

**Appreciating Carnatic Music**  
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**Lecture -51**  
**Muthuswami Dikshitar – Some more aspects of his work**

Dikshitar composed compositions on many of deities of various temples across the country. As I said he has composed on Vishnu at Badrinath and again on Rameshwara, Ramanatha in Rameshwara. There are many other temples, these are all the various compositions on “Kshetra Kritis”.

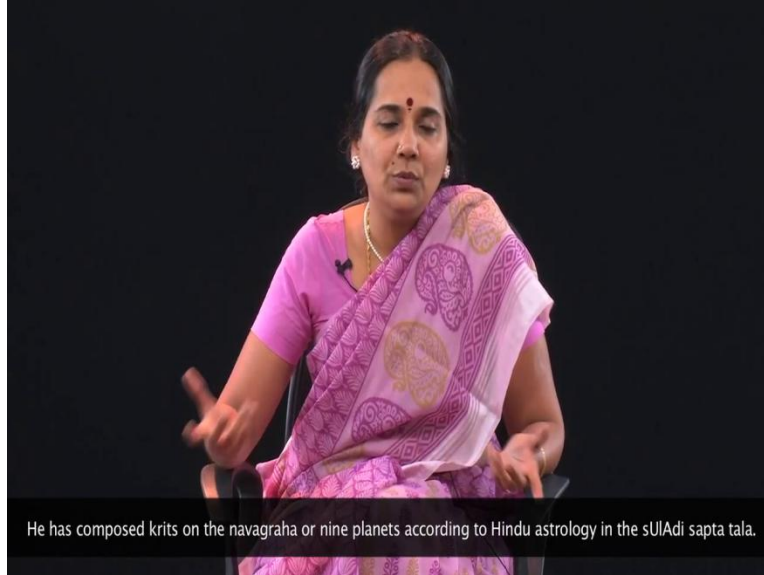
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Kshetra refers to a holy place, a temple town called kshetra. and these compositions incorporate many details about the temple, about the deity, about the concert of the deity, about any special festival associated with the temple and the deity. The temple tank the references to the temple, the temple tree any other lout that is connected with the temple.

For instance, he has composed in a raga Thodi on the temple at Guruvayur dedicated to lord Krishna here, the charanam line starts with the description of the deity.

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Vishnu is supposed to have” Changu Chakra Gada” and a Lotus, and that is completely incorporated in the charanam line. (Singing Starts: 1:55) (Singing Ends: 2:38) and so on until the charanam line. The last line goes this is a “Madyama Kala Sahitya” that comes in second speed. (Singing Starts: 2:43) (Singing Ends: 3:22). Here gurupana pooradisham refers to the Guruvayur city the town of Guruvayur where the temple is situated.

He has composed on Navagrahas and the planets according to the astrology. And these are interestingly set in the Suladi Sapta Tala beginning with the Surya the Sun god he sets it in the suladi sapta tala that is (Singing Starts: 3:55) (Singing Ends: 4:30). This is the composition on the Sun god and the sun and the Chandra that is Monday is associated with the mood. He has composed the composition in madya tala.

The second suladi sapta tala and then the third on Angarakan or Mars that is set in Roopaka tala so the suladi sapta tala are brought into play in these Navagraha kritis.

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The “Kamalamba Nava Varnams” are by far the most famous group of compositions, that we associate with Dikshitar. Kamalamba is the deity in the magnificent temple at Tiruvarur. The main deity is Tyagaraja in this temple and his concert is “Neeloth palamba” and on both Tyagaraja and Neeloth palamba, we have a set of Vibhakthi kritis  
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But kamalamba is another very unique deity in this temple. If you even look at her the iconography it is very different from any that you would have seen the very stuns the sitting position of the deity is unique. And kamalamba is not the concert of Tyagaraja, she is a yogini, she is a meditation seeking union with Tyagaraja. And it is said believed that when she achieves that will be apocalypse that is Pralayam.

So kamalamba is very strongly associated with the kind of Srividya. The Sri Chakra Upasana and Dikshitar's Nava Varna compositions on kamalambas are very justly renowned for their musical weight as well as for their immense richness of the text.

