

“Lyrical beauties in the compositions of Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar”

T.Sarada, Ph.D. Scholar & **Dr.V.J.Dwaram Lakshmi**,

Department of Music, Sri Padmavathi Mahila Viswa Vidyalaya, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh

Email: saradakuppai@gmail.com; **Mobile:**9704437000

ABSTRACT:

Muttuswami Dikshitar was a brilliant composer who is contemporary to Tyagaraja and Syama Sastry. He was born in Tiruvarur. He was proficient in Sanskrit and Telugu and was also influenced by Hindustani and western systems of music.

Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar composed about 479, spread over 193 ragas. These include Melakarta Ragas & Ragamalikason particular deities and about forty Nottuswara sahithya verses. He also composed many krithis in different languages and music systems. All Dikshitar's compositions are highly exceptional and are very accurate in employing the raga.

Dikshitar sang dozens of songs in praise of a host deities enshrined at the numerous shines at Tiruvarur and the surrounding places. He was an Advaitin, well grounded in Vedanta. His compositions are signed with the mudra 'Guru Guha' as he was a devotee of Kartikeya.

Dikshitar was a vainika-gayaka, a musician who sang as he played on the Veena. Being well versed in both Vocal and Veena, the graces, the rich Gamaka prayogas of his compositions structured in slow tempo shine in mellow glow when played on the Veena.

Dikshitar's command over Sanskrit helped him to express through his ideals and aspirations in pristine poetry. He had the composure of a yogi and the heart of a poet. Sri Dikshitar's kritis are therefore adorned with poetic imagery, tranquil grace, a certain majesty steeped in devotion.

He had a fascination for Sabda-alankaras, adorning his poetry with beautifully turned phrases ringing sweetly like temple bells; captivating rhymes of Prasa and Anuprasa. He loved the intricate play of words and to coin sweet sounding phrases.

Introduction:

Sri Thyagaraja (1767-1847), Sri Shyama Sastri (1762-1827) and Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835), popularly known as Carnatic Music Trinity, were all born in Tiruvarur. They were contemporaries and each had enriched Carnatic musical treasure with their compositions. Their rich & traditional musical compositions added flavor and established Carnatic music for posterity. The musical trinity are mainly responsible for the popularity of many unknown & less popular ragas.

The period when the Carnatic Music Trinity were born was considered as the Golden Era. Their music was appreciated by all the lovers of true music, in every age and country. The raga, the bhava (emotion), the laya (rhythm), the technical excellence, the lyrical beauties, the musical values, the inherent spiritual aspect and many others in the compositions are responsible for the status of these composers as ‘Musical Trinity’.

Muttuswami Dikshitar is one among the Carnatic Music Trinity, the other two being Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri. He was born in Tiruvarur in the year 1776. His father was Ramaswamy Dikshitar and mother Subhammal. He hailed from a family of distinguished musicians. He was proficient in Sanskrit and Telugu languages.

Muttuswami Dikshitar was accompanied by a Saint Chidambaranath Yogi to Varanasi, where he spent five years to study philosophy. He mastered Kavya, Nataka, Alankara, Jyothisha, Vaidyam and Mantrikam. He was also influenced by Hindustani and western systems of music. He worshipped Lord Subrahmanya (Karthikeya). All his compositions are signed with the mudra ‘Guru Guha’ as he was a devotee of Kartikeya. The first composition of Muttuswami Dikshitar was “Sri Nathadi Guruguho” in the raga Mayamalavagowla.

Dikshitar followed the Mela-paddhati (a system of classifying Ragas) devised by Venkatamakhi. In handling the Vivadi-melas, Dikshitar followed Venkatamakhi; and, avoided inharmonious expressions, prayogas. Sri Dikshitar’s major service to Carnatic music is that he gave expression to nearly 200 Ragas of Venkatamakhi’s system. Some of them are Mangalakaisiki, Ghanta, Gopikavasanta, Narayana Gaula, Sulini, Samantha, maargadhesi and mohana naatta.

There are many Ragas which are employed only by Dikshitar like Saranganata, Chhaya Goula, Poorvi, Padi, Mahuri, Suddhavasanta, Kumudakriya, and Amritavarshini. He also employed Hindustani ragas like Dwijavathi, Ramkali, and

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Yamakalyan, Hamirkalyani, and Brindavan sarang. In the Raga Dwijavanti, his krithis Chetasri and Akhilandeshwari are his outstanding master pieces.

