

## THE RELATION AMONG MUSIC, MIND AND DEVOTION IN TYAGARAJA KRITIS

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### ABSTRACT

Tyagaraja's philosophy of life is closely associated with the concept of true devotion to Almighty. Philosophy is considered as the view of life. Music and mind, these two terms are closely interconnected. Basically, the concept of mind is related with emotion and feeling. Different feelings are emanating from mind and finally it gets its true colour through excellent Kritis adorned by excellent Ragas. Tyagaraja speaks to the society about the marga, the Bhakti marga, to attain moksha. To get or to attain real moksha one should possess a purified mind. First, according to Tyagaraja, we should worship our own mind. This is known as the worship of mind or Manasa pooja in a broad view, mind is considered as the holy place.

Methodology Employed: Analytical method is employed in this study.

**Keywords:** Tyagaraja, Kriti, Bhakthi, Japa, Tapa, Guna, Dhyana, Raga, Tala, Sangeetha

### TYAGARAJA'S PERSPECTIVE ON MUSIC, MIND AND DEVOTION

All the Tyagaraja Kritis depicts the different mental states in different human situations. And he also advises certain definite ways to overcome the trials and tribulations of human life, sense and with his matchless aesthetic poetic excellence, he is portraying human life, the sphere of human activities and different angles of vision in his Kritis. His presentations of this type are the unique/rich contributions to the mankind. Mind, Meditation, devotion, and music have an inseparable relation in between. This has been explained with ample lucidity by his numerous Kritis. We can see a passionately and emotionally charged relationship existing among these three areas of musical significance. By music and meditation, Tyagaraja intends to mean the power of control that one has over his mind to enjoy music in a meaningful way, the 7 Musical notes (saptha swaras) should be aligned with the Sruti. The more the notes are aligned with the Sruti, the more will be its attractivity and acceptability. Tyagaraja compares this concept of Sruti to human mind and its purity.

Tyagaraja believes the nearer the mind to virtues, the greater will be its purification. In fact, by empowerment of mind, in his different kritis, he tries to explain the different moods and expressions he has in relation to his state of mind. You can see him asking questions to his own mind and finding out solutions by himself. The music with complete Sruti alignment will soothe the ears of the hearer and that will be a consolation and solace to any weak and unsteady mind. Each raga has a subtly distinct expression and beauty. They have different impact and influence on the hearer. The power of influence that each raga has on the hearer depends mainly on the state of mind he has at that time. The speciality of Tyagaraja Kritis that keeps them a class apart from the compositions of other vaggayakaras in their inexplicable and beautiful combination of lyrics and music. That is the reason why a connoisseur is more appreciated and entranced at Tyagaraja Kritis. We can see the notation of

the Kritis are amazingly arranged in accordance with the lyrics, even the selection of raga is decided by the mood and expression of sahitya. His personal experience and state of mind has been a great influencing factor in the creation of each of his Kriti. The different situations with this spiritual and poignant state of mind are clearly reflected in these kritis. They include (Sthobhavasthakal), questions, finding answers himself, anxieties, and the like, all of which convey a vivid and clear mission as expected by Tyagaraja. The main theme of his Kritis is how we can pacify and calm down our mind in difficult situations.

