

Appreciating Carnatic Music
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Lecture – 47
Thyagaraja- His many moods

Between seven hundred and eight hundred of, Thyagaraja's compositions, have come down to us. And they have come through, what is called "Sishya Parampara". Sishya means, student Prampara means lineage. So, Thyagaraja had his students, who learnt his compositions, they in turn had students, who intern had students, does through an oral tradition, his composition had come down to us.

There has been an attempt to preserve compositions, in written, in written mode as well. But the primary way that the composition was come down to us is, the oral transmission, is through oral transmission. Even today many musicians worth is of his sort, traces back his or her lineage Thyagaraja or sometimes Dikshatar.

Now, Thyagaraj sang on many themes, there are many moods that we can find in Thyagarajas compositions. In this session, I will try to take a few of these themes. We will look at some his compositions and this will hopefully urge you to take a look at many of his other compositions, that are available very easily on the internet.

Thyagaraja talks to Rama, he (()) 02:18 him. Even sometimes rebukes him gently, he sings in joy and he sings in despondence, he speaks of music, he thinks of himself, power of music. And then he speaks of bakhthi, devotions what is the true nature of bakhthi? And he sings of charlatan, those who run a charade of devotions or of musicianship. So, there are many varied voices that we find in Thyagaraja. And in this session, I will just have a small selection of songs with these varied themes.

So first of all who was Thyagarajas Rama? Of course, it was the Rama of Ramayana. As envisioned, as we find Ramas story, as has told by Valmiki. In the Ramayana and in many of his songs, there are References to various episodes from the Ramayana. And suddenly there are many beautiful metaphors that you can find sprinkled here and there. For instance, he call Rama "sat chitta shayi", that is he who reclines, he who reclines in good person heart.

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Another very famous song, he starts addressing Rama as “Sujana jeevana”. (Music Starts: 04:04)
(Music Ends: 05:55)

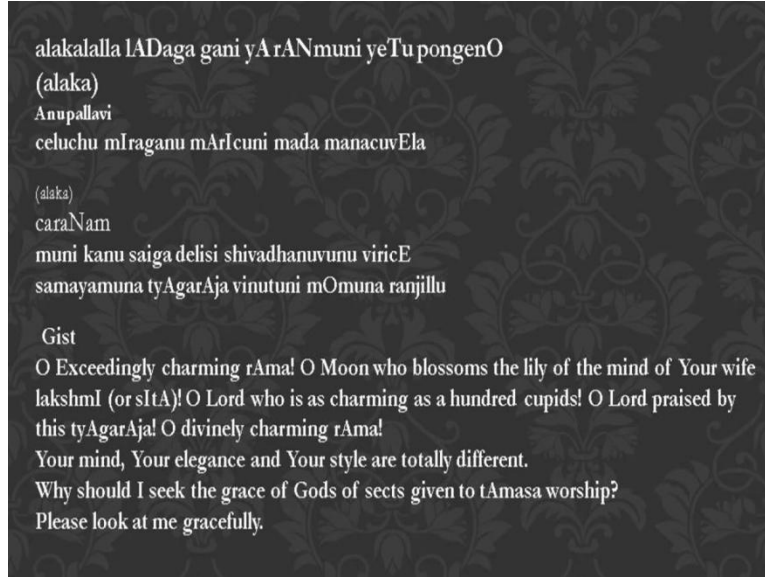
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Sujana jeevana, he says, you are the life of sujana. Sujana means good persons, anyone who is good person, of that person you are the life. And we come across many such epithets in his compositions. Very common theme in his compositions are simply Music the glory of Rama,

Music of his beauty, Music of his deeds, of his episodes of Ramayana, always with a personal angle to it.