Dikshitar composed a few hundred kritis in Melakarta Ragas and in ragamalikas, on particular deities enshrined at the numerous shrines at Tiruvarur and the surrounding places. All Dikshitar's compositions are highly exceptional and are very accurate in employing the raga.

Sri Dikshitar was a great Sri Vidya Upasaka and Sadhaka, an intense devotee of Devi. He was a master of Tantra and of Yantra Puja. The Tantra ideology permeates all through his compositions. A group of eleven kritis, called the 'Kamalamba Navavarna', comprises some of his masterpieces from both the musical and language points of view. As a great astrologer, he composed a group of kritis in praise of the nine planets (Navagraha), which are the real precious gems. Sri Dikshitar, in his compositions, has employed only Suladi Taalas; to the exclusion of Chapu and other Taalas. Each of his Nava-Graha Kritis is set in a different Suladi Taala.

Following are the list of some of the important group krithis of Dikshitar:

- Ganesha Vibhakthi Kritis
- Guruguha Vibhakti krithis
- Kamalamba Nava Varana Kritis
- Navagraha Krithis
- Nilotpalamba vibhakti Krithis;
- Panchalinga Kshetra kritis;
- Panchabhuta Kriti
- Rama vibhakti Krithis;
- Tiruvarur Pancalinga kritis;
- Thyagaraja vibhakti Krithis;
- Abhayamba vibhakti Krithis
- Madhuramba vibhakti Krithis

Muttuswami Dikshitar's Compositions-Decorative Angas:

The salient features of Dikshitar's compositions is the completeness of the raga bhava employed and not just merely its traces. Sri Dikshitar's kritis with Samashti-

charanam have enriched the variety of musical forms in Karnataka Samgita. He was a great master of the raga alapana, whose essence he poured into his compositions. This makes all his compositions clear, comprehensive and very rich masterpieces.

Majority of his compositions are slow in measure or vilambakala laya, as he was by Hindusthani Music. To avoid the fatigue or strain due to the slow tempo, he introduced ‘Madhyamakala Sahityam’ in almost all his compositions.

Dikshitar had a fascination for Sabda-alankaras, adorning his poetry with beautifully turned phrases ringing sweetly like temple bells; captivating rhymes of Prasa and Anuprasa. He loved the intricate play of words and to coin sweet sounding phrases.

Dikshitar incorporated a number of Swaraksharas in his compositions:

1. Suddha Swarakshara:

Suddha swaraksharas are the ones, with the sahitya letters are exactly same like the solfa syllables or swaras.

Ex: “Ni rajakshi Kamakshi”- Hindola raga krithi. Ni is the Suddha Swarakshara.

Ex: “Pancamatanga-mukha-Ganapatina-paripalito~~ham~~-Sumukhena-Sri” Malahari raga krithi, the Pallavi is set to the Svaras ‘Pa- dha-Ma- pa – dha- pa- ma- ga- ri- sa- pa- dha- Sa’

2. Suchita Swarakshara:

Suchita Swaraksharas are the ones with the sahitya letters differ slightly instead of being exactly like solfa syllables or swaras.

Ex: “Bhutadi sam sevita charanam”-Vatapi Ganapatim- Hamsadhwani raga krithi. ‘sam’ is the Suchita Swarakshara.

3. Misrama Swarakshara:

It is a combination of both Suddha and Suchita Swaraksharas.

Ex: “Sri Guruguha”- Suddha saveri raga krithi. Here ‘Sri’ is the Misrama Swarakshara.

4. Solkattu Swara:

It is a passage that is attached to anupallavi and repeated at the end of the charanam. Solkattu Swara contains both swara and the jati(sol) interspersed. Muttuswami Dikshitar incorporated ‘Solkattu Swara’ in some of his krithis like Ananda natana prakasam(Kedaram) and Sri Maha Ganapatiravatumam(Gowla)

5. Yati:

These are certain varied and improvised patterns of composing and structuring the lines in a Krithi such as the prosodical beauty.

i. Srotovahayati:

It is the broadening or increasing like the flow of a river

Ex: In his kriti “Tyagarajayoga Vaibhavam”

Sam

Prakasham

Svarupa Prakasham

Tatva svarupa Prakasham

Sakala Tatva svarupa Prakasham

Shivashaktyadi Sakala Tatva svarupa Prakasham

ii. Gopucchayati:

It is tapering or decreasing like a cows tail

Ex: In Sri raga kriti “Sri Varalakshmi”

Sarasa Pade,

Rasapade,

Sapade,

Pade.

de

6. Madhyamakala Sahitya:

Madhyamakala sahitya, is an integral part of a krithi which can occur at the end of anupallavi or charana or both and is set in Madhyamakala or in the second degree of speed. Most of Dikshitar compositions have Madhyamakala Sahityam.

