to guide the use of *Vedic* speech in ritual contexts, and to aid the clear interpretations of individual human speech. Both Pānini and Patañjali, two major Sanskrit grammarians, were the first to provide a systematic and formal analysis of the grammatical basis of all intended meanings. Pānini (7th century BCE) developed the *Ashtādhyāyī* (Eight-Chapters) for the grammarians. It is a well known fact that ancient Sanskrit works written in the form of *sūtras* or *kārikās* require a commentary for their understanding. Patañjali wrote *Mahābhāshya*, a commentary on *Ashtādhyāyī*. Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* is based on *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjali. *Vākyapadīya* has three *kānda*-s (volumes). Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* was composed in the 5th century and became the most extensive work in the medieval period which represented the most fruitful epoch of Indian thought. Another name of the book is '*Trikāndī*' as it has three *kānda*-s. These volumes contain around 2000 *kārikā*-s (verses). The relation between words and their meanings, discussion of proper and improper words, relationship between *sphoṭa* and *dhvani*, epistemological value of grammar etc. are the main concerned subjects of *Vākyapadīya*.

_____

_____

In *Vākyapadīya*, *kānda* I, Bhartṛhari defines the scope of his inquiry as the subjects of grammar. One argument is that grammar is one of the *vedaṅga*-s and final goal of the knowledge imbibed in the *Veda*-s is the attainment of *mokśa*. The ultimate goal of *mokśa* is the attainment of *Brahman*, the ultimate Reality. Hence this text on grammar begins with the discourse on *Brahman*. There are six auxiliary sciences of *Veda*: *Jyotiṣa*, *Śikṣā*, *Kalpa*, *Vyākaraṇa*, *Nirukta* and *Chhanda*. For the *Veda Puruṣa*, the six limbs are:

Jyotiṣa	Astrology/Astronomy	Eyes
Śikṣā	Phonetics	Nose
Kalpa	Vedic Action	Arms
Vyākaraṇa	Grammar	Mouth
Nirukta	Etymology	Ears
Chhanda	Vedic Meter	Feet

It has been said that:

"All the words are included in the *Veda*. One who does not know the *Veda*
    cannot understand *Brahman* at all" (Iyer 15) .

Of these six auxiliary sciences, the science of grammar is the most important. "The best of all the austerities, the one that is nearest to that *Brahman* is the discipline called 'Grammar', the first among the auxiliary sciences of the *Veda*-s, so have the sages declared" (Iyer 16) Grammar is also considered as a *Uttam Tap* because of giving two types of fruits (results) - *dṛśta* (visible) and *adṛśta* (that of which the consequences are not yet visible).

Forms of *Śabda* (Word):

As the words are endless, it is impossible to have knowledge of all the words. So we must make some rules to acquire the knowledge of words. There are general rules as well as some specific rules. The general rules can be inferred from specific rules. Therefore, we can gain the knowledge of *śabda-brahman* through the knowledge of grammar. It has been said:

"He who does not know the Science of Grammar does not know the word, the
    meaning, their mutual relation and the occasion for use nor what is correct and
    what is not, even when the meaning is the same nor who is cultured, inferred
    from their use of the correct forms of the words" (Iyer 18)

In the Sanskrit grammatical tradition, the "elite" are defined as those who use the correct language; we arrive at this standard language by abstracting from communicative language, or "language-in-use". Grammar also tells us about the nature of word; whether it is *sādhu* or *asādhu*. There are two forms of *śabda* - *śabdatav* and *sādhutav*. The knowledge of *śabdatav* can be obtained from the sense of hearing but the knowledge of other form of *śabda* i.e. *sādhutav* cannot be obtained without learning the science of grammar. Grammar also clarifies the doubts regarding meanings of words; therefore, the study of Grammar is necessary to eradicate the doubts. It is the only means to gain the complete knowledge of a language.

Types of Knowledge:

Bhartṛhari categorises the knowledge into two types: *Lōkik* (ordinary) and *Alōkik* (extraordinary). In *kārikā* 35th, he says that only the jewellers know the value of *lōkik mani* and *ginī* (precious stones). They cannot define it to anybody else because the knowledge of quality of any object can be attained through practice. This knowledge obtained through practice cannot be said 'evaluation'. To understand certain things, it is necessary, not only to make use of perception, inference and tradition, but also, practice. Therefore, the knowledge of *sādhutva* (desirable forms) can be attained through practice.

_____

_____

In the next verse he says that *Alōkik* (extraordinary) powers of the famous *Pitṛs*, the demons and the goblins, going beyond perception and inference, are the results of their previous deeds. For instance, a mother who is at a distance from her child can understand the feelings of the child only by *tap* (endless efforts). Surdas, an Indian poet who was blind by birth could write about those subjects which cannot be written by ordinary (who can see) human beings. This indefinable power of *adṛṣṭa* is the result of the deeds done in previous births and must be distinguished from perception, inference, tradition and practice.