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alakaLalla lADaga gani yArANmuni yeTu pongenO
(alaka)
Anupallavi
celuchu mIraganu mArIcuni mada manacuvEla

(alaka)
caraNam
muni kanu saiga delisi shivadhanuvunu viricE
samayamuna tyAgarAja vinutuni mOmuna ranjillu

Gist
O Exceedingly charming rAma! O Moon who blossoms the lily of the mind of Your wife
lakshmi (or sItA)! O Lord who is as charming as a hundred cupids! O Lord praised by
this tyAgarAja! O divinely charming rAma!
Your mind, Your elegance and Your style are totally different.
Why should I seek the grace of Gods of sects given to tAmasa worship?
Please look at me gracefully.

In his composition in the raga “Madyamavati”. (Music Starts: 06:49) (Music Ends: 08:18) In this composition Thyagaraja speaks of, some of Ramas feet, for instance like, meeting king Janakas, challenge by lifting the bow of lord Siva and other such episodes. And what Thyagaraja says is that, the hair locks of Rama, as playing on his face, the sheer beauty of that sight.

Thyagaraja says, Sage Viswamithra who was with Rama during all these episodes. Thyagaraja says, how he missed up, relished the sight of those locks, hearing lord Ramas face, as he performs these feet. This kind of poetic teak, on describing Rama are very frequently found in his kritiS. And in a many kritis, he speaks to Rama, he asks him, why he will not show compassion? Why he will not show grace? Why he will not grant him, what he seeks?

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Pallavi
marug(E)larA O rAghava

Anupallavi
marug(E)la car(A) cara rUpa parAt-
para sUrya sudhA-kara iOcana (marugu)

Chranam
C anni nIv(a)nucu antarangamuna
tinnagA vetagi telusukoNTin(a)yya
ninnE gAni madin(e)nna jAlan(o)rula
nannu brOva(v)ayya tyAgarAja nuta (marugu)

Gist
O rAghava! O Lord of the form of both moving and non-moving! O Supreme Lord who is beyond everything! O Lord who has Sun and Moon as eyes! O Lord praised by this tyAgarAja!
Why this screen (between You and me)?
Having searched my inner recess, I have directly perceived that everything is You alone; (OR) having searched properly in my inner recess, I have perceived that everything is You alone; I shall not, in my mind, even think of anyone other than You; therefore, please protect me.

In this composition, in the raga Jayanthasri, he says “Maru gelara oh ragava”, why is there the screen in between you and me? Why I may not won with you? Why is that the screen? “maru gelara chara chara rupa paratpara surya sudhakara lochana anni niva nuchu anta rangamuna tinnaga vetagi telusukuntinaiya ninna gaani madine ninna jalanorula nannu brovu vaiya thyagaraja nuta”.

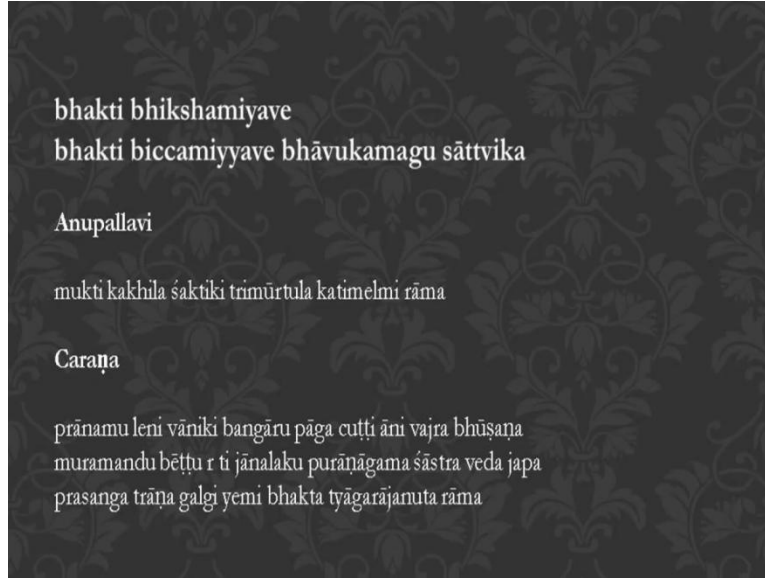
So here, he is besieging Rama to, lift that vale that separates the devotee and the god. (Music Starts: 10:49) (Music Ends: 12:19). And there are many compositions that simply describe the joy of worshipping Rama, the joy of doing pooja, the actual process of doing pooja.

