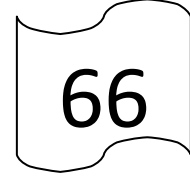


Significance of Bhakthi,musical and poetical expressions in the sanskrit works – Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini and Gita Govindam

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ABSTRACT

The Bhakthi movement in India gained wide acceptance between 7th and 15th centuries. The movement witnessed a surge in Hindu literature in Sanskrit as well as in regional languages particularly in the form of devotional poems and music. Both the works Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini of Narayana Teertha and Gita Govindam of Sri Jayadeva are very famous Sanskrit Operas highly suitable for Dance drama and have been very well presented by the Indian classical dancers as well as Carnatic Musicians.

Jayadeva was a Sanskrit poet during the 12th century who was known for his work 'Gita Govindam' the Epic poem which presents the view that Radha is greater than Krishna. This is considered as an important text in the Bhakthi movement of Hinduism.

Another important person who contributed towards the Bhakthi movement was Narayana Teertha (1650-1745) who has been regarded as an incarnation of Jayadeva, and the author of a sanskrit opera 'Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini'. There are similarities in the work of Jayadeva and Narayana Teertha.

The study is focused on the aspects of Bhakthi, beauties and nuances of the poetical as well as musical expressions and their significance in the Tarangams of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini and Ashtapadhis of Gita Govindam.

Keywords

Bhakthi movement, Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini, Narayana Teertha, Gita Govindam, Jayadeva, Sankrit Literature, Lord Sri Krishna, Sri Radha, Gopis, Tarangams, Ashtapadhis.

Introduction

Jayadeva's Gita Govindam is a unique work in the history of Sanskrit Literature. The poem describes the amorous dalliances of Radha Krishna with the excellent ideational subtleties and superb stylistic elegance. It is organised into 12 chapters. Each chapter is further sub divided into one or more divisions called Prabandhas. The Prabandhas contain couplets grouped into eights called Ashtapadhis. Gita Govindam is one of the earliest musical texts in which the author indicates the exact Raga(mode), Tala (rhythm) in which to sing each of the songs.

Jayadeva was born in a brahmin family during 12th century. Date and place of Jayadeva's birth are uncertain. The scholars of Odisha, Bengal, Mithila are of the opinion that Jayadeva was born in kindubilva, a village which they have identified with a present day village in their own region. His parents are Bhoja deva and Rama devi. When Jayadeva has visited Puri, he married a dancer named padmavathi. It is known from the temple inscriptions that he received his education in Sanskrit poetry from a place called kurmapataka, near Konark in Odisha.

Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini, a Yakshaganam in Sanskrit authored by Sri Narayana Teertha is a great work rich in poetical quality, very clear in diction and suitable for dance dramas. It



consists of 12 chapters known as Tarangams, 153 songs, 302 slokams and 31 choornikas. Sri Narayana Teertha followed Dasama skandam (10 th Skanda) of Sri Veda Vyasa's Bhagavatham. Krishna Leela Tarangini deals with life history of Sri Krishna from birth, childhood pranks and marriage to Rukmini.

Sri Narayana Teertha was born in the year 1675 AD on Ashada Suddha Ekaadasi at Kaza , near Mangalagiri, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. His parents were Gangadhara and Parvathi. Guru Sivaraamaananda Teertha gave upadesam to Narayana Teertha. At the end of the first Tarangam he mentions as Paadasevaka. Narayana Teertha took manasika sanyasam. As a sanyasi he visited many shrines and reached tirupathi where he got severe stomach ache. He prayed Lord Venkateswara and upon the instruction of a divine voice in his dream he reaches a place Varahur near Tanjore where he gets relieved of the pain after entering into the temple. Narayana Teertha spent the rest of his life in Varahur. It is believed that Narayana Teertha got the darshan of Lord Krishna in the Kalyanakkolam (wedding robes) when he completed Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini which is why he has abandoned working on the 11th skanda of Srimadbhagavatham. He attained jeeva samadhi at Thiruppoonthuruthy in 1745 A.D. Every year a music festival is being held at the saint's samadhi on the aradhana day where musicians render tarangams from Sri Krishna Leela Tarangin.

Methodology

This article is an effort to bring out the deep philosophy of Bhakthi and also significance of Music (Ragas and Talas), Poetry (Literature), which both the saint composers have used and portrayed in their divine works. The following methods are used :

- Biographies of Sri Narayana Teertha and Jayadeva
- Bhakthi and various stages of Divine love
- Musical and poetical expressions in Ashtapadhis
- Musical and poetical expressions in Tarangams
- Relevant references

Bhakthi and various stages of Divine Love

Bhakthi or Devotion to God is something unique. Bhakthi is eternal whereas Gnyana and Vairagya are ephemeral according to an instance explained in the Skanda purana. It has never grown old and even in the worst days of heresy, Bhakthi survived as a cult. An intense desire to possess and mingle is the truest characteristic of love and this is the love that a devotee feels for the object of his devotion which is called 'The Divine Love'. Therefore naturally to love God as a woman loves her beloved is considered the highest form of worship. The attitude was designated by several stages and various names in Hindu devotional philosophy – Dampathya bhava, Kantha bhava, Gopi bhava, Madhurya bhava, Parakiya bhava, etc and Maha Bhava an ecstatic concept, the highest personification of which is Sri Radha.

The singing of the yearning of the soul for God and of God for human soul, and depicting this longing in symbol of Radha and Krishna, in Gita Govindam has been significant in making the work immortal.

Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini is one of the longest dramas in sanskrit language and the entire presentation is intended to elevate the soul and merge it in The Supreme Bliss, which is why this work also has become very significant and eternal.

