

Appreciating Carnatic Music
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Lecture -48
Thyagaraja- His many moods – II

The trinity whether it is Tyagaraja or Dikshitar or Shama sashtri, they did not sing for the living. They did not use the music to make living, they did not seek royal patronage. And Thyaaraja he wanted to pursue music for higher goals “Nadopasana”, as he himself speak of in his many of his compositions. And there is a story that the king hearing of Tyagarajas proviso composer as Vaggeyakara.

He sends his men to request into compose the compositions into his praise, in the praise of the king. Tyagaraja refuses much to disappointment of his family especially elder brother. This is a story which may or may not be true. But there was song compositions, where Thyagaraja directly says that music is only to praise lord Rama and not to glorify egotists.

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pallavi
nidhi cAla sukhAmA rAmuni
sannidhi sEva sukhAmA ¹nijamuga palku manasA

anupallava
dadhI navanItI kshItasambh ²rasayO
dASarathi bhAjana bhajana sudhA rasamu ³rasayO (nidhi)

anubandha
⁴dama Sarama(sru) ganga mAnamu sukhamA
kandama dha-vishaya kIpa mAnamu sukhamA

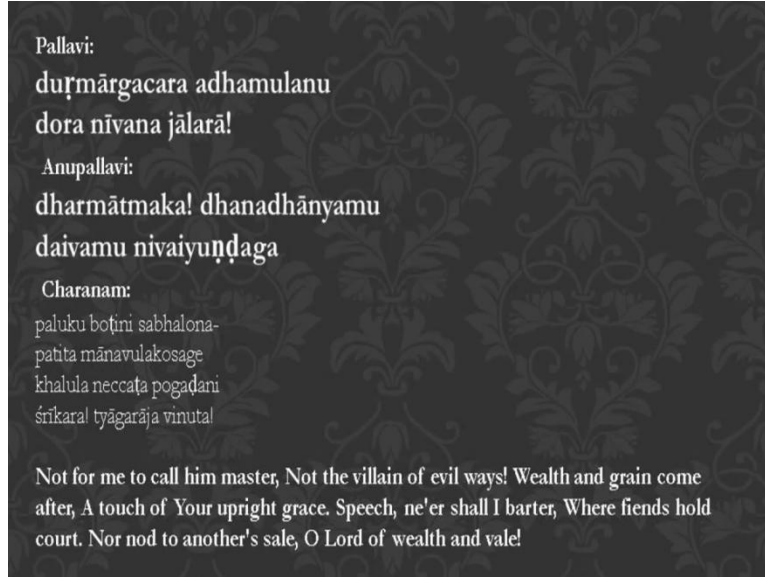
⁴mamata bandhana yuta nara stuti sukhAmA
⁵su-mati tyAgarAja nutuni kIrtana sukhAmA (nidhi)

Gist
O My Mind!
Tell me truthfully - whether wealth is very comforting or the service in the holy presence of Lord Sri rAma comforting? Are curd, fresh butter and milk etc. tasty or the nectarine juice of meditation and bhajana of dASarathi tasty? Is a bath in the (holy) river ganga called (practice of) self control and tranquility comforting or a bath in the water of well called the filthy, evil natured objects of senses comforting? Is extolling humans bound by egotism comforting or singing songs of the pure minded Lord praised by this tyAgarAja comforting?

This composition in kalyani is very famous it is “nithi chala suguma rmauni sannathi seva sugama nijamuka pallku manasa namatha bandanayuga narastuthi sugama”, this is the telling line. Narastuthi is phrase of am a man, am a mortal. That stuthi kind of phrase glorification is tide up to once to egotism and it is Thyaga egotism. He use to that kind of glorification is estrange and enmeshed “namatha mamthuva” that is bondage in once own ego.

That is what he may be using “namatha bandana yuga narastuthi sugama”, I will sing the praise of my lord which will free from this entanglement, I will not sing the glory of the king. In an extremely evocative composition in a minor raga “Ithisala sugama” is in raga kalyani one of the most popular widely heard songs in kalyani, which is a major raga.