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Another magnificent group of composition is on the “Pancha Bhutha Linga kritis” that is there are five temples that are associated with the lingas. Siva lingas regarded as the manifestation of one of the five primal elements. What you call Pancha bhuthas, Pancha Maha Bhuta, they are the earths, the principle of earth, the principle of air, water, fire and space.

So for instance the temple at Tiruvannamalai is regarded the Agni. The linga there is it embodies the principle of Agni, these compositions again are very interesting for the literary point of view and in music also. If you listen to this composition at this link.

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Jambupate, on the lord Jambupathi and the raga is Yamuna very appropriate because Jambupate is the principle of water and the Yamuna is a sacred river. And the composition if you hear it is very different from the normal carnatic composition, that we hear and it resembles, it would even reminds you of the north Indian music in its gait and its texture.

This is possibly because of his staying in Varanasi, where in no doubt would have heard Hindustani music and is possibly imbibed some of its aspects he brought out in some of his compositions. And here again you have a very interesting viewing in of Advaitik concepts here “anir vachaniya nada bindo” a beautiful profound Advaitik idea.

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He is also exposed to western band music he has left behind forty odd compositions, whose tunes are derived from western band music. (Music Starts: 9:35) (Music Ends: 10:55). So it is not, he is very frequently Dikshitar is spoken as an intellectual. And there is the reason that he brings his varied exposures to bear upon his music, his Sanskrit scholarship, his interest in Srividya. His interest in religious lour and his interest in Sanskrit poetry and in music itself.

Now prasa, as I mentioned “Dwediyaksha Prasa” is something that we find in most of the carnatic compositions in some form. Sometimes if there are two lines in the pallavi both the lines of the pallavi will have the “Dwediyakshara Prasa” or the first line of the pallavi the first line of the anupallavi will have the” Dwediyakshara Prasa” that almost always happens .

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dakshiNA mUrtE vidalita dAsArtE  
cidAnanda pUrtE sadA mauna kIrtE

anupallavi  
akshaya suvarNa vaTa vRksha mUla sthitE  
raksha mAM sanakAdi rAja yOgi stutE  
(madhyama kAla sAhityam)  
rakshita sadbhaktE Sikshita duryuktE  
aksharAnuraktE avidyA viraktE

caraNam  
nikhila saMSaya haraNa nipuNa-tara yuktE  
**nirvikalpa samAdhi** nidrA prasaktE  
akhaNdaika rasa pUrNArUDha SaktE  
**aparOksha nitya bOdhAnanda muktE**  
(madhyama kAla sAhityam)  
sukha-tara pravRttE svAjnAna nivRttE  
sva-guru guhOtpattE svAnubhOga tRptE

For instance the two three compositions, we have just considered, so here we consider “dakshina murte vidalita dasarte” the anupallavi first line is “akshaya suvarna atavraksha mulashtite”. So you can see that the “ksha prasa” is there. The first line of the pallavi and the first line of the anupallavi as it happens, the anupallavi has completely maintained the “ksha prasan”.

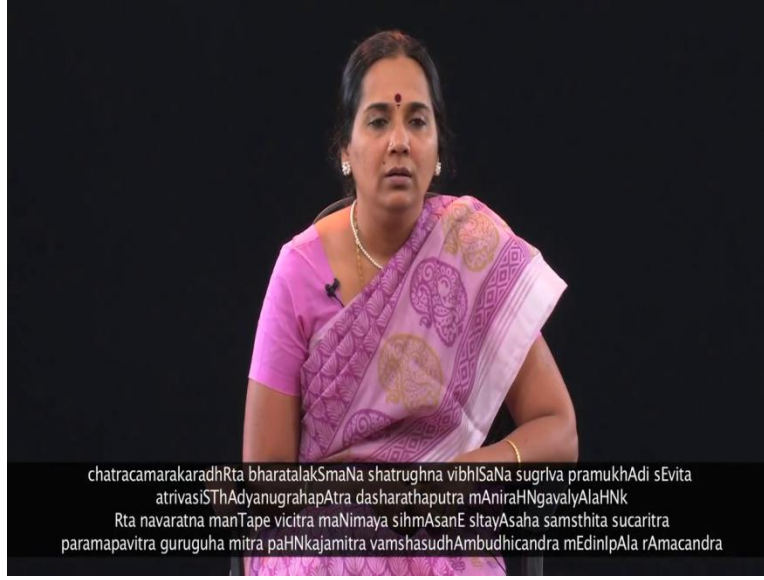
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We find dwityAksharaprAsa between the first line of the pallavi and the first line of the anupallavi.  
But we may find prAsa in other places too.

