



RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract

Maharashtra is the land of saints. Many religions, sects and their followers have been living together in this land for centuries. Saints are the coordinators between religions and their followers. The Marathi speaking saints contributed to the growth of Marathi culture according to their respective religions, Kannada speaking saints as well as Southern Sufis contributed. It means not only Marathi, Kannada but other languages also contributed equally. In this form, a beautiful reflection of unity has emerged in Marathi culture. And when this unity is presented to the masses with musical accompaniment, a supernatural ring forms around it. That is why religious leaders took the support of music to establish their religious traditions in the society. According to each religion and its sect and creed, various worship methods and music of various deities have been harmoniously combined, and religion and music have been going hand in hand from generation to generation. This shows how great is the role of music in religion and cult.

Keywords: Religion, Spirituality, Saints, Bhakti, Culture, Sect.

INTRODUCTION

The characteristics of the land of Maharashtra are that many religions, sects and their followers have been united by hand in hand since centuries. An important link between different religions, sects and their followers is the saint of that religion or sect. The aim of these saints was and is to achieve the goal of world peace along with world welfare by thinking of universal brotherhood, that even though our religions and sects are different, not only human beings but also animals are one, by awakening common sense among the masses. Jain, Shaiva, Varkari, Mahanubhava, Nath, Samarth, Dutt, Nagesh etc. in the saint tradition of Maharashtra. There are saints of many religions/sects. Not only this, they also belong to different castes. From the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to today's twenty-first century, these saints have been guiding the masses through continuous heart-to-heart communication through music. They are trying to simplify the philosophy of religion by removing its complexities. And this philosophy of religion can be conveyed easily and simply through music and this is exactly what the saints observed because music alone has the power to directly affect the minds of the masses. That's why these Saints taught the common people in their own vernacular the way of knowledge, way of karma, way of devotion etc. Different ways of Sadhana are being told through music.

RELIGION AND MUSIC

The main goal of religion is to uplift all living beings worldly and spiritually by teaching them the truth. Today, religion has become a way of worshipping God. Various methods of worship, archana, prayer are called dharma. This kind of definition of Dharma is found in ancient texts. From this religion is not something natural but it lives under the protection of the holder. Hence the propagation of a religion depends on the saints or followers of that religion. It is found that the saints mainly resorted to music to convey the philosophy of their religion to the masses. Because if this philosophy is to reach the common people, only if they understand it in their own dialect and in an interesting way, the number of followers of that religion will increase, and perhaps that is why religion and music have been inextricably linked since ancient times.

From ancient times till today, devotional music has influenced the masses. In this, religions that have been newly created with the passage of time could not stay away from devotional music. Apart from Maharashtra, the prevalence of music can be seen in other provinces as well. The diction contained in tone and rhythm has a remarkable effect on the mind of the people, that is why all matters of knowledge or instruction are found more in verse than in prose. E.g. Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata, Ramcharit Manas etc. That is why every religion irrespective of religion or creed has used music as a powerful medium to propagate their religion. As a whole, music cannot be separated from religion. Both are complementary to each other.





RELIGION IN MAHARASHTRA

There are different religions and sects in Maharashtra. Though their philosophy, ethics, worship system is different, their ultimate goal is enlightenment and altruism of the masses. Therefore, even after many foreign invasions over the centuries, religion and culture continued to exist. The credit for this goes to the Sant-Acharya of that sect. In particular, the tradition of Hindu religion and culture passed through this fiery light and came to fruition only because of the unremitting efforts, devotion, faith, tolerance and pure conduct of these saints. Different types of religions and sects are seen in Maharashtra. People of different religions have been celebrating hand in hand in Maharashtra for hundreds of years according to their religious customs. In which mainly Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jain etc. People of many such religions are living happily. Every religion has its own different customs, traditions and customs. By following which people of various religions have come to connect with music according to the guidance of the saints of that religion. Because according to every religion, their main purpose is to worship God and achieve Moksha or God through devotion and music. It has to be said that the characteristics of Maharashtra are that people of different religions are worshiping God through music according to their traditions without any debate. Let us consider the religious music of some selected religions found in Maharashtra.

HINDUISM AND MUSIC

Hinduism is an ancient religion and since time immemorial the work of cultivating religious traditions through music is found in this religion. Among the many ways of attaining God in Hinduism, Bhaktimarga is considered special. Because not every person can become a yogi, a sadhu or a penitent, the path of bhakti is useful for the masses. Bhakti means worshiping, chanting or glorifying one's worshiper with faith or belief. That is why the path of Bhaktimarga can be considered as the path of music. Chanting of mantras, chanting of riches, instruments played on the occasion of yadnya etc. The use of this type of music is evident in religious activities.

The relationship, customs and traditions of the Hindus of Maharashtra with religious music and when considering the religious music of Hinduism in Maharashtra, some major sects have to be considered. Eg - Varkari Panth, Mahanubhava Panth, Shaiva Panth, Shakt Panth etc.