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Pallavi:
duṛmārgacara adhamulanu
dora nīvana jālarā!

Anupallavi:
dharmātmaka! dhanadhānyamu
daivamu nivaiyuṅḡaga

Charanam:
paluku boṭini sabhalona-
patita mānavulakosage
khalula neccaṭa pogaḍani
śīkara! tyāgarāja vinuta!

Not for me to call him master, Not the villain of evil ways! Wealth and grain come
after, A touch of Your upright grace. Speech, ne'er shall I barter, Where fiends hold
court. Nor nod to another's sale, O Lord of wealth and vale!

He sings another song in the same tune in raga Ranjani, “durmargacara adhamulanu dora nivana jalara adhama” a low person, just because he is power or a musician. I will not call him a lord. I will not call him my durai. I will not call him my master. When you are the “dharmatmaka adhnadhanyamu” when you are there, why should I praise acknowledge another human as my master. (Music Starts: 04:05) (Music Ends: 06:53)

And then there are compositions, where he remorse the Stalinism of many around him. He says people in a sense, musicians who use music for fame or money they are just fools. They are probably they are to be pitied. But there are this people pose as if they have knowledge religious truth. But were in actuality they are charlatans.

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sarasIruh(A)nana rAma
samayamu brOva ¹cid-ghana

para bhAmalan(A)Sinci(y)annam(i)Di
pagalu ²rEyu sarasamADu vArin(o)lla (sara)

brAhmaNikamu bAya nIcula
bratuk(A)yen(a)di gAka(y)I kalilO
⁴brahmamaina mATala nErcukoni
baragEr(a)yya tyAgarAja nuta (sara)

Here again two very different ragas “Mughari”, which is a very heavy nuanced raga. He says this “brahmanikamu baya nicula bratukayenadi hakayikalilo brahmamaina matala nercukoni baragerayya tyagaraja nuta sarasiruhanana rama samayamu brova cid Ghana”

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O Lotus (sarasIruha) Faced (Anana) (sarasIruhAnana) Lord rAma! It is time (samayamu) to protect (brOva) me, O pure (ghana) (literally dense) intellect or consciousness (cid) (cid-ghana)!

I do not like (olla) (literally detest) (the company of) those (vArini) (vArinolla) who – coveting (ASinci) other women (or others' wives) (para bhAmalanu) and providing for them (annamu iDi) (annamiDi) (bhAmalanASinciannamiDi) (literally feed), indulge in frolics (sarasamADu) with them day (pagalu) and night (rEyu). Therefore, O Lotus Faced Lord rAma! O pure intellect or consciousness! it is time to protect me.

Having abandoned (bAya) the right method of living stipulated for brahmins (brAhmaNikamu), their way of life (bratuku) has become (Ayenu) that of lowly (nIcula); further (adi gAka) (bratukAyenadi)

O Lord (ayya); in this (I) (gAkayI) kali yuga, people flourish (baragEr(u)) (baragEr(ya)) having learnt (nErcukoni) vocabulary (mATala) connected with Supreme Lord (brahmamu aina) (brahmamaina);

O Lord praised (nuta) by this tyAgarAja! O Lotus Faced Lord rAma! It is time to protect me; O pure intellect or consciousness!

