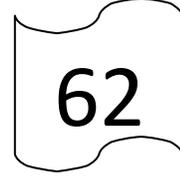


NAVA VIDHA BHAKTI IN COMPOSITIONS OF ŚRĪ ANNAMĀÇĀRYA

Dr.C.P.S.Madhuri,
Academic Consultant (Teaching Faculty),
Department of Performing Arts,
Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.
E-mail: madhuri.cps1@gmail.com



AIM

The aim of this article is to bring out the co-ordination of Nine-folded aspect of Bhakti (Nava vidha Bhakti) in the compositions of Śrī Annamāçārya.

ABSTRACT

South Indian Classical music is especially based on the concept of 'Bhakti'. The period of Bhakti movement that geared up around 6th century, witnessed many Saint-poets who accomplished the remarkable job of transmitting traditional wisdom to common people producing a great body of devotional literature, music and songs in vernacular languages and dialects, that gave India a new spiritual impetus.

Music has been considered the easiest path to attain salvation. The musical compositions of our great vāggēyakāra-s are predominantly emotional outpourings of various forms of bhakti – the most celebrated form being the Nava vidha Bhakti Tatva. The present paper attempts to explore the Nine-folded aspect of Bhakti propounded in the Bhāgavatam i.e., Nava vidha Bhakti in the compositions of Śrī Annamāçārya, one of the torch-bearers of the Bhakti movement, whose compositions are resplendent with unmatched Bhakti towards the Lord of Seven Hills.

Key Words: Annamāçārya, Nava vidha Bhakti, Bhakti movement, Sankīrtana, Bhāgavatam

INTRODUCTION

Music and spirituality are inter-related to each other. Music in India is directly linked to the divinity and the divine Gods, making it an important spiritual part of our culture. It is the most effective way to increase one's spirituality inducing 'Bhakti' – the devotional surrender to the Supreme God and is considered the easiest pathway to attain salvation.

The origin of doctrine of Bhakti can be traced back to the Bhakti Movement originated in South India around 6th Century BCE which gradually spread to the North during the late medieval period. It paved the way for preaching Bhakti (devotion) in colloquial languages, through music as a medium, which reached the common masses enabling them to follow the path of devotion and righteousness. This movement is a historical-spiritual phenomenon which was led by devotional mystics who extolled devotion and love for God as the primary means of spiritual perfection.

BHAKTI

The term 'Bhakti' refers to devotion or a passionate love for the divine. It is the foundation of all spiritual practices. The word 'Bhakti' is derived from the root 'bhaj', which means to serve unconditionally. The Nārada Bhakti Sūtra-s say

Sā tvāmasmin parama prēma rūpa (Sūtra-2)

which means that 'Bhakti is the nature of the Supreme love towards the Lord.

Ādi Śankar's Vivēkaçūḍāmaṇi quotes

Mōkṣa sādhana sāmagryām bhakti rēva garīyasī (Ślōka 32)



stating that ‘Of all the spiritual sādhana -s, the easiest and the best means to attain salvation is Bhakti.

Nava Vidha Bhakti

The Nava vidha Bhakti or the nine forms of worship propounded by Prahlāda which leads us to Mōkṣa or salvation, have been described at length in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Saptama skandam.

*Śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇōḥ smaraṇam pāda sēvanam
Arçanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma nivēdanam
Iti pumsārpita viṣṇu bhaktiśca navalakṣaṇam|| (7.5.23)*

1. Śravaṇam – Listening to His name
2. Kīrtanam – Singing His praise
3. Smaraṇam – Reciting His name
4. Pāda sēvanam – Serving His feet
5. Arçanam – Worshiping Him
6. Vandanam – Saluting Him
7. Dāsyam – Serving Him
8. Sakhyam – Friendship with Him and
9. Ātma nivēdanam – Total surrender to Him

All the above Nine types of Bhakti described by Prahlāda in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam can be discerned in the compositions of Śrī Annamācārya.

Śrī Annamācārya

Śrī Annamācārya of 15th century, occupies a unique place among the Saint -poets of India . He is hailed as ‘Pada Kavita Pitāmaha’ who gave a well -defined form to the song or ‘Padamu’ in Telugu. This ‘Padamu’ which is essentially devotional in its character is synonymous with ‘Sankīrtana’. Annamācārya composed about 32,000 sankīrtana-s under various categories among which around 14,000 and odd are available. The predominant among these are Adhyātma Sankīrtana-s and Śṛṅgāra Sankīrtana -s in which both the devotional and amorous strains have been handled with equal felicity by the Saint-poet.

