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SRI TALLAPAKA ANNAMACHARYA— CONTRIBUTION TO MUSIC

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Abstract:

Annamayya is a 15th century musician who has done immense musical and lyrical work dedication to Lord Venakateswara. Through this article a glimpse was tried to establish saying his musical work, his contribution to musical world, using music as a means making person to travel from path of humanity to divinity thus establishing equality showing fact of one in everything. The article includes his compositions those include Adhyatma and Sringara Keerthanas as well as poetic glory thus having a look on critical analysis of his sanleerthanas concluding with his keertanas being sung at various occasions at Tirumala ending with Ekantha Seva to Lord Venkateswara.

INTRODUCTION

Tallapaka Annamacharya popularly known as Annamayya bearing title as Pada Kavita Pitamaha of telugu poetry was devoted poetry who sang thousands of sankeertanas in ode of Sri Tirumala Venkateswara swamy. He was reputed singer and an eminent poet who gave life to Telugu song and lyricism and saintly Emperor of words who blended the Telugu Andhra Vedam to the understanding of common mans from within the summary of Sanskrit Vedas.

Annamayya was born as the first vocalist of South India to Lakkamamba and Narayana Suri on 22nd May 1408 AD at Tallapaka village, Rajampet Mandal, Cuddapah district,



Andhra Pradesh State; He stands as a legendary singer who sang around 32000 keertanas in worship of lord to find the way to salvation.

Annamayya is to be reckoned as first among the hymnographers in telugu not only from view point of chronology but also for his superb artistry and range of feeling and thought. He was a pioneer in the field who could handle both amorous and devotional strains with equal felicity, The eroticism evident in Kshetrayya's love lyrics and Thyagaraja's rapturous praises of the glory of Rama are undoubtedly reminiscence of Annamayya's treatment of these elements in his hymns.

Annamayya – Contribution,

Poetic style:

In the era where they were numerous foreign poets reigning over the literature times, Annamayya was the first who paved way to sing in ode of common man unlike others who only praised kings and the erudite.

Annamayya is remembered for his saintly life and is honoured as great devotee of Vishnu by devotees and saintly singers. He was one of the few who amalgamated the folk and propagated Vaishnavism among common people.

He appreciated every phase of life through his songs which include the moon, the temple, birds, flowers, lullabies, praises, austerity, awakenings, tributes and many other folklore activities. He espoused on subjects such as morality, dharma, and righteousness and was one of the first few who opposed social stigma towards untouchable castes in his era, with his sankeertanas explaining that the relationship between God and Human is same irrespective of the latter's colour, caste, and financial status.

Annamayya was greatly influenced by legacy of the god intoxicated poet composers, the Alvars. The term Alwar means one who is immersed. In the present context it denotes an ardent devotee ever immersed in God. 12 such devotees of Vishnu who lived between 6th and 9th



century in Tamil speaking region of South India are traditionally recognised as the Alvars, The Alvars are held in such high veneration that each of the 108 places they sang about has consequently come to be regarded as divine place. Annamacharya was well acquainted with the hymns of Alvars for at least two reasons 1. He was himself a latter day Alvar 2. Foremost exponent of Vishishtadvaita school of Vaishnavism – Ramanayya rightly thought that “the real proof of the being of God is the being in God”

Annamayya's wife **Timmakka** is- also the first poetess in the Telugu literature. She composed **Subhadra Kalyanam**. The sons and grand children were all born poets who continued their writings in footsteps of Annamayya.

Annamayya words are considered Vedic equivalent by their family, Annamayya's son Pedda Tirumalayya has made all the Vedic scripts into sankeertanas and explained the greatness of Annamayya to everyone. Chinnathirumalacharya the grandson of Annamayya praises him as Pada Kavitha Pitamaha. He sung about the importance of Annamayya sankeertanas all over the world.

