



Concept of Bhakthi Redefined by Sath Guru Sri Thyagaraja

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Abstract

In this Kriti Sri Thyagaraja sings the Glory of Lord Rama in a unique style. The Lord is bedecked with the ornaments and jewels made of the diamonds of Musical Tunes (Ragas). He advises to attend the Lord and serve him in single pointed devotion and be benefited. He declares that the discription of the Lord in this form is emphasised in Vedas and allied branches too. Also, singing of the Glory of the Lord in this form is adopted by great Seers and Sages. And also, even innocent devotees too sing of the Lord in groups. That is why, Sri Thyagaraja declares that he too followed the same theme to crossover the only life.

Aim: This article will discus about the Vedic aspects involved in the composition composed by Sri Thyagaraja who wrote many kritis on Lord Rama, but also popularaised plenty of new ragas. His compositions are manifested and evolved all 4 Veda's. I took one composition explained by observing in the word of his compositions.

Key words : Raga Ratna Malika, Naigama shatsastra sahitam, yogivarula sanmargam, bahagavatottamulu gudipade keerthanamulu, taarakamu.

Introduction

India is a land of Spirituality and Philosophy. Indian music has been characterized by religious flavour and spiritual fervor. In the Indian context, music was always considered a subject worthy of reverence. Indian music had tread on hitherto unsurpassed realms of the human and had tried to reach the Divine. It is a spiritual upliftment which takes us to the higher echelons of devotion. Indian music is not just about ragas and scales, it is also about path for god realization and to attain moksha. Nadopasana is the ideal path to achieve Moksha.

Sāmvēdādidamgītamsañjagrāhapitamahaḥ (Sangita Ratnakara)

Quite often in Vedas and Puranas the Lord Supreme is discribed in different ways and forms depending upon the context. From tip to toe the various limbs and parts of the body, is ornaments wepons etc are described to be in manifestations of various puranas, derived sastras of Vedas the five sences, fine etherial eliments and different segments of creation. In the present Kriti Sri Thyagaraja adopted the same scheme and discribes as the Lord bedecked with musical Ragas. And also he mentioned how the ancient Sages amd Seers percieved so.

Many of the Nadopaskas are born hear and done lot of work in music and art and culture. The golden era of our South Indian music is 16th century because music Trinity Syamasasrty, Thyagaraja and Muttuswamy Deekshitar. It is a great spiritual uplift to the world of carnatic music.



Thyagaraja composed many kritis and developed many unknown ragas and also educated the society and explained the path of Devotion and Salvation through his Musical oeuvre.

Raga Ranta Malikache – Reetigoula Ragam -Roopka talam

Pallavi : rAga ratna mAlikacE ranjillunaTa hari shata

Anu pallavi: bAga sEvinci sakala bhAgyamandudamu rArE

Charanm: naigama SaDsAstra purANAgamamArtha sahitamata
yOgivarulu Anandamu nondEdu sanmArga maTa
bhAgavatOttamulu gUDi pADE kIrtanamulaTa
tyAgarAju kaDatEra tArakamaNi cEsina shata

Typical use of the phrase of Ata in the Kriti:

The excellence of Sri Thyagaraja in presenting a theme of higher quality in a simple style in obidiance, humilyty and adoration towards Lord is paraded by the use of a very simple word ‘ata –

rAga ratna mAlikacE ranjillu **naTa**
naigama SaDAstra purANAgamamArtha sahita **maTa**
yOgivarulu Anandamu nondEdu sanmArga **maTa**
bhAgavatOttamulu gUDi pADE kIrtanamu **laTa**

In telugu poetes like Potana, Tikkana, Srinadha etc employed this word (ata) in a very purticular context. Ata symbolizes a different statement “Oh friends, Mortals and fond musicians! The statements or expressions paraded in the lyric or not my personal feelings! In fact, I am not of the great stature to advocate you thus! Whatever expression is given is nothing but the essence of the precepts of somany legends in the erlier generations! Please do accept, contemplate and be benifited.