Thyagaraja has many compositions, which describe this, since for instance he says the composition heard before in this course “Thulasi bilva malikadi jalajasumamula pujala gaikonave” that is this my pooja duo, I am offering these flowers thulasi bilva mallika, the lotus please accept these offering of mine. (Music Starts: 13:04) (Music Ends: 14:06)

In one of Thyagarajas, very favourite themes is, theme of bhakthi, devotion. In many compositions, actually he asks that. he be given that bhakthi. Bhakthi is also something that is a lord’s grace. So if you have bhakthi that is a gift and Thyagaraja asks for that gift.

He says that “Bhakthi bhikshamiyave satvika bhakthi bhikshamiyave bhakthi” that you give, he is begging. Biksha is something that you beg for. He is saying that I am begging, you to give me bhakthi and not any bhakthi “Satvika bhakthi”. (Music Starts: 15:02) (Music Ends: 16:56)

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bhakti bhikshamiyave
bhakti bhikshamiyave bhāvukamagu sāttvika

Anupallavi

mukti kakhila śaktiki trimūrtula katimelmi rāma

Carana

prānamu leni vāniki bangāru pāga cutti āni vajra bhūṣaṇa
muramandu bēṭṭu r ti jānalaku purāṇāgama śāstra veda japa
prasanga trāṇa galgi yemi bhakta tyāgarājanuta rāma

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teliyalEru rAma bhakti mArgamunu

anupallavi

ilanantaTā tirugucunu galuvarincErE gAni

caraNam

vEgalEci nITa munigi bhUti bUsi vallanenci veliki shIAganIyulai
bAga paika mArjana lOlulai rEgani tyAgarAja vinuta

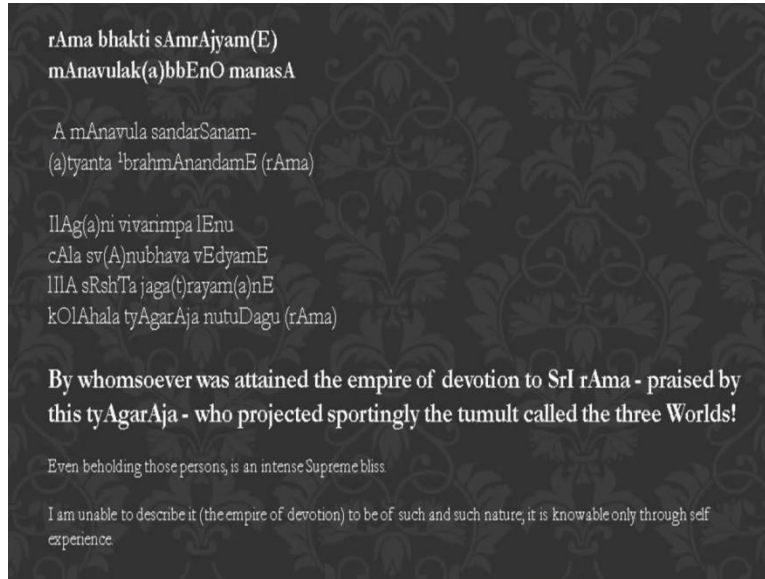
Meaning:

O Rama, we do not know the path of devotion! Men in this whole world only roam about in tension all over without being aware of the path of devotion. They get up at dawn, attend to their ablutions, wear the emblems of creed and count the beads appearing to be spiritual and religious, but busy with their working out the strategy for making money by hook or crook.

