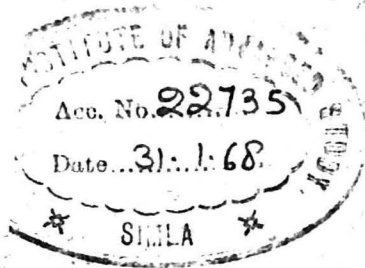




INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED STUDY
SIMLA

PH
891.2
D49S



23

10/10/83



Library

IIAS, Shimla

PH 891.2 D 49 S



00022735

Śleṣa as a Means of Economy in the Bhāradvāja Maṇḍala

by

G. V. Devasthali

It is now generally accepted that an intimate acquaintance with style facilitates the problem of interpretation to a great extent. In fact sometimes it may be difficult, nay even impossible, to arrive at a correct interpretation in the absence of acquaintance with stylistic peculiarities of the author. And the *Ṛgveda* is not an exception to this general rule. Several attempts have, therefore, been made to cultivate acquaintance with the stylistic peculiarities of the RV as a whole, and of the several families of seers to whom the several books have been attributed. Very recently Prof. VELANKAR¹ has shown how the Vedic seers (or poets) were quite conscious of the principle of brevity or terseness and tried to bring it into practice by means of several devices. Word economy would thus appear to be a very prominent feature of the style of the Vedic poets (or seers); and it may be interesting to study in details the various means and devices used by the seers of the various families. This topic is vast enough to form the subject of an independent thesis. We shall here restrict ourselves to only one of these devices and that too as used by the Bhāradvājas. It is proposed to study the use of śleṣa (paronomasia) as a means of word economy in the *Bhāradvāja Maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*.

It may be seen that śleṣa by its very nature is highly useful for word economy; for in one word or one set of words it has the capacity to yield more senses than one, so much so that the matter expressed in the ordinary manner in a particular space can be easily compressed into as much as half the space or even less than it by means of śleṣa. Moreover, śleṣa itself can be used in a variety of ways. It may be either a *śabdālamkāra*, or an *arthālamkāra*; it may occur only in one word or expression or in more words than one, or in a whole sentence; it may, moreover, be used *per se*, or may be used to serve as a basis for some other figure of speech. It may be interesting to see the use of śleṣa in all its varieties as found in the *Ṛgveda* and this is what we shall try to do here with particular reference to the *Bhāradvāja Maṇḍala* thereof.

Let us start with *māpa sphariḥ payasā mā na ā dhak* (61. 14) which is addressed to Sarasvatī. Now the expression *apa sphariḥ* easily reminds us of adjectival expressions like *anapasphur* and *anāpaspurā* which are always used in the RV in connection with the cow that does not thrust away the milkman. The reader of the line under reference may, therefore, easily recall the *anapasphurā dhenu* of RV. VI. 48. 11 and get the impression that here

1. See his 'Word-Economy and Ṛgvedic Interpretation' read at the International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, India 1964; vide summaries of papers, pp. 265-67. Also see *ABORI*, Vol. XLV. p, 3 ff.

Sarasvatī is suggestively compared to the *anapasphurā dhenu* of that passage. This further leads to the suggestion that the expression *payasā* in our passage may have been used with a *double entendre*, so much so that with the river Sarasvatī it should mean *water*, but with the suggested *dhenu* it should signify *milk*. It would thus appear that here is a case where the poet has used suggestive and paronomastic expressions giving rise to the figure called *samāsokti*. For, while referring directly to the *prakṛta* viz. Sarasvatī, he has at the same time suggested the *aprakṛta* viz. *dhenu* by using paronomastic expressions applicable to both.²