In the biography of Annamācārya , his grandson Çinna Tirumalayya describes his compositions as sacred, saturated with devotion to Hari, embedded with the secrets of all the mantra-s and is a treat to the singers.

*“Pāvanamulu hari bhakti vi-
bhāvanamulu sarva mantra parama rahasyō-
dbhāvanamulu gāyaka nika-
rāvanamulu tāḷlapāka annaya padamul”*

All of Annamācārya’s compositions depict a great intensity of his Bhakti , his immersion in every possible way with the thoughts and feelings about the Lord of Seven Hills.

In the compositions of Annamācārya , one can find vast number of examples for each one of the Nine fold Bhakti enunciated in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

Nava vidha Bhakti in the Compositions of Annamācārya

1. Śravaṇam

“Sravaṇam nāmaçarita guṇādīnā śṛtīrbhavēt”

The first form of Bhakti is ‘Śravaṇam’ - which is listening to the glory of the Lord . It includes listening to His virtues , sports and stories connected with His divine Names and Forms . One cannot attain Śravaṇa bhakti without proper guidance from Saints or wisemen , instructing the devotees in the right path. King Parīkṣit attained liberation through Śravaṇam - after listening to



the glories of God from Śuka Maharṣi.

Annamācārya extols Śravaṇa bhakti in his compositions as follows:

- “*Vīnarō bhāgyamu Viṣṇukathā / Venubalamidivō Viṣṇukathā // Ādi nundī sandhyādi vidhulālō / Vēdambainadi Viṣṇukathā Nādinčīnidē Nārādādulaçē / Vīdhivīdhulanē Viṣṇukathā*” (3-355)

The above Sankīrtana means that the story of Viṣṇu is endowed with energy and prosperity . It is sung in the Vēda-s, sung by sagely Nārada, Vēda Vyāsa and many other great devotees.

- “*Śripati mī kathalu çevulanu viñtimi / Pāpamulaṇagenu bhayamuḍigenu*” (2-322)

Annamayya implores all to listen to the divine deeds of Lord Viṣṇu . Listening to them dissolves all the sins of the devotees.

2. Kīrtanam

“*Nāham vasāmi vaikuñṭhē na yōgi hṛdayē ravau Madbhaktā yatra gāyanti tatra tiṣṭhāmi Nārada*”

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 4.21.41*)

“O Nārada! I am not in Vaikuñṭha nor in the hearts of the Yōgi -s, but I dwell where my devotees engage themselves in singing my Name.”

Here it is emphasised that Nāma Sankīrtanam is much powerful.

Kīrtanam means singing the noble traits and miraculous deeds of God with purity of thought and word. The eulogy of Divine power is the main feature of Kīrtanam . Śuka Maharṣi is the best example for Kīrtana Bhakti , who attained perfection by reciting i .e., singing (Kīrtanam) Śrīmad Bhāgavatam for seven days to King Parīkṣit . Through his compositions, Annamayya not only praised the qualities and deeds of God but made them instrumental for people to know the Ultimate Reality.

- “*Çāladā Bramhamidi sankīrtanam / Jālella naḍagiñçu sankīrtanam // Santōṣakaramaina sankīrtanam / Santāpamaṇagiñçu sankīrtanam Jantuvula rakṣiñçu sankīrtanam / Satatamu dalaçudī sankīrtanam*” (1-343)
- “*Çāladā Harināma soukhyāmṛtamu tamaku / çāladā hitavaina çavulella nosaga // Tagu Vēnkaṭēṣu kīrtanamokaṭi çāladā / jagamulō kalpabhūjambu valenunḍa*” (1-52)
- “*Naḷinadaḷākṣuni nāmakīrtanamu / kaligi lōkamula kaladokaṭi*” (4-34)

The significance of Sankīrtanam is brought out in the above compositions.

3. Smaraṇam

The manner of realisation of God varies from Yuga to Yuga . It is Tapas in Kṛta Yuga , Charity in Trētā Yuga, Yagna-s in Dvāpara Yuga. In Kali Yuga, the procedure for God realisation is through Smaraṇa, that is, constant and continuous remembrance of God’s stories , reflecting His Might and Mercy. Of the Nine modes of worship , Smaraṇa Bhakti – the one by constant remembrance and contemplation - is the next to Kīrtana Bhakti. As per ancient saying –

“*Kṛtaḥ Smaraṇān muktihi*”

The Supreme Bliss is attained by incessant remembrance of all that pertains to God . Prahlāda is the best example for Smaraṇa Bhakti who always remembered (Smaraṇam) the Lord, not forgetting Him even for a moment.