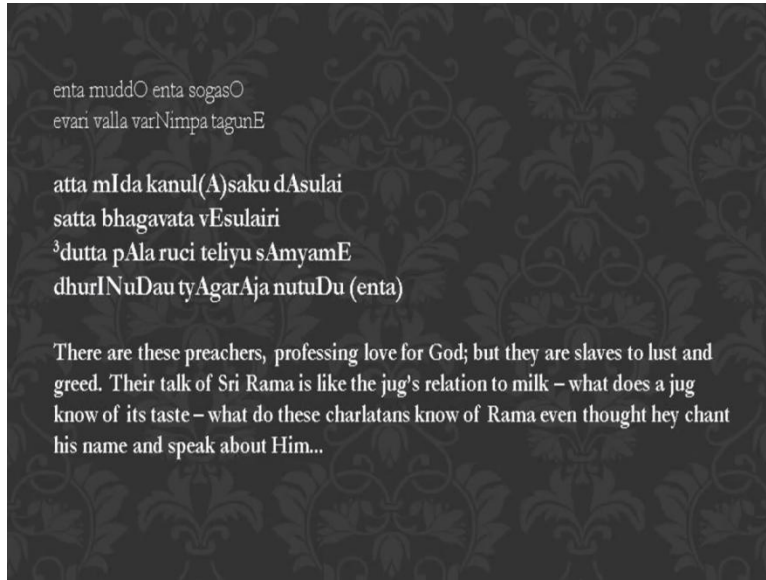
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And in another composition, a minor one this time “Bindumalini”. He says that look at the beauty and grace of lord Rama, why would you fault the charm of a women, as many of these charlatans to they have their name of their lord on their lips, but there mind is not with the lord.

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It is like what is a pot, know of the taste of milk pot is a container, but it knows not the taste of the milk. So also so the charlatans, they have their lord names on their lips, but they don't know the sweetness of his name. This is in Bindumalini. (Music Starts: 11:23) (Music Ends: 13:20). Though, in many of his compositions, again he speaks of Rama. Being actually Rama, being everything, one truth prevailing all, Rama is the ista deivatha.

Where it is ultimately on reality that pervades. All he says in everything “gagananila tejo-jala bhumayamagu” these are the five elements “mrgakhaga naga tarukotalalo” animals birds mountains and trees “sagunmulo vigunamulo satatamu sadhu tyagarajajadi asritulalo paramaatmudu velige muccata baga telusukore”

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enta muddO enta sogasO
 evani valla varNimpa tagunE

atta mI da kanul(A)saku dAsulai
 satta bhagavata vESulairi
³dutta pAla ruci teliyu sAmyamE
 dhurINu Dau tyAgarAja nutuDu (enta)

There are these preachers, professing love for God; but they are slaves to lust and greed. Their talk of Sri Rama is like the jug's relation to milk – what does a jug know of its taste – what do these charlatans know of Rama even though they chant his name and speak about Him...

In another song he says with the same theme “gnananu saharaga paramathamudu jeevathmadu pathinalu lokamudu” won't you give me wisdom to ultimately see all that is one.

(Music Start Time: 14:52) (Music end time: 17:06)

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pallavi
 jnAnam(o)saga rAda garuDa gamana vAdA

anupallavi
 nI nAMamu cE nA madi ¹nir-malam(ai)nadi (jnAna)

caraNam
 paramAtmuDu jIvAtmuDu ²padu nAlugu lOkamulu
 nara ³kinnara kimpurushulu nArad(A)di munulu
⁴paripUrNa nish-kaLanka niravadhi sukha dAyaka
 vara tyAgarAj(A)rcita vAramu ⁵tAn(a)nE (jnAna)

O Perfect (paripUrNa)! O Blemish-less (nish-kaLanka)! O Bestower (dAyaka) uninterrupted (nir-avadhi) bliss (sukha) (literally comfort)! O Holy (vara) Lord worshipped (arcita) by this tyAgarAja (tyAgarAjarcita)! O Lord who rides garuDa! Won't you condescend to bestow (on me) the true wisdom that (anE) indeed You (tAnu) (tAnanE) are ever (vAramu) – the Supreme-Self (paramAtmuDu), the Individual-Self (jIvAtmuDu), all the fourteen (padu nAlugu) worlds (lOkamulu), men (nara), celestial beings (musicians) kinnara, kimpurusha (kimpurushulu), sages (munulu) nArada etc. (Adi) (nAradAdi)? Or is it contentuous?

