

# GUṆA IN UPANIṢADS – A SURVEY

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**Abstract:** Guṇa is a poetic element. According to some, it is a soul of poetry. Bharata said that, the opposite of Doṣa is Guṇa. Although there is disagreement about the number of Guṇa, Bhāmaha admits three Guṇas. They are Mādhurya, Ojaḥ and Prasāda. After discussing the symptoms of these three Guṇas, examples are given from the Upaniṣads. In conclusion the importance of the Upaniṣads in finding the source of Guṇa is undeniable.

**Keywords :** Kāvya ( Poetry ), Guṇa, Mādhurya, Ojaḥ, Prasāda.

A large number of rhetoricians have emerged themselves in the discussion of sanskrit poetics, but they do not agree with soul of poetry. Therefore, we can see several schools with their different opinions. Amongst them, one of the school thinks that Guṇa is the cause of poetry (kāvya). According to them, presence of Guṇa makes a kāvya a good one. The beauty of poetry is firstly created by Guṇa, then it is enhanced by Alamkāra. In this context Vāmana's statement is –

“Kāvyaśobhāyāḥ kartāro dharmā Guṇāstadatīsayahetavastvalamkārah.”<sup>1</sup>

Between Guṇa and Alamkāra, the application of Guṇa is more important than the application of Alamkāra. The application of Guṇa is mandatory, but the application of Alamkāra is subject to the will of poet. On this issue Bhoja said – “Tatra ca guṇopādānālamkārayogayogūpādānam gaṛīyaḥ.”<sup>2</sup> According to Bharata, the opposite of Doṣa is Guṇa –

“Ete doṣā hi kāvyasya mayā samyak prakīrtitāḥ |  
Guṇa viparyayādeṣām mādhyudāryalakṣaṇāḥ ||”<sup>3</sup>

According to Bharata, the number of Guṇa is ten –

“Śleṣaḥ prasādaḥ samatā samādhirmādhuryamojaḥ padasaukumāryam |  
Arthasya ca vyaktirudārātā ca kāntīśca kāvyasya Guṇā daśaite ||”<sup>4</sup>

On the otherhand, Bhāmaha accepted only three Guṇas, i.e. – Mādhurya, Ojaḥ and Prasāda. Later Bharata was followed by Daṇḍin and Vāmana. Though there is a difference between the acceptance of numbers of these Guṇas. While Daṇḍin accepted only ten Guṇas, Vāmana said twenty of them. Dhvanivādin and Rasavādin conceptualized Guṇa as – “Tamarthamavalambante ye'ṅinaṃ te Guṇaḥ smṛtaḥ ||”<sup>5</sup> Also –

“Ye rasayāṅgino dharmāḥ śauryādāya ivātmanaḥ |  
Utkarṣahetavaste syuracalasthitayoḥ guṇāḥ ||”<sup>6</sup>

Mādhurya, Ojaḥ and Prasāda – these three Guṇas belong to śṛṅgārādi nava rasas. Mādhurya with Śṛṅgāra, Karuṇa and Śānta expresses the mind, while Ojaḥ with Raudra, Vīra and Bībhatsa exhibits the same. Similarly, Prasāda Guṇa is associated with Hāsyā, Bhayānaka and Adbhuta rasa. Now we will discuss about these Guṇas –

**Mādhurya:** From Bharata to Jagannātha, all of the rhetoricians accepted this Guṇa. Although there is disagreement over its definition. Bhāmaha said – “Śravyaṃ nātisamastārthaṃ kāvyam madhuramiṣyate ||”<sup>7</sup> According to Mammaṭa – “Āhlādakatvaṃ mādhyam.”<sup>8</sup> This Guṇa, which is associated with a fewer compound words and soft letters, reveals śṛṅgāra, karuṇa and śānta rasas.

