

## Bhajana Tradition and Music therapy (Nada Chikithsa) of His Holiness Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji

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### ABSTRACT

“SisurvethhiPasurvethhiVethhiganarasamphanihi”. According to this popular saying, children, animals and snakes can be influenced and possessed with music. Music is a universal language of people which influences the human being on his thoughts, feelings and emotions. It gives the relaxation, energy, health and peace. Music is not only a performing art but also could be combined with various other fields like medical, yoga, and meditation etc.

There are many saints, sages, guru-s and philosophers in India who teach and preach philosophical thoughts and cultural values. They play a key role in keeping the human life in a right track. Medical, yoga, Music and meditation are different from one another and it is impossible to see these together at a single place and in a single person. Though all these four aspects put together do miracles in human life, it is difficult for a person to possess such combined skills. Such kind of person should have been more trained, talented, hard work natured with amazing grasping & memory skills and also need to be a scholarly person. One such great living legend with all the above skills is **His Holiness Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji**, a popular Hindu philosophical guru who is influencing and motivating the people with his Bhakthi (devotion) & Bhajana tradition. He is an expert in yoga, meditation and also in music. He is a poet, author, musician, music composer, psychological philosopher, and a healer of diseases through his therapeutic music concerts.

**Aim** -This paper is to focus on the musical aspects of Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji in composing bhajan-s on various deities and his service to the people through music therapy to heal their diseases, illness and ailments.



**Key Words:**Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji, Raga Raginividya, Nada Chikithsa, Nada Yoga, Music therapy, bhajan-s, yoga and meditation

## **Bhajana Tradition and Music therapy (Nada Chikithsa) of His Holiness Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji**

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### **Introduction**

Music influences people irrespective of their caste, religion and language. Music develops the memory power, reading abilities and expression of thought. Practice of music gives satisfaction to the people of all ages. Music aids in training the differently abled children and disabled people. Lot of experiments are being done to find out the effect of music on ill people in clinics and hospitals all over the world.

### **About Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji**

Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji, a seer who spread the values and rituals of Hinduism through the Bhajana tradition and cultivating the devotion, philosophy and cultural values in people. He visited many countries all over the world to teach and spread the culture of yoga, meditation and philosophy. He is also a musician, poet, author&a music composer who heal the diseases with his NADA CHIKITHSA, a kind of therapeutic music concerts.

### **Biography**

Sri GanapathiSachchidanandaSwamiji was born in 1942, May 26<sup>th</sup> (Telugu year – Chitrabhanu with ThidhiAdhikaJyeshtasuddhaEkadasi) Tuesday, to his parents Sri Narasimha Sasthy and Smt. Jayalakshmi. During the birth his mother Smt. Jayalakshmi sat for meditation in Brahma Kunda and she gave birth to a divine and bright boy baby. The boy was appeared with vibhoothi (holy ash) on his forehead along with the ornaments of Rudraksha and Saligrama for a while and those got disappeared after sometime. The boy was named as “Sathyanarayana” and is of BharadwajaGothra.



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His mother Smt. Jaya Lakshmi used to pray for hours together by spending in a spiritual state. People believed her as an incarnation of Goddess Sri Raja Rajeswari Devi. She used to sing devotional songs with his melodic voice for a long time. All these are her own compositions and are in easy language but with an excellent thought and meaning and rich knowledge. (Her keerthana-shad been published as a book in the name of “Sri Krishna Jaya Geethi”). She was living in a village called “Mekedhatu” (in Karnataka state) where this is an ideal place having a triangular structure with a natural SRI CHAKRA with a confluence of rivers Kaaveri, Arkavathi and GupthaGamini rivers in the centre point. Her Gurus KarapathraSwamy and Phakeerpredicted with her that the God Sri Datthatreya would take birth in her womb.

## Childhood

The boy Sathyanarayana, had possessed enormous knowledge and talents since childhood. He used to live with dangerous animals and poisonous species without any inhibitions and with great courage. That made his mother to understand and he was a special and divine incarnation. He has shown lot of unbelievable gimmicks in his childhood like turning the sand into sugar at the age of 5 years and controlling the animals etc.

## Practices

His mother taught him the secrets of philosophy through her lullabies. She has also taught him RAJA YOGA and how to lead his further life by helping the poor and serving the god. After his mother’s death, the boy was taken care by his maternal aunt ‘Venkamma’, who was a ‘Yogini’, taught him HATA YOGA & SAMA VADA. Under her vigorous training Sathyanarayana became expert in yoga, meditation and many different acts in Advanced Yoga, which awakened his eternal magical powers. At the age of 24, he went to ManasaSarovaram and experienced the divinity.

## Initiating life as a sage

At young age itself, he started performing Ganapathihoma-s (fire ritual for divine blessing and well-being of people) and conducting devotional group bhajan-s with huge masses to evoke the devotion and peace. One fine day when he went to the River Kaveri to take bath, he was happened to go into “Samaadhisthithi” (a state of meditative consciousness) for 3 hours



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and when he came to the banks of the river, he found saffron clothes, a stick and wooden foot wear. Upon accepting that as if the will of Almighty to become himself as a ‘Seer’, he wore those and became as “Sri GanapathiSachchidanadaSwamiji”. He established “AvadhoothaDatthaPeetam” near Mysore, Karnataka State in India.