In *kārikā* 38th, Bhartṛhari says that the words of those (*Mahṛishi*-s) who, with their third eye (extraordinary power obtained by *tap*, meditation), see things which are beyond senses (matter as God, atom, *śabda-braham*, deities etc.) cannot be set aside by unorganised reasoning. If a person starts believing a *Yōgi*'s power, then how can he be diverted by reasoning? He considers a *Yōgi*'s *pratyakṣa* (extra-sensory cognition); his own direct vision. That is why, all men – Brahman (good) to *Chāndāl* (bad) believe on the utterances of *ṛśis* and have very little use for scriptures. *Dhaṛma* like *Yāga* (an offering) cannot be proved by reasoning only, without the help of tradition. Even the knowledge of Seers is due to their previous cognizance of the tradition. It cannot be proved by estimation that '*swaṛga* is attained by *dhaṛma*'. For instance, as the nature of fire is to ignite something; the nature of *dhaṛma* is to lead towards *swaṛga*. So nobody can violate the paths of *dhaṛma* by reasoning and the followers of the tradition are established and known by *Gūru Paramparā*.

In *kārikā* 27th, Bhartṛhari says that *sādhu* words generate *dhṛama*. The knowledge of *sādhu* words can be obtained only through grammar. He says that it is the function of the grammar to instruct about the *nitya* (stable) *śabda*. To interpret rules, there is need of meta-rules. Grammar generates two rules – (1) use only *sādhu* words (2) not *asādhu*; only *gośabda* is *sādhu*, not *gāvi*. *Asādhu* words are just like precipitate (insoluble impurities). However, meaning can be conveyed through both categories of words but cultured people always use *sādhu* words as both type of waters (soft and hard) can suffice thirst but pure water is safe for health. In the same manner, there may be many *sādhu* words for one meaning but one must choose according to context. For instance, if a person is suffering from fever and he is recommended to take light food; he has many choices like juice, water of pulses, *daliyā* (oatmeal) etc. Every food described is light i.e. good for health but he/she has to choose one according to situation, mood and tradition. In the same way, one has to choose *sādhu* word according to context.

Epistemological Value of Grammar:

Bhartṛhari talks about the epistemological value or status of Grammar from *kārikā* 132-143. He says that Grammar distinguishes between *sādhu* and *asādhu śabda*. However, the *śabdatav* (basic element) of all the words is same whether it is *sādhu* or *asādhu*. As the basic element (*jalatav*) in all the waters is same but still wine is considered as sin and *Gangajal* (water of the Ganga River) as sacred. Similarly for the subject of *dharma*, *sādhu* words should be considered; not *asādhu*. The proof of the efficacy of words is *Veda*. This Supreme Grammar tells the *sādhutav* of traditional words and it has been studied by the cultured from the ancient tradition.

Sādhu śabda is not fixed; it is changed according to the context and the designation of the hearer. For instance, the properties of green (fresh) *pīpar* (a tree kindred to Ficus infectoria) are different from dried *pīpar*. Sprouts germination of objects like *mūṇga* (pulse) varies according to the environment (conditions required for the germination). Bhartṛhari (In *kārikā* 33rd) says, "The known power of an object to produce different effects is inoperative when it comes into contact with particular objects or factors" (Iyer 44). To borrow a scientific precedence, the function of Oxygen is to aggravate fire but when it combines with the atoms of Hydrogen, it extinguishes fire.

$$O_2 + 2H_2 \longrightarrow 2H_2O \text{ (Water)}$$
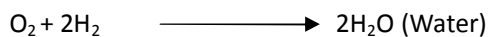
Similarly the power of a word is changed with the change in place, time and context.

_____

_____

Śabda-jīnān is necessary to understand a language. There are three stages of *vāk* (language), namely, *Vaikharī*, *Madhyamā* and *Pasyantī* and the knowledge of these stages in sequence can be attained only through Grammar. *Pasyantī* in the form of *parā* is *Brahman*. Hence the cause of *Brahmanjīnān* (knowledge of *Brahman*) is Grammar. As the treatment for the physical ailments is Medicine, for the divine agitation is Prayer, for the disturbance of the mind is philosophy, and when the human values deteriorates in the society, the treatment is *Kāvya*; so the cure for *vāk* is Science of Grammar. Grammar is the essence of all *vidyā*-s. But a natural doubt arouses in everybody's mind that *mokśa* can be attained through self-realisation; not through the *śabda*-realisation. This doubt is not appropriate because the illusion of *budhī* (wisdom) can be removed through the knowledge of grammar and the human beings can be acquainted with the *sādhu śabda* (proper words). At that time *Ātmā* (self) is capable of attaining the knowledge of *Veda* which takes us to the path of self-realisation, consequently, *Mokśa*. However, the pure form of *Veda* is metre which is understandable only with the erudition of Grammar.