In other well known composition of his, he says that “Teliyaleru rama bhakthi margamunu”. We don't know the path of devotion, we roam around here and there without being aware of the path

of devotion. People go through the motions. They have the ritual path, they where religious symbols. But where is bhakthi in all those “Teliyaleru rama bhakthi margamunu” (Music Starts: 17: 29) (Music Ends: 19:33)

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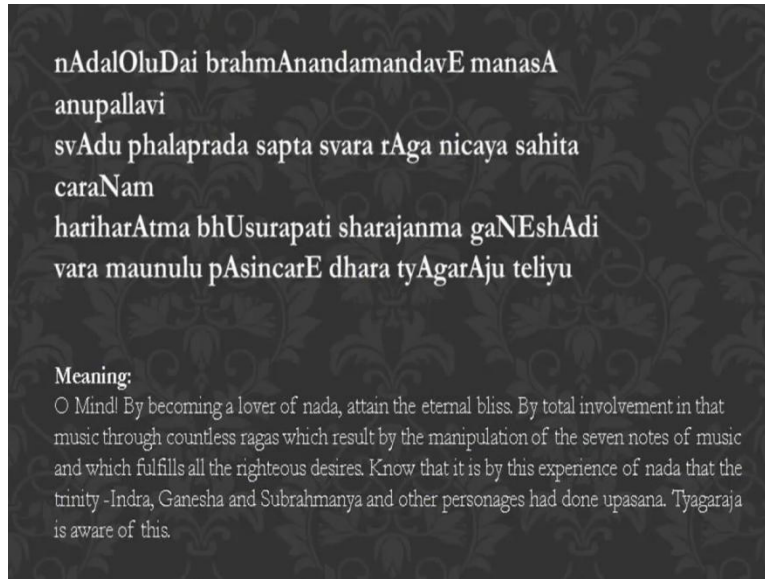


And in this, gem of a composition he says, he talks of the sheer bliss of bhakthi, Rama bhakthi. He says “Rama bhakthi samrajyam”, his empire, Samrajya of Rama bhakthi, is something that, if you attain it, there is no bliss equal to it. And it is something that you cannot describe, something that is for you to experience. He says “ilagane vivarimpalenu cala svanu bhava vidhyame” it is not possible to describe it, this way or that way, it is a matter of “Svanu bhava”. (Music Starts: 20:24) (Music Ends: 21:33)

He asks Rama for bhakthi, he asks Rama for wisdom for budhi, he says, why would not you give me the wisdom that the great man have had? “enduku peddala vale buddhi iyyavu endhu podu nayya ramayya veda sastra tatvartamulu telisi bheda rahita vedantamulu telisi nada vidya marmabulanu telisi natha thyagaraja nuta nija muga enduku peddala vale buddhi iyyavu”. Why do not you give me the wisdom, that great men had? (Music Starts: 22:29) (Music Ends: 25:07)

And remarkable set of compositions Thyagaraja has left behind are on music itself, the power of music, the power of notes, in many of his compositions. He refers to, he uses the word “Nada”, Nada yoga, Nada vidhya, Nado pasana, the worship of Nada musical sound. Nada yoga, Nado pasana means of liberation of music through sound.

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nAdalOluDai brahmAnandamandavE manasA
anupallavi
svAdu phalaprada sapta svara rAga nicaya sahita
caraNam
hariharAtma bhUsurapati sharajanma gaNEshAdi
vara maunulu pAsincarE dhara tyAgarAju teliyu

Meaning:
○ Mind! By becoming a lover of nada, attain the eternal bliss. By total involvement in that music through countless ragas which result by the manipulation of the seven notes of music and which fulfills all the righteous desires. Know that it is by this experience of nada that the trinity -Indra, Ganesha and Subrahmanya and other personages had done upasana. Thyagaraja is aware of this.