Song pattern of Keertanas and Lyricism:

The Sankeertanas have a common structural pattern. Each song comprises a **Pallavi**, occasional **Anupallavi**, and usually three metrically and musically identical four line **charanas**. In general, the songs exhibit a high degree of literary craftsmanship in which he uses both colloquial and literary Telugu.

Annamayya was not the first to comprise or invent Padas, which had been evolving over many years and was used by Sri Padarayaswami and his predecessors for writing devotionals in Kannada. Annamayya who was probably influenced by this composer seems as yet to be the first writer of Padas in Telugu. The Pada is a difficult form to handle, and being bound by strict rule, meant to serve the purpose of both poetry and song. Annamayya used it with such mastery that it became a habit of his mind.

The Krithis of Thyagaraja and others are conceived generally as musical compositions and their however impressive is mainly a verbal scaffold for raising a musical structure.



Therefore while singing Annamayya's compositions, importance has to be given to the meaning to be given to the meaning since sahityam takes precedence over music, The ragas used by Annamayya in his songs are about 100 which includes Abali, Amarasindhu, Kandamalahari, Sorashtragujari in good number. Even the commonly used ones today like Sankarabharanam, Mukhari, Kambhoji, Devagandhari and Sri have undergone subtle changes since his time.

Compositions:

Annamayya's songs which he considered as flower offerings to God are his outstanding achievements, in them he praises Venkateswara, describes his love for him, argues and quarrels with him, meditates on his attributes, confesses his failures and apprehensions and surrenders himself to him, Traditionally his songs are classified as **Adhyatma** and **Sringara Sankeertanas**.

Adhyatma sankeerthanans affirm the primacy of spiritual values over the purely mundane and express inevitable tension between these and oneself. They emphasize the need for Bhakti and Virakti, Despite such faith, Annamayya was troubled by opposing pulls in himself "**To live and move aimlessly has been my lot, When do I learn? O Lord, fixity of purpose? So unsteady am I, while I desire renunciation**". Temple festivities gave Annamayya many occasions for songs in which he sees symbolic enactments of cosmic truths.

In the song **Alara chanchalamaina athmanandhunda alavatu cheseni vuyyala palumaru nuchwasa pavanamandhunda nee bhavambu telepeni vuyyala.....**this was known to be popularly sung during Ekantha seva. Here Annamayya describes the movement of air, uchvasa, nisvasa undergoes on behalf of the divine hand of lord i.e. the inbuilt energy behind the air that is in the form of air which is nothing but the divine energy received by lord's blessings. Not only the divine spirit is confined to air but also the energy due to which light is being emitted from the sun and the moon is also not other than that of lord. Similarly decoding each energy of nature as well as Universe ultimately gives the answer of divine spirit behind their function. Hence Annamayya beautifully indulged the truth behind which the world is made functional explaining the oneness of whole universe hence ignoring the conflicts and what not.



The Sringara Sankeertanas express love and longing for the lord and his surrender to him. Here Annamayya speaks for himself and for others who similarly long for God in terms of Rakthi rather than Virakti.

Through the song **Alarulu kuriyaga aadinadhe.... alakula kulukula Alamelmanga....** Annamayya described the beautiful dance of Alamelumangamma. While dancing the felling of flowers one by one, moving the knuckles is explained blind folded, young girls behind the screen mask (body) attracted to the dance is clearly made understood through the keertana. The dance is dissolving the lord's heart as well as penetrating in to the deeper layers of lords heart thus representing the diamond squirting the sparkles.

In another song **Paluku tenela thalli pavalinchenu... kaliki thanamula vibhuni galisinadhi gaana....** Goddess Padmavathi is described as paluku tenela thalli where goddess is resting on the lord's heart till the sunrays fall on her glowing face expressing the sleep of Goddess.