## About his Music skills and powers

One day when he was spending time with children, deotees and disciples at the banks of Kaveri River, a miracle was happened. To his surprise, he found Tabla, Harmonium and Brass cymbals floating on the water, coming towards him. These were taken to ashram, and thus he initiated his music practice and soon he got expertize in playing many musical instruments like Veena (named as DatthaVeena), Harmonium, Sitar, Violin, Flute, Drums, Tabla, and Synthesizer and many other instruments.

To improve himself physically and philosophically, he had practiced Raga-Ragini and Yoga SangeethaTarangini(Nada Yoga) very hardly. Soon he started writing and composing bhajan-s and other devotional songs,kirtan-s and kriti-s with vaggeyakara mudra (composer’s signature) “Sachchidananda”. Many musicians, singers and instrumentalists started performing with Swamiji seeking his blessings. It became a common practice of conducting music concerts in Ashram on auspicious days, festival days and other important religious days. A specialized building called “Nada Mandapam” was built in AvadhoothaDatthaPeetam Ashram for practicing, composing, performing and recording the music.A Sapthaswara temple has been built in Ashram and many stalwarts had given and still giving their concerts from all over the world.

His bhajan-s, kirtan-s and kritis possess an excellent configuration of Raga. He has a good melodic voice. His music mesmerises the people and gives pleasure, happiness, and health. His kriti-s contain spiritual messages, beejakshara (a powerful chanting of special syllables in Sanskrit or Telugu languages relating to the goddess Kaali) and social messages. He had composed more than 2000 songs in Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, English, Tamil and Hindi in praise of various deities. They are devotional, philosophical and are having grammatical & prosodic beauties with excellent lyrics.



## Raga-s and Tala-s used in Swamiji's musical composition

Swamiji had composed almost all his bhajan-s and kriti-s with very catchy, attractive and easier tunes. One can easily learn and get adapted to the raga on listening to that. He had used wide range of raga-s, Tala-s and different gathi-s in his compositions. He had used many popular raga-s like Kharaharapriya, Shanmukhapriya, Mohana, Sahana, Naata, NalinaKanthi, HamsaDhwani, Kaanada, SindhuBhairavi, NataBhairavi, Kaapi, SuddhaDhanyasi, and Hindolametc in his compositions. Rare raga-s like Narthaki, LathaanthaPriya, RushyaKethuPriya, MadhuVarshini, Vaasanthi, Sutradhari, AmbaPriya, Andolika, Kalindaetc were used and also few Hindustani Raga-s like Peelu, Tilang, MisraBilaval, YamanKalyan, MisraYaman and Behag were used in his compositions. He had used Adi, Eka, misrachapu, Triputa and Khandachapu etc. He composed few specialized bhajan-s and kriti-s namely Saptaswarakirtana-s, Beejakharabhajan-s, Datthabhajan-s and NavabhakthiGeethams, Saankaribhajan-s, Nava thathwakriti-s of Ganapathi, NaamaSankeerthana, Naadanjaneyakriti-s, Siva Jyothi (kriti-s), and Sri Krishna Ganaetc were released in CDs. A sample Sanskrit bhajan (From the collection of 'Bhakthidhara') has been analysed to showcase his music skills and about his easier tunes.

### Raga- MohanaBhajan – KaalikaamKaalikaamTalam –Eka (Tisragathi)

**Arohana – S R2 G3 P D2 Ś**

**Avarohana - Ś D2 P G3 R2 S**

#### Pallavi

Kaalikaamkalikaamkalitharundamaalikaambhajell

#### Charanam-s

Himagireendrabaalikam - srithamuneendrapaalikaam l  
Hatanataghadhulikam- layavidhanakelikamllkaalikamll

Suravipakshavyalikam- Lasadhudharachoolikaam  
Janivinaasamoolikam – Gathavimohajaalikaamllkaalikamll

Kara dhruthograsoolikam – rudhiraranjithaalikam  
Asurarundamaalikaam – mahithamanthrakelikaamllkaalikamll

Kala deva sangathaam – Kalithapanchakruthyakaam  
Kaalakaalavallabham – Kala sukaalavigrahaamllkaalikamll



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Ghoraghoraroopikam – maaramaaranayaikaam  
Amruthabhavanaalikam – Sachhidanandakaalikaamllkaalikamll

## Pallavi - Notation

G r G ,	G r G ,	s rg Rr	G r G r	Ś , ...
Kaa li kaam	Kaa li kaam	Kalitharunda	Maalikaambha	Je ...