Another instance we find at 37. 2 ab which reads: *pro drone harayaḥ karmāgman punānāsa rjyanto abhūvan*. Here the expressions *punānāsaḥ* and *rjyantaḥ* deserve careful consideration. The former is primarily an epithet of *soma pavamāna*; while the latter expression actually occurs in the following verse as an epithet of the horses yoked to Indra's chariot (*rathyāso āśvāḥ*). Actually, however, both these expressions in the present case apply to the same substantive viz. *harayaḥ* (horses). But the expression *harayaḥ* itself in the RV means both the *tawny soma juice* as well as *Indra's horses*. So here again the poet appears to have used the expressions *harayaḥ*, *punānāsaḥ* and *rjyantaḥ* to suggest that the *harayaḥ* (soma juices) themselves are the *harayaḥ* (Indra's horses) whom the poet expects to bring Indra to him. The phenomenon here is again similar to what we have seen in the first passage discussed above; for, this passage also conveys two ideas (one directly and the other only suggestively) by means of paronomastic expressions.³

Yet another instance is to be found in *sa no mandrābnir adhvare jihvābhir yajā mahaḥ | ā devān vakṣi yakṣi ca* (16. 2). Here the poet is requesting Agni to invoke and sacrifice to the gods with his *jihvāḥ*. It must be noted here first of all that the idea in the expression *yaja* is made clearer by the expressions *ā vakṣi* and *yakṣi*; and further that all this is to be done by *jihvābhiḥ*. It is, therefore, obvious that the expression *jihvābhiḥ* has been used to convey a two-fold capacity, that of *āvāhana* and the other for *havana*. In this connection it must be observed that in the RV the expression *jihvā* is used more in connection with the idea of enjoying food or eatables than that of speaking⁴. But the use of *jihvā* as an organ of speech is not altogether foreign to the RV; and it is quite possible to suggest in cases like the one under consideration that the expression *jihvābhiḥ* must have been deliberately used in view of the double capacity wielded by it. The verse under consideration may, therefore, be easily seen to evince a deliberate attempt on the part of the Vedic poet to achieve word economy by using an expression presenting a phenomenon that is very much akin to *śleṣa*.

2. *Samāsokti* is defined as :

समासोक्तिः समर्थं च कार्यलिङ्गविशेषणैः ।
व्यवहारसमारोपः प्रकृतेऽन्यस्य वस्तुनः ॥

Sāhityadarpaṇa X.

3. See note 15 below.

4. See GRASSMANN, *Wörterbuch zum Ṛgveda*, under *jihvā*.

Let us now turn to another example which is even more interesting. RV VI. 23.10cd reads : *asad yathā jaritra uta sūriḥ indro rāyo viśvavārasya dātā*. Neither GELDNER nor GRASSMANN have any suggestion to make about these lines and they render them word for word as they stand. But the use and the position of the expression *uta* after *sūriḥ* does not appear to get full justice at their hands. For they would interpret the expression as a conjunction joining the second and the third *pādas* of the *ṛk*. But the more natural interpretation of this expression as it stands here (i. e. after *jaritre*) would make us expect something that the poet wants to add to *jaritre* itself, rather than to the preceding clause as it is generally supposed to be. But what can this thing be? This question can be answered without much difficulty if we give a deeper thought to the expression *sūriḥ* that has occurred immediately after it. In this connection it must first of all be remembered that the expression *sūriḥ* is often used in the RV as an epithet of Indra. Even the Bhāradvājas have so used it more than once⁵, so much so that there should be no doubt regarding the construction of this expression with *indraḥ* as it is accepted by all. But as has been suggested above, difficulty crops up when we come to the expression *uta* which means ' *More-over, and also* '. Now since this expression comes after the word *jaritre*, it is more natural than not to expect that the poet wants to add something to the idea conveyed by that expression. But what can it be? Now when we read the whole *ṛk* it is evident that it is aimed at seeking some blessings for the singer (*jaritre*) and (*uta*) some one else who is left unmentioned. Now if we remember the fact that the R̥gvedic poets (and Bhāradvājas are no exception to this) often invoke blessings not only for themselves but also for their patrons along with themselves⁶, the case under consideration should present no very serious difficulty; and without much hesitation we may presume that here also blessings are invoked by the poet for himself and also for his patron as usual. But, it may be asked, where is the expression for ' patron ' ? This question can be answered on the assumption of *śleṣa* on the expression *sūriḥ* and suggesting further that the expression *sūriḥ* here stands for itself directly and for *sūraye* suggestively. *Uta* coming immediately after *jaritre*, it may be argued, suggests that it must be followed by an expression in the dative; and the expression (i. e. the *prātipadika* itself) of which the dative may be expected here, is suggested by the expression *sūriḥ* that has occurred immediately after *uta*. It may be remembered that the expression *sūri* in the RV is used not only in connection with Indra (as in the present case it obviously stands), but also in the sense of ' rich patron ' for whom the poet is often found to invoke the blessings of deities along with himself. Thus the expression *sūri* in the RV has a *double entendre* which can never be lost sight of. On the strength of this *double entendre* it should not be very difficult in the present case to have the expression *sūraye* after *uta*, which may be said to have been dropped for the sake of word economy particularly because it could be easily