There is no alternative to Nāma Smaraṇa for the purpose of crossing the Ocean of Samsāra .

Annamayya has the following to say about Hari Nāma Smaraṇa .

- *Hari nāmamu kaḍu ānandakaramu / marugavō marugavō marugavō manasā // Naḷināḷṣuni śrī nāmamu / kalidōṣaharamu kaivalyamu Phalasāramu bahu bandha mōçanamu / talaçavō talaçavō talaçavō manasā* // (4-409)



- *Bhāvayāmi Gōpāla bālam mana / ssēvitam tatpadam çintayēyam sadā || (1-137)*

4. Pādasēvanam

Pāda sēvanam or worshipping the Lord's feet , is the next form of Bhakti . In Rāmāyaṇam , Bharata depicts a bhakti prakāra in which he worships the Pāduka of the Lord Rāma . Annamayya praises Pādasēvana bhakti in many of his compositions.

- *Bramha kaḍigina pādamu / bramhamu tāne nī pādamu ||
Çelagi vasudha goliçina nī padamu / bali tala mōpina pādamu
Talakaka gaganamu tannina pādamu / balaripu gāçina pādamu || (1-191)*
- *Īpādamē kadā ila nella goliçinadi (1-66)*
- *Kāmadhēnuvidē kalpavṛkṣamidē / prāmāṇyamugala prapannulaku
Dharaṇīdharu pādasēvē bhōgamu / paramamberigina prapannulaku || (2-488)*
- *Bhavarōga vaidyuni padamulu sēvinçi / bhuvī rōgamula bāsi podalarō || (1-441)*

5. Arçanam

Arçanam or constant worship of the Lord is the fifth form of Bhakti . Devotion through worship of the consecrated idols deeming them to the God Himself is Arçana Bhakti . King Pṛthu is the best example of Arçana bhakti who worshipped the Arçā mūrti of the Lord and attained salvation. Śōḍaśōpaçāra pūja along with mēlukolupu sēva , uyyāla sēva , pavaḷimpu sēva , margaḷāsāsanam come under the category of Arçana Bhakti.

Annamayya extols the Śōḍaśōpaçāra pūja kainkaryam in the following composition

- *Śōḍaśakālānidhiki sōḍaśōpaçāramulu / jādātōḍa niççalunu samarpayāmi ||
Alaru viśvātmunaku āvāhana midē sarva / nilayunaku āsanamu nemminidē
Ala gangā janakunaku arghya pādyaçamanālu / jaladhiśāyikinī majjanmidē ||(2-134)*

The Nīrājana sēva is described as below

- *Ettarē āratulu yiyyarē kānukalu / yittala nēgi vaççēnī indirānāthuḍu || (4-31)*

Annamayya offers Naivēdya in various compositions as follows

- *Āragimpavō māyappa ivē / pērina nētulu perugulunu ||
Paramānnambulu pañçadāralunu / ariselu gārelu navugulunu
Karajikāyalunu khaṇḍa maṇḍegalu / pari pari vidhamula bhakṣyamulu || (6-4)*

Mēlukolupu sēva:

- *Vāridhi śayana vō vaṭapatra pariyanaka / gāravāna mēlukoni kannulu deravavē (4-465)*

Mangaḷāsāsanam:

- *Mangaḷamu Gōvindunaku jaya mangalamu garuḍadhvajunaku
Mangaḷamu sarvātmunaku dharmā svarūpunaku – Jayajaya (1-46)*

6. Vandanam

The sixth form of Bhakti is Vandanam or paying salutations or offering prayers to the Lord . Akṛūra is the best example for Vandana Bhakti who offered prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa on his way to Vrindavan, thus pleasing Him through his beautiful prayers and attained mōkṣa.

Vandana bhakti helps us cross the Samsāra Sāgara . One's desires or boons are granted and self-ego disappears. Annamayya in his several compositions sang the praise and glory of Salutations to the Divinity.

- *Navanītaçōra namō namō / navamahimārṇava namō namō||
Harinārāyaṇa kēśavācyuta śrīkrṣṇa / narasimha vāmana namō namō
Murahara padmanābha mukunda gōvinda / naranārāyaṇa rūpa namō namō || (3-24)*
- *Vandē vāsudēvam śrīpatim / brndārakādhiśa vandita padābjam (1-53)*
- *Kēśava nārāyaṇa krṣṇa gōvinda mukunda / mūsina muttemuvale mōkkēmu nīku*



7. Dāsyam

The seventh form of Bhakti is Dāsyam or serving the Lord . Dāsa is one who serves God with attention, diligence and care. He must always consider himself as the slave of the Lord as well as that of Lord's servants and that his life is justified only performing the necessary daily worship in all its aspects. Lakṣmaṇa and Hanumān are the best examples of Dāsyā bhakti.