Musical and poetical expressions in Ashtapadhis

Though the original tunes of Ashtapadhis were lost in history, they remain popular and widely sung in a variety of tunes in various systems of Music and Dance forms. Some famous musicians have tuned Ashtapadhis and rendered beautifully. Dr. Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna garu has



tuned and also rendered in his albums. A few famous renditions:

- Sritha Kamala kucha – Bhairavi – Adi thalam
- Pasyathi disi disi (Natha Hare) - Sindhubhairavi – Adi thalam
- Chandana Charchita - Mohana - Adi thalam
- Raase Harimiha - Reethi Gowla – Adi thalam

The renditions of Ashtapadhis by Sri Balamurali Krishna Garu is a greatest contribution to Music. To find expressions of the Raga, Thala and also the Bhakthi rasa depths, a great poet like Jayadeva has chosen Sri Balamurali Krishna garu, who when sings the Ashtapadhis, one can realize how the intoxicated Gopis must have felt the ecstasy of The Divine Love.

The Ashtapadhi 'Natha Hare' is sung by the Carnatic musicians in different ragas. The famous vocalist Sri Unnikrishnan has rendered this in the raga Madhuvanathi which perfectly matches the mood of the poetry.

Jayadeva with his exquisite artistry drew us into poetic imagery of what he wanted to convey by using imagination and life experiences in his work. The imagery in the Gita Govindam could be examined on 2 levels, physical and psychological. The poetic imagery recreates the interior landscape of the lovers connecting their inner states of being with the outward nature.

Since it is considered as kavya, a work of poetry, Gita Govindam is divided into 12 Sargas or chapters. Jayadeva has given names to each of the sargas which are unique and meaningful. These are :

1. Samoda Damodaran: He who gives joy to the mother who tied him to a mortar.
2. Aklesha Keshavan: He who protected Brahma and Shiva.
3. Mukta Madhusudanan: He who punished Madhu, the asura who was enslaved by Moha.
4. Snigdha Madhusudanan: He who revealed his beautiful form to Madhu and Kaitabha.
5. Sakanksha Pundarikakshan: He who awaits the arrival of his devotees with eyes wide open.
6. Dhrista Vaikuntan or Dhanya Vaikunthan: He who reveals the bliss of Vaikuntha to everyone.
7. Nagara Narayanan: He who can appeal to people of a city, though He had lived in a village among the Gopis.
8. Vilakshya Lakshmiapati: He who accepts everyone who seeks his Grace as Lakshmi herself.
9. Mukta Mukundan: The Guru who bestows a unique experience.
10. Chatura Chaturbhujan: He who has four arms which grant all the goals of human life.
11. Sannada Govindan: He who brings joy to cowherds and to everyone on earth.
12. Supreeta Pitambaran: He who, pleased by the devotion of his devotees, bestows upon them the Pitambara (the yellow garment worn by Him)

Musical and poetical expressions in Tarangams

With simplicity of the Language, the selection of ragas and Talas and the beautiful Solkattus, the Tarangams are composed in Suladi saptha talas. With the intention of making the Tarangams of Sri Krishnalila Tarangini more popular, great musicians choose different Ragas and Talas than those mentioned in the original script.

Among them are the famous carnatic legends: Sri oleti venkateswarulu, Sri Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyyengar, Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna, Sri Nedunoori Krishna Murthy, Sri Malladi Suri Babu.

Sri Malladi Sree Ram Prasad and Sri Malladi Ravi Kumar popularly known as Malladi brothers have also tuned many Tarangams and popularized them.

Jayadeva has divided the Gita Govindam into Twelve Sargas (parts), influence of which can be seen throughout Sri Krishnalila Tarangini. On the aspect of Bhāva, Raga and Tala, the musical



pieces of Sri Krishna Lila Tarangini easily ranks with Ashtapadhis of Jayadeva. A significant aspect in Tarangams is that they can be sung in any Talam for the reason that the author of the work Sri Narayana Teertha has set the metre of the composition very brilliantly.

In Sri Krishnalila Tarangini, the selection of ragas is in perfect accord as to convey the emotional content of the Sahithya.

Sri Krishnalila Tarangini consists of various literary forms like Slokas, Gadyams and Dvipadamsetc. These literary forms are set in different Sanskrit metres which were carried out through the work with poetical excellences. Most of them are set to 'Anushtup' metre. Each Taranga has a specific name, which gives a clue, about the story content of that particular Taranga. Before each Taranga, Narayana Tirtha prefixes 'Athabhiniyate', which means to be enacted.

Before each Tarangam, the story is briefly conveyed through Slokas. For instance:

Before the Tarangam "Mangalaya Mamava Deva" in Kedara Gowla, Adi Talam, A brief content of it is given in following Slokam :

devakyassiSubhavametya bhagavan narayana Sripatihi
sarvajnana manavibhooti sahita satprardhanaihi karmabhihi
Adityendu sahasra koti sadrusa bhasa gruham bhasayan
pitrossneha sudha mahodadhi Sasanko yam harirgeeyate ||

Meaning:

Sriman Narayana the lord of Lakshmi was born to Devaki and Vasudeva due to their abundant piety in their previous births. He is embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. His resplendence is supreme. He excels a million Suns and Moons in effulgence. His radiance illuminated the prison. Devaki and Vasudeva were filled with ocean of happiness just as sea overflows at the sight of the moon.

After the Slokam the Tarangam is followed. In between Slokas and Tarangams, there are Gadyams, which are like the linking passages. The Gadyams are like a connecting bridge between Sloka and the Tarangam.

Conclusion

Due to the significance of Bhakthi with various aspects of Divine Love along with imagery poetry and unsurpassed musical expressions in both the works "Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini" and "Gita Govindam", they will be remained immortal and eternal for the benefit of all the beings in the whole universe.

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