5. cf. *ā tā sūriḥ pṛṇatī tūtuḥānāḥ*, RV.VI.29.5c and 37.5d.

6. cf. RV. VI.10.5; 26.7; 54.6; 63.11; 68.7.

applied. Such dropping of expression is not an uncommon phenomenon in the RV⁷; and may, therefore, be admitted in the present case without much hesitation.

Let us now turn to *ā sūryo na bhānumadbhir arkair agne tatantha rodasī vi bhāsā* (4. 6ab) which presents a slightly different case. It may be noted here first of all that the present hemistich is almost synonymous with (or a sort of amplification of) *ā yas tatantha rodasī vi bhāsā śravobhiḥ ca śravasyas tarutraḥ* (1. 11ab.). Such phenomenon again, it may be observed, is not quite unusual in the *Bhāradvāja maṇḍala*; and we have several cases where a close parallelism is noticeable between the passages which would thus appear to be nothing short of a paraphrase of each other⁸. It should not, therefore, be difficult to see that *arkaiḥ* of our passage corresponds to *śravobhiḥ* of the other and further that like *śravobhiḥ śravasyaḥ* of that passage our passage should have *arkaiḥ arcanīyaḥ*. It would thus appear that our passage (4. 6ab) is only a re-statement of the other passage (1. 11ab) with the simile '*sūryo na*' added to it. If this is accepted then we have to see how *arkair arcanīyaḥ* (which evidently will form the common property) applies to both *agni* as well as *sūrya*. And here we see *śleṣu*. *Arkaiḥ* taken with *sūrya* may apply to his rays; while with *agni* it may stand for *śravas* (i. e. *stotra*) of VI, 1. 11ab, a meaning that can be supported by several passages.⁹

Vijehamānaḥ paraśu na jihvām (3. 4c) is yet another instance. The more usual expression of the RV is *jehamānaḥ* (without *vi*) which has occurred four times¹⁰ in the RV whereas *vijehamānaḥ* has occurred only once. A perusal of our passage clearly shows that *paraśu* is the *upamāna* for *agni*. Now the phenomenon referred to is obviously 'fire spreading out the *jihvā* and he is said to do it like a *paraśu*. But evidently *paraśu* can't be said to spread out its *jihvā*, which means that *jihvām vijehamānaḥ* can't be said to form the common property. What can then be the common property meant in this case? To my mind it appears that the common property is couched in the expression *vijehamānaḥ* only, and further that the expression has to be differently understood with the *upameya* and with the *upamāna*. It should be observed that *√jeh* is both transitive as well as intransitive (or reflexive). With *agni* it is to be understood transitively (with *jihvām* as its object) while with *paraśu* it is to be construed the other way. Thus the simile when

7. This often is the case when a deity is addressed. In such cases the expression is put in the Voc. only, which then is meant to serve the purpose of the Voc. as also the Nom. For illustrations see Professor VELANKAR, *ABORI*, Vol. XLV, pp 3 ff. Professor VELANKAR also has mentioned passages where a word actually employed with one case-termination leads to the implication of the same word with another case-termination (as is the case here), the latter being required for the completion of the sense of the sentence.