Ex:”Vitaginam vianatayoginam viswakaranam vighnavaranam”- Vatapi Ganapatim bhaje Krithi-Hamsadhvani ragam-Adi talam

Ex:”Toyajaasanaadi sevitapare tumburu naaradadi nutavare, Trayateeta moksha prada chature, tripada shobhita guruguha saadare”-Annapoorne Krithi-Saama ragam-Adi talam

7. Prasam:

Apart from the above alankaras, Dikshitar also incorporated various other decorative angas like Prasam, which means the occurrence of the same letter or syllable. All types of Prasam like Dvitiyakshara Prasam or Adi Prasam, Antyaprasam, Anuprasam can be seen in his compositions. Following are some of his compositions with the citation of prasam.

1. "Sree Nathadi Guruguho" in Raga Mayamalavagoula-Tala -Adi

An incident that took place when Dikshitar went into a deep meditation in the temple of Lord Subramania at Tiruttani, an old man appeared before him and put a sugar candy in to his mouth and suddenly disappeared. This inspired him that he burst forth with a song "Srinathadi Guruguho" in Mayamalavagoula raga, which was the first krithi of Muttuswami Dikshitar. Later on this was followed by a number of kritis.

Pallavi

Srinathadi guruguho jayati jayati

Srichidananda nathohamiti santatam hrdini bhaja

Anupallavi

nano prapancha vichithra karo
nama rupa pancha bhootha karo
akjnana dhvan-tha prachanda bhaskaro
jnana pradayako Maheswaro

Madhyamakala

dinavano dyukta divyatharo
divyoughadi sakala deha tharo
manasa ananda kara chaturatharo
mad guruvaro mangalam karothu

Charanam

maya maya visva adhishtano
math makakadi matanushthano
malinee mandalanta vibhano
mantradyajapahamsa dhyano
mayakarya kalana heno
mamaka sahasra kamalasinno
madhurya ganamrita pano
madhavadya bhaya vara pradano
mayasabal ita brahma rupo
marakoti sundara svarupo
matimatam hridaya gopura dipo
mattasuradi jaya pratapo

Madhyamakala

maya malava goul'adi desa

maheepathi poojitha pada pradesa

madhavadyamara brinda prakasa

mahasaspa, maha ardhopadesa

This kriti is in the raga Mayamalavagoula set in Adi tala. The pallavi has two padas, the anupallavi has eight padas and the charana has 16 padas. In this krithi one can clearly notice the, Adyakshara prasa is present in the pallavi like Sree nathadi, Sree chidananda. Adyakshara Prasa is seen in the anupallavi like nano prapancha, nama rupa, akjnana dhvantha ,jnana prayako. Antya prasa is also seen in the anupallavi like vichitra karo, bhootha karo, prachana bhaskaro, prayako maheswaro, dyukta divyatharo, sakala dehatharo, kara chatura tharo , mangalam karo. In the charana Adyakshara prasa is present like maya maya, math makakadi, malinee manda, manthrathya japa, maya karya, mamaka sahasra etc.

The composer's mudra guruguha is seen in the first pada of the pallavi. The raga mudra is included in the charana sahitya. The sahitya graphically describes Lord Subramania. He describes Lord Subramanya as guruguha, chidananda natha who dwells in the 11th Malini chakra whose brahma swarupa is covered by Maya and who is worshipped by the kings belonging to Mayamalagoula desa.

2."Akshaya linga" Raga - Sankarabharana Tala - Misra Chapu

Once when Muthuswamy Dikshitar arrived at the Siva temple of Kivalur very late, he was disappointed to see the doors of the temple closed. Then as soon as he sang then the kriti "Akshaya linga" in the raga Sankarabharanam, the doors opened.