The lyrics (sahitya) have a very important role to play to reach out theme intended by the vageyakara to the connoisseur. When we want to learn a Kriti, we should try to understand the meaning of lyrics. Here we can see the merit of Tyagaraja kritis which convey the spirit and life of Kritis. The expressions given to each part of the Kriti is equally enjoyed and appreciated by the musician and connoisseur so naturally that they begin to feel they are a team and all of us reach to peculiar state of ecstasy where we see nothing unnatural, but beauty and spiritual sublimation. In every Tyagaraja Kriti you can see devotional spirit and musical excellence getting more and more united and unified. Psychology is very much related to the term emotion. Emotional out bursting emanating from the mind of a true devotee having well musical background leads to the formation of a musical form. Music and mind are interrelated based on emotion. Hearing a good music creates a serene mood in the mind of a music lover. Both the performer and hearer get involved in a particular state of communication, by which each of them enjoys the healing power of the music. It is a factor which deserves detailed evaluation that the relationship between felt and performed emotions in performing musicians. According to Tyagaraja a performer should be fully involved and should have a deep insight or should be able to penetrate the layers of the melodic petals of a raga. Then only he can create such a state of mood in the minds of the felt or audience in order to make the musical communication more enjoyable and spiritual. He should be able to make a spiritual union with the audience. He clearly put forward this view in the charana of the famous Kriti, Nadasudharasa, in Arabhi raga. In the charana of the famous kriti, tyagaraja clearly emphasizes the need to have a good relationship between the performer and the audience. - ‘sarasa sangathi sandarbhamu kavagina munura ‘

### **SANGEETHA JNANAMU BHAKTI VINA-DHANYASI-ADI TALA**

The main theme in this Kriti is the inevitable relationship of music and devotion (Sangeetha and Bhakti) depending on the form of art that one is interested / devoted in. It is a must to have a strong spirit of devotion to it more than anything else. The performance and enjoyment of any art form requires a true sense of Bhakti to it. Here we can observe two different spheres of devotion. In short, the very word Bhakti has different connotations in different contexts. Considering one aspect of Bhakti-the innocent, selfless dedication with no expectation of acquisition or personal gains – that itself is denoted by the presence of an immaculate mind. Only from an immaculate mind, you can expect grace and true devotion. This spirit of Bhakti generated through an immaculate mind is so apparent and extra –

ordinarily outstanding in every Tyagaraja Kriti or that is the stamp of Thyagaraja creations. The unique speciality of Tyagaraja Kritis is the matchless mixing and combination of musical notes (that determines the tune of the Kriti) according to the variations and suitability of sahitya (lyrics). Each state of mind with its special nature of Bhava is represented by the support of the most appropriate plans.

### **MANASU SWADHEENA MAINA-SANKARABHARANA- MISRACHAAPPU TALA**

He says one who has absolute control over his mind, what need is mantra or yogic powers? This line indicates the importance of the mental control. He simply clarifies the universal doctrine that the power of mental control stands as the decisive factor in the character of a Human being. This mental control derives from the concept of mental purity. Only person who has innocent or stainless mind can easily take a decision in right time in a right way. Tyagaraja says all rituals such as Japa, Tapa, and Dhyana etc are intended to exhilarate the intensity of the power of mental control. According to Tyagaraja, to acquire power for mental purity is a process in a life span of a human being. We are all living in a disturbed atmosphere, and are always suffering from various vicious sensual problems. Therefore, Tyagaraja suggests the right path, that is to confine into the power of the concept of RAMA, it is according to Him, the utmost solace.

In Anu Pallavi Tyagaraja says for one who realises that he is not the body where is the need for making penance? He illustrates the concept of an individual soul and the universal soul. (He speaks to humanity that the soul will be departed from body after the demise) through this line he indicates the importance of human birth and life. In this mortal life one should spent his life time for the sincere worship to Rama. Though in general meaning, he questions as where is the need for Mantra or Tantra for one who has. absolute control over his mind. Ultimately, he suggests that it is a good device to get mind to be purified Though this fantastic Kriti Tyagaraja intends to project the futility of the mere worship without the firm vision to control the mind. Tyagaraja kritis are the real examples of the different stages of emotions emerging from the mind of a true devotee who always immersed in the ocean of music. His kritis are the emotional out bursting of disturbed mind, and finally he himself gets convinced that the Rama is the paraphragma or the whole universe, and he sincerely worships for a peaceful and delightful merging of his soul with the universal soul. He says, for one who realised that this universe-is a maya, and free from vicious sense – enjoyments, what need is there to be worried with the cycle of birth and death? And will not be enticed by women, nor will he be tempted by wealth. One who free from vicious sensual indulgences there can be no fear of the future.