He calls Rama you are “paripoorana nish kalanga paripoorana” your are full, “nish kalanga” without any flaws, “niravathi sugha thayaga” you can alone bestow endless further most joy and I am besieging you, thyagaraja is besieging you, would you give gnana or knowledge. (Singing Starts: 17:40) (Singing Ends: 18: 24)

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Thyagaraja has composed many kritis. He has also composed, what are called “Divya Nama Sankeertana” these are different structure have the pallavi, probably anupallavi and many charanas for the same structure, very often just pallavi followed by anupallavi followed by many charanas, these are actually meant for group singing. For the one person leading, since all charanas will be in the same tune, it is easy for repetition and for group singing.

There are some very beautiful compositions among these and another set of compositions are is called “Utsava Sampradaya Kritis”.

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Now utasa here referees to temple festivals and these compositions described the various activities around the lord through the day.

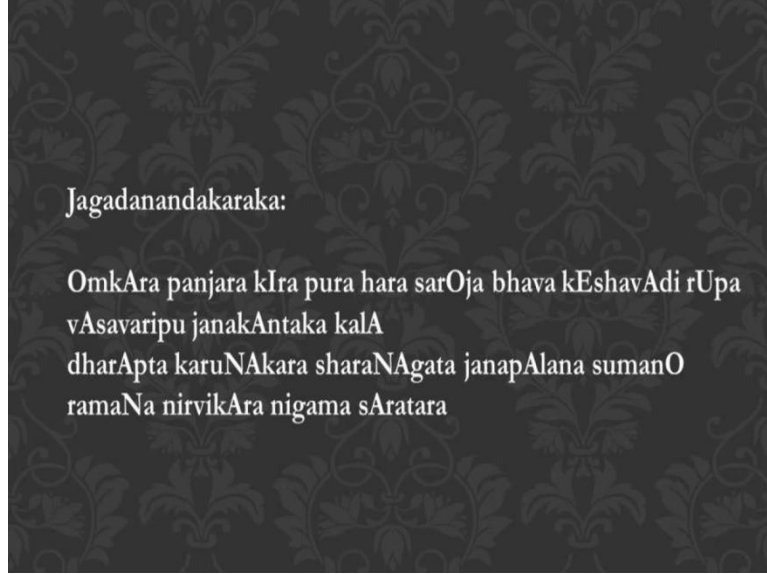
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Thyagarajas “Pancharathanas” very famous pancha rathana here means five gems these are compositions, where we have pallavi followed by an anupallave and about eight to ten charanas. Now each charanas has a swara to sing, the swaras first and then the sahiththya, these five compositions in the five ghana ragas Natai, Gowle, Arabhi, Varli and Sri. And interestingly each of them in a different mood.

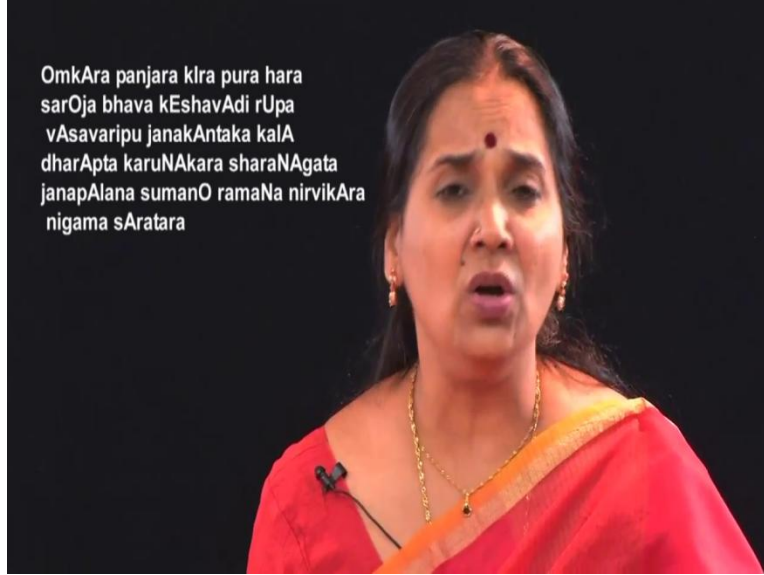
Natai pancharathanam “jagatha nandha karaga” it is simply singing the glory of Rama, he addresses Rama with many epithets.