Pallavi

Akshayalinga vibho svayambho

Akhilanda kodi prabho pahi sambho

Anupallavi

Akshara svarupa amitha prathapa

Aroodha vrushavaho jagan moha

Madhyamakala sahitya

daksha sikshana dakshathara sura

lakshana vidhi vilakshanalakshya

lakshana bahu vichakshana sudha

pakshana guru kataksha veekshana

Charanam

Badaree vana mula nayika sahitha

bhadra kaleesa bhakta vihitha

madana janakadi deva mahitha

maya karya kalana rahitha

sadaya guruguha tliatha gunatheetha

sadhujanopetha sankara navaneetha

hridaya vibhatha thumburu sangeetha

hringara sambhutha hemagiri natha

sada hritha kalpaka maheeruha

padambuja bhavaratha gajathuranga

padadi samyutha chaithrothsava

sada siva sachchidananda maya

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It is a chouka kala composition. The pallavi of this krithi has two padas, the anupallavi has six padas and charana has 12 padas. Prasa is seen in all the padas. Adyakshara prasa comes in the pallavi like Akshaya linga vibho, Akhilaanda kodiprabho. Anupallavi also has Adyakshara prasa like Akshara Svarupa, Arooda erushala. Dviteeyakshara prasa is seen in the madhyamakala sahitya of the anupallavi thaksha sikshana, lakshana vidhi, lakshana bahu pakshana guru. In the charana also, one can see the Adyakshara prasa like badareevana, madana jana kadi maya karya, sadaya guru, sathu jano, hridaya vipatha hringara samputha.

3. “Hiranmayim Lakshmeem” Raga - Lalita Tala –Rupaka

In this Krithi Dikshitar says that he worships Goddess Lakshmi, the giver of wealth but he stays away from rich people who are materialistic. It is a suggestion of how the mind of a righteous man should be to worship and long for the grace of God to bask in the sunlight of the permanent, true and ever-new bliss which God gives and not be merely satisfied with the earthly things and sensual pleasures of this mAyA we are all living. From musical and lyrical point of view, the grandeur characteristic of all his krithis is once again very evident.

Pallavi:

Hiranmayeem Lakshmeem sadaa Bhajaami
Heena Maanava Aashrayam Thyajami

Anupallavi:

Chira thara Sampath pradaam Ksheeraambudhi Thanayaam
Hari vakshasthala Aalayaam Harineem Charana Kisalayam
Kara kamala drutha kuvalayaam Marakatha manimaya valayaam

Charanam:

Swetha Dweepa Vaasineem Sree Kamalaambikaam Paraam
Bhootha Bhavya Vilaasineem Bhoosura Poojithaam Varaam
Maatharam abja maalineem Maanikya aabharana Dharaam
Geetha Vaadya Vinoodhineem Girijaamthaam Indiraam

Seetha kirana nibha vadanaam sritha chinthaamani sadanaam
Peetha vasanaam guru guha maadhula kanthaam lalithaam

This is one of the famous kritis of Dikshitar, which composed is in the raga lalitha and set in Rupaka tala. The pallavi sahitya has two padas, the anupallavi has three

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padas and the charana has six padas. In the pallavi Adyakshara prasa comes like. Hiranmayim the first "Hi" is Hrasva Svara Heena manava , the second Hee is Dirgha Svara. Antya prasa is seen in the pallavi like Sada bhajaami, Aasrayam thyajaami. Antya prasa also comes in the anupallavi and charana like Bhudhi thanayam, Charanam, kisalayam, Manimaya valayam, Charanam, Ambikam, param Poojitham, varam, Abharana tharam, Tham Indiram, Chintamani Sadanam, Kantham, Lalitham. Dviteeyakshara prasa comes in the charanam like svetha dveepa, bhutha bhavya, maatha mabja, geetha vadya, seetha kirana, peetha vasanaam.

4. “Anandamritavarshini” Raga - Amrithavarshini Tala - Adi

There was another incident in which Muthuswami Dikshitar invoked rain God to shower rain on an area hit by drought by singing the krithi “Anandamritavarshini”. It is in the place near Ettayapuram, Tirunelveli district.

Pallavi

Anandam ritakarshini

Amrita varshini haradi poojithe sive bhavani

Samashti charanam

Sree nandanadi samrakshini Sree guruguha janani chidrupini

Madhyamakala sahitya

Sananda hridaya nilaye sadaye

sadya suvrishti hethavethvam

santhatham chintaye amritesvari

salilam varshaya varshaya varshaya

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The pallavi has two padas. The charana consists of Madhyamakala and its sahitya has four padas. In the last pada the word “Varshaya” is repeated in three times. Amritavarshini is a rain producing raga. In the pallavi there is Adyakshara prasa like Ananda mrita, Amrita varshini. The charana also has Adyakshara prasa like Sree nanda, Sree guruguha. The madhyamakala sahitya has Adyakshara prasa like sananda hridaya, sadya survrishiti, santhatham, salilam varshaya.