8. See RV. VI.1.9 and 2.4; 4.6 and 1.11; 5.5 and 1.9; 7.5 and 8.2; 11.4 and 48.6: 12.1 and 6.6; 6.4 and 8.2; etc.

9. See GRASSMANN, *ibid*, under *arka*.

10. cf. I.110.5; 163.6 (*jehamānam*) : X.3.6 (*jehamanasya*) ; 15.9 (*jehamūnāh*).

drawn out would be; *vijehamānaḥ paraśur iva jihvām vijehamānaḥ agniḥ* (i. e. Agni, like a stretching out *paraśu*, spreading his tongue). For otherwise it would be impossible (at least very difficult) to explain the simile as it actually stands.

Kratvā hi droṇe ajyase' gne vājī na kṛtvyaḥ (2.8ab) presents a slightly different case. For there we have an expression (*ajyase*) that is to be derived from two totally different roots whereas in the last illustration we had the same root used in two different ways (i. e. transitively and intransitively.) GELDNER has already suggested that here *ajyase* should be traced back to √*aj* or to √*añj* according as we construe it with *agni* or *vājī*. It must, however, be observed that the *kṛtvya vājin* or *atya* appears as *upamāna* for *soma* in RV. IX¹¹: and from there the simile seems to have been transferred to *Agni*. *Soma* is actually pressed and poured forth into the wooden vessel just as a charger is also groomed and let loose in a race. In a way, therefore, the expression *ajyase* in both its senses (as derived from the two roots as stated above) can very well go with *Soma* as well as the *vājin*, thus making the simile quite perfect in every respect. But the same can't be said in connection with *Agni*. For *Agni* has to be rubbed (produced by attrition) in the woods (*droṇa* = *samidh*). But the idea of letting loose can't apply to him, particularly when it is said to have been done in the *droṇa*. Hence it may be seen that in the verse under consideration we must take *ajyase* as a form of √*añj* only in the case of *Agni*, though with reference to *vājin* it may be traced back to both the roots and thus suggest both the senses.

In all the cases discussed so far it may be seen that the paronomastic expression has served as an economic measure in the hands of the poets of Maṇḍala VI. Cases of words used in more senses than one, but not used as a means of word economy also are not wanting in this *maṇḍala*. We may note *ā vivāse* (51.8ab) as an illustration. In *a* it is used in the sense of *parīcarana* while in *d* the sense intended to be conveyed thereby is *varjanam* as Śāyana has well brought it out. We are not, however, here concerned with such expressions; and hence we leave all such cases out of consideration and pass on to our next point.

Āgnir na śuśkaṁ vanam indra hetī rakṣo ni dhakṣy aśanir na bhīmā (18.10ab) presents a peculiar case. In this hemistich clearly we have two similes; and the two *upamānas* are *agniḥ* and *aśaniḥ* Śāyana resorting to *adhyāhāra* takes *hetīḥ* as the *upameya* of *agni* and *aśani* as the *upamāna* for *Indra*. But the obvious *liṅgavyatyaya*¹² between the *upamāna* and the *upameya* can be easily avoided if *Indra* and *hetī* are construed as *upameyas* of *agni* and *aśani* respectively. Thus it would mean: *Indra, tvam aśanir na śuśkaṁ vanam hetī (Instr.) rakṣo ni dhakṣi'*; and further (*sā hetir*) *aśanir na bhīmā (asti)*.

11. cf. *atyāsaḥ kṛtvya iva* (RV. IX.46.1b); *indur aśvo na kṛtvyaḥ* (RV. IX.101.2c).

12. Not that *liṅgavyatyaya* is foreign to the RV (cf. e.g. VI.24.40). But there can be no two opinions that irregularity should not be taken for granted as far as possible.