Annamayya says –

- *Jñānamu neragamu ajñānamu neragamu / śrīnāyakuḍa nī sēvakuḍa nēnu (4-113)*
- *Takkaka śrīvēnkaṭēsu dāsya mekkuḍainattu / yekkaḍa mōkṣōpāyamika jeppanunnadā (2-170)*
- *Ātaḍe yajamānuḍu ādinārāyaṇuḍu / ātani baṅṭlamu māku nanniṭā niṣcintamu (2-237)*
- *Nī dāsula baṅṭu baṅṭanayyēnikanu (3-51)*

8. Sakhyam

The eighth form of Bhakti is Sakhyam. Treating the Lord or moving with Him as if He were a friend is called Sakhyam. God is a repository of all auspicious attributes. Sakhya Bhakti involves becoming His close acquaintance, cultivating and singing praise of His qualities. Annamayya describes the attachment of a Bhakta to God in the following composition.

- *Peṅca beṅca mīda perigēṭi ḷelimi / inḷukanta tālimula keḍalēni ḷelimi*
Anṭu muṭṭulēka manasulanṭukonna ḷelimi / kaṅṭa gaṅṭa navvinḷē ghanamaina ḷelimi (1-29)

Arjuna is the best example of Sakhya Bhakti . In a very friendly way Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches Arjuna the Gīta or the Song Celestial . Annamayya conveyed the same in the following Sankīrtana , highlighting the Sakhya bhakti.

- *Aniyānatiḷḷē kṛṣṇuḍarjununitō / viniyātani bhajinḷu vivēkamā ||*
Bhūmilōna joḷḷi sarva bhūta prāṇulanella / dīmasānanē mōḷḷēṭi dēvuḍa nēnu
Kāminḷi saṣyamulu kaliginḷi ḷandruḍanai / tēmala paṇḍinḷēṭi dēvuḍa nēnu || (2-438)

9. Ātma Nivēdanam

‘Ātma Nivēdana’ – the Ninth form of Bhakti - means offering oneself or surrendering oneself to God. ‘Ātma Nivēdana’ means to disown material wealth and to wean away the soul from the whirlpool of the phenomenal world and place oneself at the Lord's feet . This is the main feature of Śaraṇagati.

This attitude of the individual is highlighted by Annamayya in the sankīrtana

- *Ati duṣṭuḍa nē nalaṣuḍanu / itara vivēkam bikanēdi ||*
Yekkaḍa nenniṭa yēmi sēsitinō / nikkapu dappulu nēramulu
Gakkana ninniṭa kaligina nīvē / dikkugāka mari dikkēdi || (1-78)

Annamayya exhorts people to wrench themselves away from the worldly ties and strive towards Deliverance.

- *Vāsivantu viḷiḷinavādē yōgi – Ī / āsallellā viḷiḷina ataḍē yōgi ||*
Gaddinḷi pāreḷu turagamu vaṅṭi manasu / vaddani maralinḷina vādē yōgi
Voddanē koṅḍala vaṅṭi vunnata dēha guṅḷu / diddi maṭṭu peṭṭu vādē dhīruḍaina yōgi || (1-167)

Wisdom consists in treating not only the entire creation but one's own self and one's own deeds as subject to Divine control and ownership. So Annamayya says

- *Namō Nārāyaṇa nā vinnapamidivō / samānuḍagānu nīku sarvēśa rakṣinḷavē ||*
Manasu nī yadhīnamu māṭalu nīvādēṭivē / tanuvu nī puṭṭinḷina dhanamidi



Munu nī pampuna ninni mōçukunnavādanintē / venaka nannu nērālu vēyaka rakṣinçavē//
(3-199)

CONCLUSION

Bhakti is the easiest pathway to realize the Supreme God. The Nine modes of Bhakti are the ways in which a devotee can attain the Supreme ideal of life. The Devotee can choose any of these paths and reach the highest echelons of Spirituality. These Nine forms of Bhakti are thus beautifully blended in the compositions of Sri Annamacarya, the Saint-poet, who glorified the concept of 'Bhakti' through his divine outpourings with music as its medium.

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