## **Charanam**

G g P p	D ś D ,	G g P p	D ś D
Himagireendra	baalikaam	Srithamuneendra	Paalikaam
ḡ ř ḡ Ġ ḡ	Ġ ḡ Ṛ ,	ś ř ḡ Ṛ ḡ	Ġ ř Ġ ,
Hatanataagha	Dhoolikam	Layavidhana	Kelikam

## **Analysis of Bhajan**

This bhajan is an example of dwi-dhathu composition. That means Pallavi has been composed in one dhathu and the charanam has been composed in another dhathu. All the charanam-s are set to samedhathu (tune). ‘Pallavi’ has been tuned using only threeswara-s...S, R and G. In ‘charanam’, high pitch notes were used and ranged upto high pitch Gandharam. After singing charanam, a swara phrase - ‘Ś ; ; d p g r s r’ has been used to take the Pallavi conveniently. His Mudra “Sachchidananda” could be seen in last charanam in the above given lyrics.

## **Music and Therapy**

Music springs from Nada (Sound) and all music carries vibrations stemming from the rhythm and tone of music. In any form of music, its key elements are Taala (rhythm) and Swara (tone). Human body too will have such rhythm of heart beat, pulse rate, blood circulation and inhale & exhale movement of breathe. When the health is out of order, the help of harmonious vibrations are necessary to bring back the state of harmony to the human body. Here the music is being performed to regulate the rhythm of the body of a person to tune his harmony. The human body has 72,000 astral nerves which vibrate in a specific rhythmic pattern. Any disturbance in its rhythmic vibration causes the ill health and diseases. Music notes works to restore them into their normal rhythm.



## Music therapy

Swamiji's Music therapy lays stress on concentration on both the healer musician and the listener (diseased). He believed and proved that the listening a particular raga is special technique requiring sense control. The long concentration on the raga creates healing effect on the listener. Swamiji also opines that, "Music is not a substitute for medicine but it influences and aids the process of curing and healing. When music is combined with Ayurveda, psychology, Gem therapy and astrology it effects a lot on people". He uses the devotional music for the process of spiritual energy transmission. He uses the synthesizer that contains 1008 different instruments and accompanied by classical Indian music instrumentalists and percussionists. He used to play different raga-s for different health conditions. He establishes the rapport between the human and god through music. Once that started working, body consciousness disappears gradually, and with that the illness ceases to be experienced and ceases to exist. That is the healing through Music.

## Nada Chikithsa Music Concerts

Sri Swamiji's bhajan-s influence a layman as equal to that of a scholar. His bhajan-s caused relief from different kind of diseases. Hence gradually, he turned his music concerts into Nada chikithsa concerts (Therapy through musical concerts). Swamiji had chosen the synthesiser as his main instrument for 'Nada Chikithsa' concerts. His firm voice aided to his instrument for healing the illness. Swamiji used to consider the thidhi, birth star, birth place, date, day and time before choosing the raga-s to play and thus to evoke the particular body part or organ. Nada Chikithsa interrelated and depended on rules of Astrology. When a particular raga is combined after considering the particular birth star, relevant colour, suitable gem, and particular tree, it gives lot of effect in healing the illness.

There is a separate ward for Music therapy in Holistic Health Centre Hospital, in Swamiji's Ashram of Mysore, where it is equipped with Biofeedback machines, string beds and recliners for patients and a set of head phones were provided to experience the Nada chikithsa'. The specialized compositions with selected raga-s sung by swamiji will be played for each of them as part of this 'Nada chikithsa'. Swamiji also had done experiments on animals and trees with his music therapy and he established a specialized Botanical Park with Bonsai and other



kind of specialized trees (zodiac and planet trees) and each of the trees is connected with individual sound system through which the raga-s are played for its growth and best output.

He had conducted, organized and performed hundreds of Nada Chikithsa therapeutic music concerts in the name of RAGA SAGARA all over India. He reaches the people through huge public meetings, home visits, TV, Radio preaching, through books and CD-DVD. All the musical recordings of swamiji are done in a studio on ashram called “Nada Nidhi”. Since more than two decades Swamiji is giving his Divya Nada Chikithsa (divine Nada treatment) concerts in many other countries like, USA, Trinidad & Tobago, Australia, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, Belgium, Malaysia, Hawaii and many other countries in the world and many music scholars and stalwarts had accompanied him along with percussion instruments.

## Swamiji’s Publications

Sri Swamiji has authored the books “DatthaDarsanam” & “Raga raginiNadayogam” His collection of poems, SachchidanandaNeeti Mala, ChitikeSahityam, Vedanta Geetalu, in Sanskrit, Kannada and Telugu have been making many people to attract their path into devotional way. Bhakthimala (Spiritual monthly magazine) published in 6 languages such as Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, English, Hindi and Sanskrit. They exemplify the essence of life in a very simple and plain language. More than fifty albums containing speeches and Bhajan-s of Sri Swamiji have been published so far.

## Conclusion

Music is like breathe, language, religion, expression and soul for Swamiji. There are lot of activities and achievements of Swamiji through the Nada chikithsa concerts. Police department in Tamilnadu, Department of prisons/Jails & few hospitals in Mysore are following this Nada chikithsa process as if a stress management and cause of relief in police men, prisoners and patients respectively.. Though this topic has a wide scope to elaborate in detail about the compositions and Nada chikithsa process, it has been limited due to the size constraints. This could be an excellent topic for upcoming Research Scholars.

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