Annamayya's Poetic Glory:

Diving in to Annamayya's magnificent compositions, a song which every telugu born lother would sing to her infant at dusk, feeding him morsels of food, by showing the alluring moon is scripted as

Chandamama raavo jabilli raavo – manchi kundanapu vendikora vennapaalu teevo

Later she cradles the infant by singing a lullaby **Jo achyuthanandha jo jo mukunda – rave paramanandha rama govinda – jo....jo.....**

The baby slips into fast sleep by the sweetness of nectar in the songs of Annamayya and the eternal love of the mother; Annamayya's songs have been entertaining and enchanting the telugu folks over generations as a blessed boon. He also preached the philosophy through songs such as **“Brahmam okkate, parabrahmamokkate..... Tandana ahi, Tandana purae ”** He also advocated equality through the verse **“ Nindara raju nidrinchu nidrayu okate..... andane bantu nidra adhiyu okate...andariki Sri hare antaratma”**which meant that the king sleeps the



same way as the slave sleeps which proves that the lord is one and equal for all. He also used singing as a medium to convey the people that the lord Srihari is beyond caste and creed

A popular song verses include

Ennadu vigananamika naaku..... -

vinnapamidhe Sri Venkatanadha..

basina bayavu bhavabandhamulu - aasa dehamunnannallu

kosina tholagavu korikalu – gasili chittamunnannallu

kochina korayavu kopamulu – gachula gunamulu kaliginannallu

thachina thagalavu thahathahalu – rachalu vishayapu rathulunnallu

okatikokatikini vodabadavu – akata Sri Venkatadhipuda

sakalamu neeve saranatee – ika vikatamulanagenu vedukannallu

Here Annamayya is explaining the pain underwent by jeevathma within human body is clearly explain through this sankeerthana saying ennadu vignanamika naku vinnapamidhe sri venkatanatha...

The desires towards the materialistic world has getting no end as well as the hope of taking bodies is not worn out... o lord when will the soul get blessed to thought of getting liberated ffrom creating bodies..., whren will I come out of maya egudu dhigutho koodina gachula gune saying the up's and downs of the trigunas to be lost and turn to stage of gunatheetha..

O lord please take me out of darkness and bless me with vignana. O lord! This is my humble plea vinnapamidhe Sri Venkatanadha..

Conclusion:

Unfortunately little is known about annamayya's music and his musical thought while his poetry was preserved, his music could not be for reasons not known not only is there no written



record of his music there is no living tradition of singing his songs although several centuries after him, his songs are sung in Tirumala.

The copper plates only mention raga for the song but what musical form and tala he assigned to it is not known. The fact that Annamayya knew all musical modes and forms of his times are obvious from his works. But he considered his Padas primarily as Devotional poetry. Music was mainly an Aid to render them effectively.

Through his Keerthanas Annamaya conveyed to society the truth that God is beyond all differences the truth is one that is not different from lord.

Even though these is much musical work by is available Annamayya much there is need to spread his true ideology to all the people as well as make them aware of lyrical contribution of Annamayya that includes the occasions in individuals life from child birth, marriage also the death even after the death explaining the journey of jeevathma from humanity to divinity. In this way all the life styles of human race from all the dimensions through his keertanas were included by Annamayya.

Ekantha seva at Tirumala:

At Tirumala, lord Sri Venkateswara awakes with Annamayya's melukolupu and follows the days rituals, ends with great saint poetess Vengamamba's Muthyala Harathi.

Muthyala Harathi is the last ritual performed during Ekantha seva to Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala. This seva is symbolic gesture of lord's love for his devotees. The ritual was started by saint poetess Tarigonda Vengamamba and for almost the 3 centuries is being performed on par with Lalipata introduced by another great dwvottee Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya. Along with Mangala Harathi the lullaby song composed by great devotee Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya is sung which is relished by the Lord before he goes to Yoga Nidra. During Ekantha seva a descendent of sainy poet Sri Tallapaka Annamacharya sings lullabies to putforth the lord to celestial sleep. This seva is known as Panupu seva.



Performing both the rituals during Ekantha seva to the lord is remembering these great devotees who had surrendered to lord, The speciality of Ekantha seva is glorified as

TALLAPAKA VAARI LAALI, TARIGONDA VAARI HARATHI.

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