This Kriti has been composed and set in the raga Sankarabharanam. The essence of the Kriti asserts that when the mind can be brought under control, we are all powerful and therefore the necessity for other Tantras (methods) does not arise. The Raga “Sankarabharanam” with

its serenity and magniloquence has rightly been chosen by Tyagaraja for the above Kriti. All the plans (sangathees) are slow tempo based – after a lot of ransacking of mind through myriad routes of human thinking what he comes to conclude is the truth – if only one could control his mind – that is his monologue. We can see the slow-paced tempo plans in another Kriti, which begins with “Dwaithamu sukhama” this Kriti is composed in the raga Reetigoula. The concept of whether ‘Dwaitha’ or ‘Adwaitha’ is correct, of which the answer tends to become confusing or difficult, becomes the main theme of the Kriti. Tyagaraja has been successful in deciding the apt plans which can accommodate the mood of the Kriti. Such a beautiful coincidence is said to be the hallmark of tyagaraja Kriti. The most predominant purpose of music is to please the mind. Musician brings into the heart of the connoisseurs’ different types of emotions or feelings through the musical compositions set in different ragas.

The most dominant factors that please or soothe our mind are music and meditation. Here the meditation done with the help and support of music will give a different pleasant experience. ‘Japa kodi Gunam Dhyanam’ as far as a man is concerned his mind has a pivotal position which is so abstract and subtle. Music has this power to motivate and influence such an abstract mind shows how noble music is.

## CONCLUSION

The compositions of Saint Tyagaraja –prime among the trinity of Carnatic music, scale a lofty height for their literary as well as musical quality. His works which touch the various facets of human life illumines the world of music, even to the day. The theme of his works is his own experiences-the joys and sorrows of life. The most endearing features of his kritis are his perspectives on the vagaries of human mind. Through his verse he endorses harmony, purity, and concentration of the mind. It is a tedious task to control a distraught mind. Saint Tyagaraja refers to the ‘capricious mind’ in many of his kritis. He employs his creativity for the sanctification of the mind which he believes is of cardinal importance.

Nearly a hundred of his compositions are contemplations on the vagaries of human mind. Almost all his kritis are questions, attempting to deliberate with his own mind. Even his concept of the divines integrated with his preoccupation with the purity of mind. Rama for him was not merely an incarnation of the Almighty in the singer’s mind Rama epitomizes everything good and pure. He equates tranquillity of the mind with eternal bliss and music as the way or path to it. Devotion and music for him are deeply interwoven and inseparable. Through devotion Tyagaraja offers himself for virtuosities is in this state that his works become exceptionally simple and lucid. Simplicity is an outstanding feature Tyagaraja composition. The rarest of Rags through his kritis communicate in simple terms with the listener, which no other composer can easily claim. His vast yet simple presentation which debates with his own mind without attempting to criticize any external body, can be seen in each of his kritis which deal with the mind. The Kriti ‘Manasu swadheena’ in the Raga

Sankarabharana is a prominent one related to the concept of mind. He tries to give a message that if a man acquires the strength to control his mind, then he has no use for 'Mantra or Tantra.' Another version of this aspect can be seen in the Kriti 'Manasu nipa Sakthi Leka' in the Abhogi Raga, here Tyagaraja elaborates that no offerings made in prayer will suffice if one has no control over the mind. In the Kriti 'Sangeeta jnana, Dhanyasi Raga, Tyagaraja speaks about the nobility of devotion, to the mind. In 'Dhyana me varamaina 'Raga Dhanyasi, He says meditation with a lofty aim purifies the mind completely. His Kriti 'Nidhi Sala Sukhama' in Kalyani Raga, Tyagaraja portrays man's inclination to accumulate wealth. Tyagaraja through his kritis related to the concept of mind intends to confine the wavering nature of human mind and his ideal doctrines for an ideal mind, which is of vital importance in the human life.

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