Such a construction, however, requires us to have two expressions *hetī* and *hetih*, which it is not altogether impossible to have. For, in the *samhitāpāṭha* we have the expression *hetī-rakṣo*, which has been rendered in the *padapāṭha* as *heith rakṣah*; but may also be rendered as *hetī rakṣah* (according to the rules of euphonic combination). If this suggestion is accepted, here we shall have a case of what may be said to correspond to the *sabhaṅga śleṣa* of the later days. It must be noted here that Maṇḍala VI of the RV is not altogether innocent of artificialities of style as can be realised when we see the various ways in which the poets have used acrobatics comparable on a smaller scale, of course, to the later highly artificial *śabdālamkāras*¹³.

[*Jātavedāḥ*] *usrah piteva jārayāyi yajñaih* (12.4) presents a peculiar case where *śleṣa* has been utilised for presenting a simile. Thus the expression *jārayāyi* (like the expression *ajyase* discussed above) is to be derived from two different roots and understood in two different ways. Once it is to be derived from √*Jr.* (*jāraya*) to *sing*; and secondly it is to be derived from the Denom. √*jāraya* (from *jāra*) to act as a paramour. GELDNER has pointed out that here a reference is made to the incident referred to in RV 1.71.5d (*svāyām devo duhitari tviṣim dhāt*) in the expression *jārayāyi*; and on that basis *Agni* here is to be compared with *usrah pitā*, both of whom are (or can be said to be) *jārayāyi*, though in quite different senses. Now this explanation offered by GELDNER appears to be too artificial, no doubt. But it is indeed worth considering and at least provisionally acceptable for want of any better interpretation¹⁴ and also in view of the fact that artificiality is not altogether absent in the *Bhāradvāja Maṇḍala* of the RV.

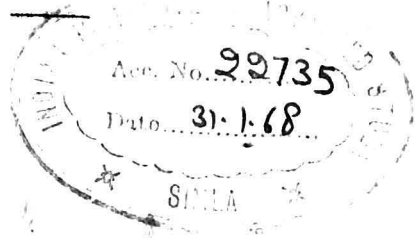
Finally we may turn once again to 37. 2ab already discussed above. We have already seen there how *harayaḥ* is a punning expression; and conveys the senses of the tawny drops of Soma and the tawny horses of Indra. The hemistich, therefore, conveys two pictures; one directly and the other indirectly by suggestion as the later rhetoricians would describe it; and hence we visualise here the figures *samāsokti*, or *aprustutaprasāmsā*¹⁵ or perhaps mere *śleṣa*, according to the view we take about the two pictures conveyed by it.

It may thus be seen that in the hands of the Bhāradvājas, *śleṣa* with its varieties has served as a good means of word economy; for as we have seen so far, in several cases they have actually conveyed more *artha* in fewer *śabdās* by employing *paronomastic expressions* in a variety of manners.

13. cf. e.g. RV. VI. 2.11; 6.7 (play on the expressions *citra* and *candra*); 14.6; etc.

14. Yāska, Durga and Sāyaṇa have offered other interpretations, for which the reader is referred to the *Nirukta* VI.15, Durga's commentary on the *Nirukta* VI.15 and Sāyaṇa's commentary on *Rgveda* VI.12.4 respectively.

15. Both these figures have two *arthas* viz. *prakṛta* and *aparakṛta*, of which one is expressed and the other implied. In *aprustutaprasāmsā*, the *aparakṛta artha* is expressed to imply the *prakṛta artha*; while just reverse is the case in *samāsokti*. In *śleṣa*, on the other hand, both *arthas* are *prakṛta* as also *vācya*. In the verse under consideration, for want of any deciding factor, the figure may be *sandehasamkara*.



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY

Acc. No. _____

Author : _____

Title : _____

Borrower	Issued	Returned
----------	--------	----------

--	--	--

|