Sub-units

Pallavi: Raaga Ratna Malikace Rangillu Nata hari Shata

Oh, friends – it is said – The Lord appears in Glory, being bedecked with jewels of ‘melodious music ragas’. The Lord is known as “saamagaayanah trisaamah”. He feels immense bliss, listing to music and taking the tunes as a pieces of decoration. **"Divyau GandharvO Bhuvanasya Yaspati Reka asit | EkaEeva Namasyah Vikshu Edhaacah Tan Tayoumi Brahmana Divyadesh Namaste Astu Divi sadasya|| "**

(Atharvaveda 2-2-1)

“He is divine! He is the only Lord of creation! He is Gandharva himself, who is endowed with magical and musical powers of par excellence! He is the only one to be saluted in awe and reverence! Not only himself, his abode and activities or any segment of the universe, his glances set them become celestial and grand!

‘**Ranjillu**’ – He shines the brilliance, how Atharva Veda says-



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"Tan punyan gandan ganadharvapsrasa upajivanti | Punyagandhi roopa jIvanIyO, bhavati ya Evam veda!" – (Atharvaveda 2-2-2)

But for His existence, air or fragrance of perfumes the divine cults 'Gandharavas' and 'Apsorasas' the Celestial maids, can't be existing! The one who knows this truth shall become a strong ally and supporter of those communities too! 'Ranjillu' Has a wider canvas of purport, the music and the related arts are not just for jubilee! They give the Lord inspiration and strength to fight Evils in mortal land and Celestial globes too. Rigveda says

"Ahrayataaya Drshnave Dhanu SThanvanti Shukra Viyanti Asurai Virnije Vipamagne Mahiyuvaah || - (Rigveda - 7-99-1)

"These hymns of priests, music and dance of devotees shall be pleasing to Lord as twangs of the bowstring and offer security as armour

"Abhinavakte Adruh: priyam Imdrasya Kanya Vatsam Na Poorvam Aayur Ni Jaata Rihanti Maatarah" - (Rigveda 9-100-1)

"Let our performance of artistic bits and chants set in melodious music be pleasant to You, Oh Lord! As a newly born calf feels joyful and comfortable when the mother cow licks with her tongue all-over the body!"

Anupallavi: *Baaga sEvinchi sakala bhagyamandu daamu raare*
'Let us serve the Lord in the best possible way'

Step 1: By singing of his glory, due to the association of music, our speech, mind, soul and activities get purified and we shall enjoy heavenly bliss at the end of the day.

"Visvedeva Mamashravntu Yajnaya UbhE Rodsi Apaana Napaccha Manma | mawve vachansi parichakshyaNi vyEcham sunmau shvidvo madame ||" - (Rigveda 6-52-14)

Rigveda highlights the same concept thus!

"Oh adorable, universal deities! Globes of Heaven and Earth, water and ether! please accept my prayer! Let no degradable word be uttered! Please you do approach us near and bless us. " this is the power of music.

"Hansariv Sakhibhi Vaavddabhi: Ashmanm Maani Nahana Vyan | bruhaspatihi Abhi Kanikradaga Uth Prastauducha Vidwan Agaayat||" – (Rigveda 10-67-3)

The Marth's and their allies clamour like geese in musical notes shattered mountains to get back the cattle encaved by Rakshasas! Brihaspati sang aloud the chants and lauds! To sing a chant in the early hours of the day yields riches and health says **"Prativam Shur Udite Suktaih Mithram Huve Varunam Putadakshyam Yamo Rasuryam pakshitam Jyeshtham Vishwasya Yamanntrachita Jagatnu!" - (Rigveda 7-65-1)**

"At the day-break, at dawn, I invoke you Mitra, Varuna who is of pure vigour whose imperishable and Supreme might is triumphant in crowded conflicts so that we too may win the battle of life.

Charanam: *naigama SaDsAstra purANAgamamArtha sahitamata –*

Plenty of stanzas and hymns are found in Sama and Atharva Veda to support the above statement. Sri Thyagraja says that music and its splendour is associated with Vedas, Puranas,



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Treatises of philosophy and various branches of tradition! For instance, quote from Rigveda follows

Gyantitvaa GaitriNau Archati Arkinah Brahmanasthva Sahatakrit Udvanshmiva YemirE – (Rigveda 1-10-1)

Oh, Lord Supreme! Masters of Gayatri sing your Glory and people, the adepts in attending spiritula rites and the chanters of hymns to dispel hurdles and evils sing your Glory only. Just like a pylon, a Celestial pole in Yaga, your excellence is surmounted.