**Ojaḥ:** This Guṇa is also recognized by all of the ancient rhetoricians. Daṇḍin prescribed it as – “Ojaḥ samāsabhūyastvam.”<sup>9</sup> It has more compound terms. Bhāmaha also said – “Kecidojo'bhīdhitsantaḥ samasyanti bahūnyapi.”<sup>10</sup> Vīra, Bībhatsa and Raudra rasas' expressive Guṇa, Ojaḥ has enormous compound terms.

**Prasāda:** This Guṇa is also universally accepted. Sentences with this Guṇa are easy to understand. Bhāmaha said – “Avidvadaṅganābālapratīrthaṃ prasādavat.”<sup>11</sup> Daṇḍin's definition is – “Prasādavat prasiddhārthaṃ.”<sup>12</sup> This Guṇa is 'madhyamasamāsuyuktam' and 'madhyamavarṇasamghatitam'. It indicates Hāsyā, Adbhuta and Bhayānaka rasas.

Now, their examples are being quoted from the Upaniṣads –

## Mādhurya

“Na tatra Sūrya bhāti na Candratāraḥ nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto'yamagniḥ |  
Tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṃ tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṃ vibhāti ||”<sup>13</sup>

“Nāhaṃ manye suvedeti no na vedeti veda ca |  
Yo nastadveda tadveda no na vedeti veda ca ||”<sup>14</sup>

“Tadejati tannajati taddūre tadvantike |  
Tadantarasya sarvasya tadū sarvasyāsyā bāhyataḥ ||”<sup>15</sup>

“So’kāmayata – bahu syāṃ prajāyeyeti | Sa tapo’tapyata | Sa tapastaptvā | Idam sarvamasṛjata ||”<sup>16</sup>

“Yatra supto na kañcana kāmaṃ kāmayate, na kañcana svapnaṃ paśyati, tat suṣuptam ||”<sup>17</sup>

“Yo vai bhūma tat sukham nālpe sukhamasti bhūmaiva sukham bhūmā tveva vijijñāsītavya iti bhūmānaṃ bhagavo vijijñāsa iti ||”<sup>18</sup>

“Kālī karālī ca manojavā ca sulohitā ya ca sudhūmravarṇā |  
Sphuliṅginī viśvaruṅcī ca devī lelāyamānā iti sapta jihvāḥ ||  
Kāmān yaḥ kāmayate manyamānaḥ sa kāmabhirjāyate tatra tatra |  
Paryāptakāmasya kṛtātmanastu ihaiva sarve pravilīyanti kāmāḥ ||”<sup>19</sup>

“Navadvāre pure dehī haṃso lelāyate bahiḥ |  
Vaśī sarvasya lokasya sthāvarasya carasya ca ||  
Vedāhametaṃ puruṣaṃ mahāntamādityavarṇaṃ tamasāḥ parastāt |  
Tameva viditvā’ti mṛtyumeti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate’yanāya ||”<sup>20</sup>

“...nainaṃ pāpmā taratī sarvaṃ pāpmānaṃ taratī nainaṃ pāpmā tapatī sarvaṃ pāpmānaṃ tapatī vipāpo virajo’vicikitso brāhmaṇo bhavatyēṣa brahmalokaḥ samraḍenaṃ prāpito’sīti hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ so’haṃ bhagavate videhān dadāmi mām cāpi saha dāsyāyeti ||”<sup>21</sup>

**JETIR**  
**Ojaḥ**

“Yacchedvañmanasī prājñastad yacchejjñāna ātmani |  
Jñānamātmani mahatī niyacchettad yacchechchānta ātmani ||  
Parāñci khāni vyatṛṇt svayambhūstasmāt parāñ paśyati nāntarātman |  
Kaścīd dhīraḥ pratyagātmanamaikṣad āvṛttacakṣuramṛtatvamicchān ||”<sup>22</sup>

