

**Appreciating Carnatic Music**  
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**Lecture -49**  
**Muthuswami Dikshitar – an Overview**

Muthuswami Dikshitar he was the youngest of the “Mummoorthy” carnatic trinity. He was also born in Tiruvarur in the year 1775.

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Sanskrit scholar brilliant musical mind widely travelled person who visited many temple town across the length and breadth of India deeply devote person and Srividya Upasakar. Srividya is an rhetoric discipline, rhetoric worship cult and he was initiated into srividya. And many of his compositions bear references to aspects of this worship, his life and his work is musical work are strikingly different from that of Tyagaraja.

If Tyagaraja lived his most of his life lived in the small hamlet of Thiruvaiyaru near Tiruvarur. Diskshitar was a widely travelled person, though born in Tiruvarur. They his family moved to Manali town near Chennai. Muthuswami Dikshitar father Ramaswamy Dikshitar was erudite musician scholar himself, composer of known mean merit, in fact creation of very, very popular raga Hamsadhwami is attributed him.

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Ramaswamy Dikshitar along with his sons all of them are musically accomplished, they all moved to Manali at the behest invitation of patron in Manali Muthukrishnan Mudaliar. Muthukrishna mudaliar is set to visited Tiruvarur and being very impressed with the Dikshitar family, his musical achievement. He invited them and brought over to Manali. At Manali Dikshitar had varied influences, he was of course tutored in Sanskrit and also in music he was also exposed to Western Band Music, that he used to play at the fort there.

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And as you see later, he has left behind 40 odd compositions. Whose tunes are derived from Western Band Music, while at Manali, when Dikshitar was fifteen or sixteen years of age the family was visited by a yogi called Chidambranatha Yogi. And the yogi took a liking for

Muthuswami Dikshitar and they propose and he asked that Muthuswami Dikshitar should accompany him on his travel northwards. Knowing that it would be a great influence on a young man his father Ramaswamy Dikshitar permitted that.

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And Muthuswami Dikshitar travelled with Chidambaranatha yogi and it is said they lived at Banaras, Kasi for a few years. Muthuswami Dikshitar was initiated into Srividya Upasana he was taught various sastras by Chidambaranatha yogi and he was also presumably he heard North Indian music at that time.

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Banaras is also a cultural centre and music thrived in this town for many centuries and it is believable that Dikshitar heard Hindustani as well. And some of his compositions clearly influenced by Hindustani music they are cast in Hindustani ragas. So at the end of his stay in Kas,i yogi asked him to return legend. As it that he was asked take a dip in the Ganges and when he came out it, he found a Veena and Dikshitar calls himself Vainika Gayaka he was a Veena player.

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And the nuances in Veena, the style is very prominent in his compositions. In any case, he returned to the south and after coming back he went to the holy town of Tirutani. Where you have a temple of it is a very ancient temple of lord Subramania. And again however as said that at the end of Mandala of Meditation. Dikshitar meditated for 41 days at the end of it, an old man appear and dropped a piece candy into Dikshitar's mouth, Dikshitar busted into his first ever compositions.

This is musical lore this is a legend as we received through the oral tradition. So his life was completely different story from Tyagarajas or Syamasastri as well. You will see his compositions his musical work is also remarkably different. If Tyagaraja sung predominantly on Srirama Dikshitar sung on whole pantheon of Hindu deities. We could say that his favored deity was the goddess because he was a Srividya Upasagar.

But his compositions do not reflect any such biases in term of sheer numbers possibly number of compositions on lord Vishnu, Rama, Krishna are lesser.

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But he has composed on all the deities. Even the Navagraha's the nine planets are according to Hindu astrology. Dikshitar travelled all across the country and he composed composition on the deity at Badrinath on the one end. And deity at Ramaswaram, the other end. So that was his span of his travel.

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Dikshitar composed entirely in Sanskrit and few compositions are in "Manipravala". Manipravala is where, there is mixture of languages. But he was a Sanskrit composer.

Thyagarajas compositions and his musical outpouring have one abiding guiding light, so to say that is to express wide gambit of emotions. So you find Thyagarajas compositions a variety of tala, of laya ,of moods expressed in the lyrics.

Dikshitar is very sedate, his compositions are extremely restrained in expression of emotions. In fact you hardly find any emotional outpouring in his compositions. They are grand and they are aloof. The most, Dikshitar will say is to his deity is “Mam Ava” is protect me or “Pahimam” or” Mam Rakshithu” and so on. All in the sense just supplication to protect none of the besieging talk tone or the cajoling tone, we find in Thyagaraja or in Samasastri.

Dikshitar compositions magnificent and they are extremely almost. They have almost, they have a impersonal tone about them. Which is also why am as I mentioned earlier in terms of their relationships to the Bakthi movement, Bakthi traditions as we understand it in the work of Bakthi poets. Dikshitar is farthest because the emotive content in the lyrics is very, very minimal emotive content of the music is very high.

Diksitar compositions also follow the standard pallavi, anupallavi and charanam structure. But in Thyagarajas compositions means the musical setting of the anupallavi is repeated in last couple of lines in the charanam, always the anupallavi is of two lines charanam is four or six lines or eight lines sometimes. So the last couple of lines of a charanam of any Thyagaraja compositions usually has the same musical setting of the anupallavi.

This is not the case in Dikshitar compositions, his charanams have the musical life of their own.

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And his charanams or sometimes even the anupallavi incorporate “Madyama Kala Stahithyam” that is the lyrics are sung at twice the speed. So anupallavi is sung at a particular speed and then there is one avarthana two avarthanas of the text, which is sung at twice the speed. This is the feature of even so musically his compositions are structurally, they are quite different from Thyagarajas.

Some of his compositions well known compositions have only two sections pallavi, sometimes it is called anupallavi, sometimes it is called Samasti Charanam.

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So, only two section in the compositions in the kriti. We have compositions like this also and these are those small, they are grant compositions and very, very definitive compositions. So for instance if we talk of a raga Varali. One of the most prominent compositions in this is “Ma mava meenaksh”i which is Dikshitar compositions and it has only two sections pallavi and charanam. Dikshitar also composed Ragamalikas.

The compositions is set in a string of ragas is very famous “Chathurdasa Ragamalika”. Ragagamalika has fourteen ragas in it. It is composed in place of Vishwanatha at Kasi. There are couple other Ragamalikas also. So this is board over view of the compositional output of Dikshitar.