Gaayatri, Arkinah, Brahmana these three symbolize Sama, Rig and Yajurveda. Later the 6 sastras are derived from Vedas only. In Puranas we find Narada, Parvata, and Tumbura and many others who sing the Glory of Lord.

In Yajurveda there is an excellent episode. Goddess Saraswati vanished from certain Yagna. She dwelt in three different trees 1. Bamboo 2. Jack (panasa) 3. Sore wood (Devadau) thus she reappeared in the forms of Venu, Veena and Mridangam Thus Flute, Lyre (Veena) and Drum are produced by the grace of Goddess Lakshmi.

bhAgavatOttamulu gUDi pADE kIrtanamU laTa

Power of music is explained in Indian tradition which is beyond the reach and perception of any other Region, continent and culture. At the start of the rainy season or during the period when clouds start shedding water, the frogs start croaking in rhythm! These sounds please Varuna immensely - says Rigveda! **“Samvatsaran Shashyanah Brahmanah Vratcharinah Vachan Parjanya Janvitan Prammdukah Avadishu ||”** (Rigveda 7-103-1)

Like Brahmanas and priests observant of a vow, practising penance, throughout the year, the frogs gutter aloud the praises agreeable to Parjanya, for rich downpour!

yOgivarulu Anandamu nondEdu sanmArga maTa –

People will be satisfied with the general meaning of the statement. The mendicants who contemplate music, and get elated. They feel immensely happy through this track!

But the esoteric meaning is so deep as explained in Amruthabindu Upanishad (Krishna Yajurveda).

All of us accept every branch of knowledge and wisdom including Music are sprouted from ‘Om’ –

The tunes, strains different pices of cadence and symphony are not merely bits of excellent hold, talent and wisdom of the music. They are not to be paraded or practiced simply for the pleasure of oneself and the audience.

Only the highly learned and people of deep probe recall the truth,

Step-1

“Kaaltrayepi Yasya Immatra Noonam Prushta Esha Omkar: Akhayato Daarnabhi Nibodhat.” (Nadabindu Upanishad – Rigveda)

The Pranava ‘Om’ is established with no decay, well established in its abode, in past, present and future times too, even it is amalgamated with 12 different minute measures



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(Maatra) they are “*Ghoshini, Vidyut, Patangini, Vayuvegini, Namdhaya Indra, Vaishnavi, Shankari, Mahati, Dhriti, Nati, Brahmami* “

The twelve symbolize twelve different statutes of the Celestial world, heaven, presided by 12 dieties of 12 different superpowers. By mastering each ‘Matra’ by meditation, years together as most ideal case one may reach 6th or 7th world only (being a being of 100 years span). This is the power of music as observed, adored and practiced by ancient people of spiritual nature, not only by people of music.

But Sri Tyagaraja conceals and encourages the normal beings, practising music incorrect measure ardently with adoration towards Lord, one need not be a mendicant in a forest or cave, but spending normal social life too! One can achieve bliss and attain Lord’s sanctum, remembering the true concept of music!

Finally, the result - जाग्रत निद्रा विनिर्मुक्तः स्वरूपावस्थताम् इयात्॥

"Jaagrata Nidraa Vinimruktaah Swaroopavastham iyaat."

He, the Sadhaka sheds down, both wakeful state and slumbering stage and finally reaches the state of eternal bliss. Sri Tyagaraja mirrored the image of Himalayan Mountain in a small mirror!

Conclusion: The present Kriti is one of the unique models for the expertise of pen-picturing of Sri Thyagaraja which supports a far acclaimed statement that Sri Thyagaraja is never extravagant in use of phrases also directly and indirectly suggestion of Sri Thyagaraja that “the tone, tune, lyric, raga, tala are not to be employed for individual pleasure, mass attraction and yielding of other benefits but it is to be understood that singing etc. is another form of worship of the Lord. In the message of Prahlada keerthanam of the Lord suggested same sentiment enjoined in Vedic Literatures. The same is enjoined in the present Kriti.

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