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The whole song is a celebration of Rama. He says “jagadanandakaraka” you are the joy of the entire world, you bestow, you are the reason for joy in this entire world “jagath anada karaka gaganathipa sat kulaja raja rajaswara gaganathipa sat kulaja ganathipa” is the sun Rama is that he belongs to the “Suriya Vamsam” and so on. The whole compositions it is in Sanskrit and it is all of them are epithets, addressing Rama, “omkara panjara kir pura hara saroja bhava” (Music Starts: 21:29) (Music Ends: 22: 21)

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The second panjarathana is in a mood of penitents. It is almost despondent, where Thyagaraja asks Rama, how are you going to save me, such a sinner I am. Then that is appropriate that the raga that such a mood expressed very well “nonoku vala” is sing in the raga Gowle. The third panjarathana is actually has Krishna is centered figure, fourth is in varili in which Thyagaraja is raveling beautify of lord Rama “kanakana ruchira” as I keep gaying at you, beauty seem to grow that is the gist of his compositions.

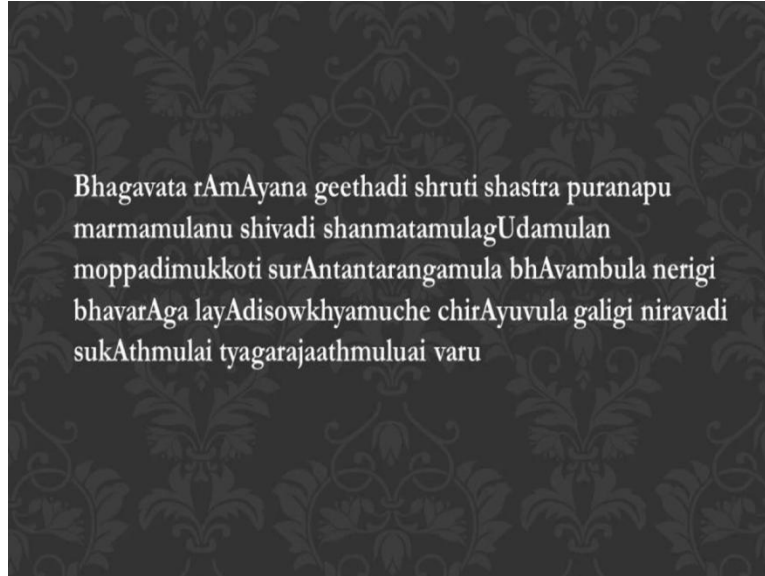
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The fifth we will perhaps very deservedly, very famous composition is “endaro mahanubhavudu antharigi vandhanam” the story goes that Thyagaraja is visited by great musician from kerala

musician called “Shatkala Govindathamara” and seeing Govindhamaras musicianship Thyagaraja set of composed this.

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Which says that where ever these great souls “Mahanubhavudu”, I bow to all of them now, his idea of mahanubahvu is very, very stringent one, you are not, we are not likely to come across many. He says “bhagavata ramayana geethadi shruti shastra puranapu marmamulanu shivadi shanmatamulagudamulan moopathumukodi surantantarangamula bhavamula nerigi bhavaraga layadi sowkhyamu chechirayuvula galiga niravadi sukathmulai thyagarajaathmuluai varu”

(Music Starts: 24:24) (Music Ends: 25:49)

If you look at composition, conceptions of maganubhavudu a great soul is indeed very stringent. It is very lightly Thyagaraja himself met that standard.