Bhartṛhari says that *saṃskār* (cultivation) of *śabda* is the proved form of grammar which is the only means to attain *nityaśabda-brahman* (God). The seed of grammar is in *Veda*. To understand *Veda*, there is requirement of Grammar. The *Veda*-s are the roots of all the sacred writings or scriptures and after gaining the knowledge of *veda*-s, there is no need of *darśan* (philosophies) like *Pūrva-Mimaṃsa*, *Uttar- Mimaṃsa* etc. because the subjects described in these doctrines can be understood only through *Veda*. But the people who cannot understand the meaning of *Veda*; the speculation of *Mimaṃsa* and *Vedānta* are the eyes for them. There is need of *śastra*-s to understand *Veda*. Sometimes to understand the exact meaning, we have to arrive at reasoning. For instance, "'He should release his speech after seeing the star.' The seeing of the star is meant to convey a particular time. Thus, it, the releasing (of speech), is done when the main thing (the time) is otherwise ascertained or as (seeing the star) stands for something else, the particular time is ascertained when the stars are visible" (Iyer 122).

Many modes of reasoning are used to understand *Veda* but arguments should be based on tradition. As the decision about *dharma* cannot be estimated even by cleverer critics and estimation is not the proof for final decision. Similarly the words sometimes convey the general meaning and sometimes the particular. Thus the reasoning not proved by tradition is unreliable and that the reasoning of one may be upset by another. For instance, *Maharshi* Kapil proved the universe by matter but *Maharshi* Kanād proved the same by atom. Therefore, mere reasoning is not essential to compose the rules of grammar. He says that the destruction of a person is not difficult who works on the basis of the guess which is not followed by tradition. For instance, a blind man cannot escape falling when he moves on without the help of a sighted person.

From *kārikā* 144-156, Bhartṛhari tells about the Nature and Purpose of Grammar. The Science of Grammar is created by *vibhāga* (lexical-grammatical division) and *avibhāga* (division according to *śaitriya* (region), *śrotriya* (proficient or versed in the *veda*) etc.). The sages have realised the powers of words through which we understand the nature of elements. In *kārikā* 149th, Bhartṛhari says, "They (the incorrect words) are the cause of the correct words (figuring in the mind) by inference. By identifying themselves, as it were, with them, they convey the meaning of the correct words" (Iyer 133). But grammarians do not consider *asādhu śabda* significant. They consider *sadhutav* as the method of proceeding. However, *asādhu śabda* cannot act as a reminder for those who do not know the *sādhu śabda* because *sādhu* words are non-expressive for them.

Therefore, on the basis of eternal scripture and reliable tradition, the cultured (*Maharshi*-s) - Pāṇini, Kātyāyan and Patanjalī have composed the science of grammar (*śabdanuśāsan*). According to the grammarians - to achieve the ultimate goal, knowledge of appropriate word and its proper usage is essential. Although murmuring sounds of water, *nād* of *vīṇa*, sound of crow are also considered as *śabda*. So, the discipline of these desirable forms (*sādhutva*) should also be taught in *vayākaran-śastra* (science of grammar).

_____

_____

CONCLUSION:

In this way, Bhartṛhari tells us about the relationship between Grammar and *Veda*; how Grammar is a means to understand *sādhutav*, *vāk*, *kāvya* (metre), traditional doctrines and consequently *Veda*-s. There is a debate about the ontological and epistemological status of relations between the words (*sādhu* and *asādhu*), and Bhartṛhari's commentary on grammar includes a review of several theories and ultimately he seems to favour the "naturalist view". In the first chapter of the *Vākyapadīya*, Bhartṛhari explains the naturalist view. The naturalists, such as Pānini, believe that language has an invariant form expressed in grammar. They, therefore, give epistemic primacy to spoken language; formal language is only an "appearance" and secondary aid to understanding. The conventionalists, on the other hand, hold that the analytic language is primary as it contains within it all the structural features that may be used to create meaningful speech.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Apte, Vaman Shivram. (2010). *The Student's Sanskrit- English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers. Print.

Iyer, K. A. Subramania. (1965). *Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari with the Vṛtti*. Poona: Deccan College. Print.

Śukal, Sūryanārāyana. (1975). *Vākyapadīya: Kānda I.* Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan. 3rd Edition. Print.

Williams, M. Monier. (2005). *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers. Print.

_____