The first line of the pallavi and the first line of the anupallavi in the composition of the trinity. There you usually find prasa, but in the Dikshitar case, we find that the prasa in many forms. For instance, if you take this composition, very well known composition in the raga Manirango “Mamava Pattabirama” the charan was like this.



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Chaitrira, So you can see the alterations of the prasa on the tha and thra that is again and again used in this charanam deliberately obviously. (Singing Starts: 13:28) (Singing Ends: 14:30) So here you have this use on the tha thra, in fact the whole varga ta tha da na all of them are repeated used in. It is like Dikshitar is playing like that entire set of syllables.

And this composition again you can see I mentioned that the composition is in the “Manirangoon” the name of the raga is almost always incorporated in Dikshitar compositions in this case “maniranga valya lankrita maniranga mandape”. So you are sitting on a throne, that is studded with manis. So in this way he brings in the word name of the raga “Mani ranga”. And in all his compositions, mostly all his compositions, you have the name of the raga woven into the text of the composition.

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Sometimes it is in a very interesting way, not you know straightforward, so the name of the raga will be hidden in a long complex, a long compound word.

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For instance, in this composition of Arabi, the ragas name is Arabi, so he incorporates it like this Samsarabi. So “samsara” is world “bi” is fear thyapahe samsarabi thyapahe that is you will destroy the fear. The fear, in the sense metaphysical fear of the world. It is in trace of saraswathi you can just hear this composition rendered.

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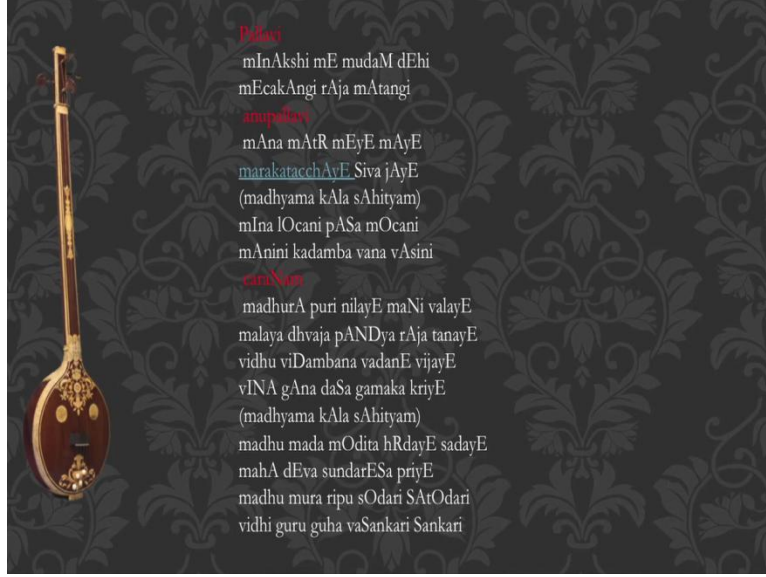


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Dikshitar's ankita is Guruguha and you can find that in all of his compositions. So Guruguha and the name of the raga is always woven into the composition. Now another interesting way in which the name of the raga is incorporated, I will take up this magnificent composition of his "Meenakshi memudam dehi" this is in place of the Meenakshi temple at Madurai.

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Text of the composition is like this, she is Mathangi. Meenakshi is called Mathangi, “meenakshi memudam dehi mudam” is joy not any ordinary worldly joy. The bliss of union with the divine, what you call the bliss of Advaitic realisation that is “Mudam” here.