5. “Tyagarajam Bhaja Re Re” Raga-Yadukula kambhoji Tala-Misrachapu”

Once Dikshitar went to the temple to worship and while worshipping with the pangs of poverty, he poured out the following kriti in the raga yadukulakambhoji in front of the diety. This incident brings out the unshakeable faith of Dikshitar in God.

Pallavi

Tyagarajam bhajare re chitta

Tapatrayam tyajare

Anupallavi

yogiraja hrdayabja nilayam

Bhogirajanuta charana kisalayam

Nagaraja mani valayam raja Tyagarajam mukha kuvalayam

Charanam

Poulomisadi dikpala poojita gatram

Nilotpalambanukulatara kalatram

Trailokya guruguha tatam trinetram

salokidi kaivalya prada charitram

Nilakanta maneka phaladam

sulapanimasoka subhadam

mulabhutamamulya varadam

kala kalamakhanda sukhadam

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This kriti is in the raga Yadukulakambhoji in Tripata tala. The pallavi has two padas the anupallavi has four and the charana has six padas. Prasa beauty is depicted throughout the sahitya. The sahitya is in praise of Lord Tyagaraja of Tiruvarur. The language is in Sanskrit.

Adyakshara prasa comes in the pallavi as Tya and Thaa Ex: Tyaga rajam,Thaapa thrayam. Dviteeyaksha prasa also comes in the anupallavi like yogi raja, yogi raja. Antya prasa comes in the anupallavi like Hridayabja nilayam, Charana kisalayam,Mukha kuvalayam. The charana has also Dviteeyakshara prasa like Poulo meesadi, Neelotpalamba Salo kaadi, Neea kanta maneka, Sula pani, Mula bhuta, kala kala.

6. “Venkateswara ettappa bhupatim” Raga - Megharanjini Tala- Rupaka

This kriti was composed by Muthuswamy Diskshitar in the Perumal Temple at Sattur,when his missing brother Baluswamy Dikshitar was found safe and his marriage was being performed by the generosity of Venkateswara Ettappa Maharaja of Ettayapuram.

Pallavi

Venkatesa ettappa bhGpatimasrayeham
Visva vikalpapaham
Vidvajjana kalpa bhuruham
Vadana sarasiruham

Charanam

kangasaila madhyasthitha
karttikeya siva guruguhakarnakatakshapatram
kanjadalayata netram
kankana hara kiritalankrta sundara gathram
kancana vrshti prada megharanjitha bahu kshetram
Pankaja bhavamukha surakrita
Sakala mishkala stotram
Sankalpa vikalpa rahita
Saccidananda matram

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This composition is in the raga Megharanjini and is in Rupaka tala. The pallavi has four padas and the charana has ten padas. The composer's mudra “guruguha” is seen in the charana (second pada). In the charana sahitya the raga's name “Megharanji” is incorporated. In the pallavi the Maharajah's name “Venkateswara ettappa” is added. Adyakshara prasa comes in the pallavi: Ex: Venkatesa ettappa, Visva vikalpa, Vidvaj janakalpa, Vadana sarasee. Antya prasa also is seen in the pallavi like Ettappa bhupatim, Ashra yeham, Vikalpa apaham, Janakalpa bhuruham, Saraseeruham. Adyakshara prasa is also seen in the charana Karthikeya siva, Karuna kataaksha, Kangana hara, Kanchana vrishiti. Antya prasa is found in the charanam katasha paathram, dalayatha netram, sundara gaathram, bahu kshetram, nishkala stotram.

Conclusion:

These are only a few compositions of Muttuswami Dikshitar among his greatest number of masterpieces. The most fascinating aspect of Sri Dikshitar's Krithis is the grandeur and majesty of his music, sublime lyrics, intellectual brilliance and the overall technical sophistication. All his compositions are gems studded with beautiful, precious stones in the form of amazing sAhityams and laced together with bhakthi. Dikshitar left a rich legacy of compositions for the fourth coming generations to learn, cherish and get inspired and dwell into the sangeeta rasa amrutham.

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