“Śrotrasya śrotraṃ manaso mano yad vāco ha vācaṃ sa u prāṇasya praṇaḥ |  
Cakṣuścākṣuratimucya dhīraḥ pretyāsmāllokādāmṛtā bhavanti ||”<sup>23</sup>

“Sa paryagācchukramakāyamavraṇamasnāviraṃ śudhamapāpavidham |  
Kavirmanīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūryāthātathyato’rthān vyadadhācchāśvatībhyāḥ samābhyāḥ ||”<sup>24</sup>

“Adhilokamadhiyautiṣamadhividyamadhi prajamadhyātman ||”<sup>25</sup>

“Nāntaḥprajñāṃ na bahiḥprajñāṃ nobhayataḥprajñāṃ na prajñānaghanāṃ na prajñāṃ nāprajñāṃ |  
Adṛṣṭamavyavahāryamagrāhyamalakṣaṇamacintyamavyapadeśyamekātmapratyayasāraṃ prapañcōpaśamaṃ śāntaṃ  
śivamadvaitaṃ caturthaṃ manyante | Sa ātmā Sa vijñeyaḥ ||”<sup>26</sup>

“Atha yadu caivāsmiñchavyaṃ kurvanti yadi ca nārciṣmevābhisambhavantyarciṣo’harahna āpūryamāṇapakṣa-  
māpūryamāṇapakṣād yān ṣaḍudañneti māsāmstān.... ||”<sup>27</sup>

“Yadā vai nistiṣṭhatyatha śraddadhātī nānistiṣṭhañchṛaddadhātī nistiṣṭhanneva śraddadhātī niṣṭhā tveva vijijñāsītavyeti niṣṭhāṃ  
bhagavo vijijñāsa iti ||”<sup>28</sup>

“Yattadadreśyamagrāhyamagotramavarṇamacakṣuḥśrotraṃ tadapāñipādān ||”<sup>29</sup>

“Yasyāgnihotraṃadarśamapaurṇamāsamacāturmāsyaṃamanāgrāyaṇamatithivarjitaṃ ca ||”<sup>30</sup>

## Prasāda

“Ātmānaṃ rathinaṃ viddhi śārīraṃ rathameva tu |  
Buddhiṃ tu sārathim viddhi manaḥ pragrahameva ca ||”<sup>31</sup>

“Agniryathaiko bhuvanaṃ praviṣṭo rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva |  
Ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā rūpaṃ rūpaṃ pratirūpo bahiśca ||”<sup>32</sup>

“Sūryo yathā sarvalokasya cakṣurna lipyate cākṣuṣairbahyadoṣaiḥ |

Ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā na lipyate lokaduḥkhena bahyaḥ ॥<sup>33</sup>

“Yaccakṣuṣā na paśyati yena cakṣuṃṣi paśyati ॥  
Tadeva brahma tvam viddhi nedaṃ yadidamupāsate ॥”<sup>34</sup>

“Īśā vāsyamidam sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyām jagat ॥  
Tena tyaktena bhuñjītha mā grdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam ॥”<sup>35</sup>

“Yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtānyātmaivābhūdviḥjānataḥ ॥  
Tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka ekatvamanupaśyataḥ ॥”<sup>36</sup>

“Annādbhūtāni jāyante jātānyannena vardhante ॥  
Adyate’tti ca bhūtāni tasmādanam taducyate ॥”<sup>37</sup>

“Yadā karmasu kamyēṣu striyaṃ svapneṣu paśyati ॥  
Samṛddhiṃ tatra jānīyāt tasmin svapnanidarśane ॥”<sup>38</sup>

“Praṇavo dhanuḥ śaro hyātmā brahma tallakṣyamucyate ॥  
Apramattena veddhavyaṃ śaravattanmayo bhavet ॥”<sup>39</sup>

From the above discussion, it can be said that, the importance of the Upaniṣads in finding the source of discussion of Guṇa is undeniable.

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18. Vide Chāndogyopeniṣad 7/23/1.
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