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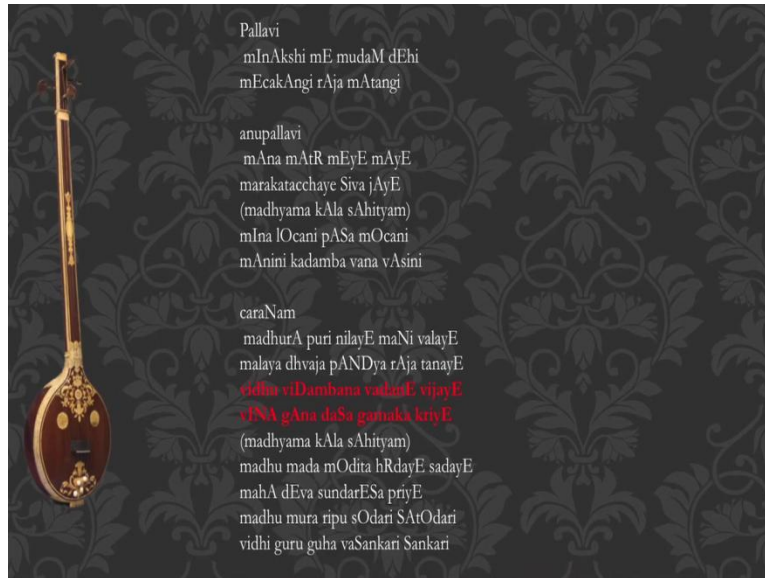


And that is worn out in the anupallavi line which is a very famous line here “mana matru meye maye”. This is completely Advaitic mana is Pramana. That is you are the means of knowledge, Matru. You are the knower maye and you are the known you are maya. There can possibly not that most beautiful encapsulation of Advaita than these lines “mana matru meye maye maragadha chaye siva jaye meena”.

Then these lines are very famous” meena lochini pasha mochini malini kadamba vana vasini”. The meenakshi called meenakshi because the eyes are supposed to be faced like the fish. “Pasha Mochini” again you can see there is prasha, very beautiful prasha in this both in the pallavi and the anupallavi. Word in fact the entire song the “Ma” makara is there is a lot of prasha in that.

“Pasha Mochini” is deliverance from the bondage “madurapuri nilaye”, with reference to the temple town, “mani valaye malayathwaja pandia raja thalaiye meenakshi” is supposed to be the daughter of the king of the Pandias. She was born to him at the end of a sacrificing yagna according to religious loar. Meenakshi was a warrior princess and she went conquering the eight directions until she met Siva, which she hope fell in love and married him.

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Pallavi  
mInAkshi mE mudaM dEhi  
mEcakAngi rAja mAtangi

anupallavi  
mAna mArR mEyE mAyE  
marakatachaye Siva jAyE  
(madhyama kAla sAhityam)  
mIna lOcani pASa mOcani  
mAnini kadamba vana vAsini

caraNam  
madhurA puri nilayE maNi valayE  
malaya dhvaja pANDya rAja tanayE  
vidha viDambana vadane vijaye  
vINA gAna daSa gamaka kriye  
(madhyama kAla sAhityam)  
madhu mada mOdita hRdayE sadayE  
mahA dEva sundarESa priyE  
madhu mura ripu sOdari SArOdari  
vidhi guru guha vaSankari Sankari

That is the religious lour associated with Meenakshi, and you can see that there is a reference to that two. In this compositions “Vijaye” he says “vijaye vidu vidambana vadhane vijaye” and “Vijaye” and then you have “veena gana dasa gamaka kriye” that is how he incorporates the name of the raga. He says that you can bring out the ten kinds of gamakas on the Veena.

Then the “Madyama kala sahitya” ends with the extremely avacative apathetic sankari, sam is anything that is auspicious, samkari who you bring out auspiciousness. He ends with that the composition ends on that note.

Now it is said, it is believed that Dikshitar passed away on a Deepavali and at the moment that his disciples were singing. He asked him to sing this composition and as he was saying “Meena lochini paasa mochini”, he left his mortal coil, that is what the spirit. Because “Pasha Mochini” is liberation from bondage. And that is how Dikshitar have lived and composed and that is why he left a very, very definite impact on Carnatic music.

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