And many of his beautiful compositions, talk about this, he says that “nada loludai brahmanandame”. He says “nada loludai brahmanandame”, is revealing or taking pleasure in the nada, that is equal to brahmanandha. Which is spiritually the ultimate state. He has handled not just major ragas, but minor ragas like what I just sang in a “Shudda bangala”. Shuddha bangala is a minor raga “Rama bhakthi samrajyamu” is a minor raga, again this “Nada loludai brahmanandame” is in a raga called Kalyana Vasantham, again a minor raga. (Singing Starts: 26:50) (Singing Ends: 27:21) (Music Starts: 27:31) (Music Ends: 29:15)

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svara rAga sudhA rasayuta bhakti svargApavargamurA O manasA
 (svara)
 anupallavi
 paramAnandamE kamalamupai baka bhEkamu celagEmi manasA
 (svara)
 caraNam 1
 mUAdhARA nAda merugutE mudamagu mOkSamurA
 kOlAhala sapta svara grahamula gurutE mOkSamurA O manasA
 (svara)
 caraNam 2
 bahu janmamulaku paini jnAniyai baraguTa mOkSamurA
 sahaja bhaktiO rAga jnAna sahitudu muktudurA O manasA
 (svara)
 caraNam 3
 maddaLa tALA gatula teliyakanE mardincuTa sukhamA
 shuddha manasu lEka pUja jEyuTa sUkura vrittirA O manasA
 (svara)
 caraNam 4
 rajata girIshuDu nagajaku delpu svarArNava marmamulu
 vijayamu gala tyAgarAju-DErugE vishvAsinci delusukO O manasA

One of the most significant composition, he says, this is in Sankarabharanam. And again, it is a music on raga swara natha, he says “swara raga sudha rasa yuta bhakthi swargapa vargamura o manasa” he is telling himself that his own mind. He is saying “swara raga sudha rasa yuta bhakthi” devotion that is charged with the rasa or the essence of the enjoyment of swara and raga, that nectar. So, devotion combined with this music that itself is “Swarga”, that itself is heaven, that itself if “Apavarga” that itself is liberation. And just, as I said is a very significant composition.

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Devotion blended with the nectar of svara and raga alone is capable of leading one to salvation. How incongruous if a crane and frog (with their cacophonous outpourings) sit on the lotus of supreme bliss? Understanding the divine nada emanating from the subtle primal source in the body gives one a foretaste of the supreme bliss. To identify the subtle and mystic sources of the seven svaras of the musical scale in the body referred to as chakras is verily a yoga leading to salvation. If one bangs the mrdanga wildly without being aware of the intricacies of the rhythmic art, can the result give joy? Likewise, to offer worship to the Lord without mental purity points to a life base and repugnant (as a pig's) It is only after countless births that one is born wise enough to think of liberation and adopt himself to a life of devotion. Yet if any one, naturally devoted to the Lord is also equipped with the knowledge of raga, he attains salvation shortcircuiting the endless cycle of births and deaths. Tyagaraja has been blessed with Svararnava a musical treatise expounded by Lord Shiva to Parvati and is acquainted with the intricacies of music at the highest level. So, with faith in his words, understand these details.

The anupallavi says this “Paramanandame kamala mupai baka bhekamu celagemi”. Now this can be interpreted in many ways, but the literary meaning, as you can see, that there is the lotus, which can give you the ultimate bliss. But what can a crane or a frog have to do with the lotus. The lotus here is refers to, what music can actually give and what people do with music is, what the crane or the frog can do with the lotus. It is only a bee that knows the nectar that the lotus can offer.

So, here is really pointing, clearly indicating at the actual worth of music. What it can give you? What people are actually deriving from it? In the first Charanam, he says “Muladara nada merugute mudamagu moksamura kolahala saptaswara grahamula gurute moksamura”. The science of Nada yoga, that discipline, the practice of “Nado Pasana” is exoteric, no doubt. But it involves in, it involves in going inwards, to seek the source of sound, to seek the source of musical sound.

And the belief is, as worn out and experienced, that there are certain parts of the body that are activated to produce certain swaras. Though, it does seem exoteric, there are living masters, who testified to its truth? And musical practice, practice of music, when it is inward, that can result, that can yield undreamt of happiness. And we may say that, what carnatic music has is professional practiced is, not the kind of music that Thyagaraja is talking about.

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All compositions of Thyagaraja,
text and translation
from
thyagaraja-vaibhavam.blogspot.in