VARKARI PANTH AND MUSIC

It is not possible to say exactly when the Varkari Panth originated. However, the tradition of Varkari Panth and its devotional music seems to be around the last 700 years. Saint Dnyaneshwar composed the book 'Bhavarth Dipika' in complete ovibaddha and suitable for singing. On the basis of this book, it is mentioned that the women of that time used to sing. Even after Sant Dnyaneshwar, it is seen that such beautiful verses were composed by saints in Marathi. Varkari Panth considers Vithoba of Pandharpur is an adorable deity, many saints from Saint Dnyaneshwar to Saint Tukaram Maharaja have done Abhang, Gaulani, Bharude etc. in their own way. They composed different types of compositions and enlightened the masses through kirtan accompanied by tal, veena and mridanga on the abhanga, and achieved spiritual upliftment. It is a Varkari Panth that embodies good character, piety, mercy, virtue and ethics. Jagadguru Tukaram Maharaj performed the same rites on the masses through his abhanga. Varkari Panth has done the work of bringing the philosophy of Hinduism to common people through various compositions that can be understood and appreciated by simple and common people. Varkari Panth is a very important sect of Maharashtra. And music has a unique importance in this cult.

MAHANUBHAVA PANTH AND MUSIC

The Mahanubhava Panth is also an important sect in the religious tradition of Maharashtra. The Mahanubhava Panth emerged in the late 12th century. Sri 'Chakradhar Swami' created the sect of Mahanubhava based on the





two pure principles of devotion and knowledge after closely observing the political, cultural and religious events of that time in Maharashtra and the arrival of Muslims from the north. Swami traveled to many places in Maharashtra and created a large family of disciples and through them he tried to spread the philosophy of this sect to the common people at the grassroots level by including the Shudra ati shudra people. Verse as much as prose have been produced in this sect. In this, a Marathi saint named Mahdamba became a poetess. She has told the story of Shri Krishna Rukmini marriage through the songs 'Dhavle'. Lilacharitra is the first prose book and Dhavale is the first devotional poem. After that many books like Murtiprakash, Satigrantha, Dnyanprabodh, Ridhipurvarnan, Udhavagita were produced in this sect. Along with that, there are many artyas, bhajans, abhangas, palnagita, bharuds, folk songs, padas etc. Many saints composed poetry for musical genres. This sect also uses music through hymns and sermons. This community, absorbed in Krishna Bhakti as a whole, is seen to be self-elevating with the help of music.

VIRASHAIVA PANTH AND MUSIC

Virashaiva Panth also known as Lingayat sect. Lord Shiva is the main deity of Virashaivas. Some scholars believe that the Virashaiva sect was founded by Mahatma Basaveshwara in the twelfth century, while some scholars believe that the sect existed even before Basaveshwara. But it is certain that the Virshaiva Panth is an ancient sect and Mahatma Basaveshwar infused it with new consciousness. Although the origin and spread of this cult is in Karnataka, it is seen that it has been propagated and spread to a large extent in Maharashtra. Like other Marathi saints, the Shaiva sect also has a sense of devotion. Also, people are enlightened through kirtans, bhajans etc. accompanied by tal, veena and mridanga. A saint poet named Siddha Rameshwar passed away in Maharashtra. At the same time, a saint poet named Sri Manmath Swami also became a member of this sect. The book 'Paramarhasya' written by him is famous. At the same time, he has also composed many abhangs. On the whole, in this sect, like the Varkari panth, there is a great propagation of music through bhajans and kirtanas.

MUSLIM RELIGION AND MUSIC

Along with Hinduism, Muslims are also present in Maharashtra in large numbers. As such, Sufi saints first came to South India in the thirteenth century. Aurangabad, Paithan, Daulatabad, Khultabad were the major centers of these Sufi saints in Maharashtra. Moezuddin and Nizamuddin first spread the Sufi sect in Maharashtra. And a Sufi musical tradition arose in the name of this sect.

Generally, all Muslims, i.e. people of Islam, consider the book 'Quran' as their holy book. The method of worshiping the God in the Muslim religion i.e. 'Allah' is also seen through music. Just as bhajan is very important in Varkari panth, in Islam it is important to pray to Allah. The daily goings-on in the mosque underscores the connection of the Muslim faith with music. Qawwali is the poetry that we hear in a specific song form about the different saints who have been formed in the Muslim religion as well as about Allah. That is, music is seen to be strongly supported in order to convey the thoughts of the Prophet to the common people in the Muslim religion as well as to worship God.

BUDDHISM AND JAINISM AND MUSIC

Along with Maharashtra, the followers of both Buddhism and Jainism consider their pioneers as gods and worship them by setting up idols of those gods in temples. They erect chaityas or stupas and install their idols in them. Jains believe that twenty-four have become Tirthakaras, while Buddhists believe that twenty-five have become Buddhas. The spread of both religions can be seen in Maharashtra.

When we consider literature in Buddhism, we can see the closeness related to music. Palitripitaka, an important book of Buddhism, uses the words Gandharva and Sangeet for music. Along with singing, musical instruments and dancing, ballad singing has also been mentioned. Today, many Buddhist monks who propagate this





religion are seen chanting Trisharan to their followers. The sounds of music can also be heard at the place where Buddhist monks live. Keeping aside the beauty of music, it is seen that the Buddhists use the valuable music only for devotional upliftment.

Lord Mahavir propagated and propagated Jainism. It is seen that music was used religiously during his time also. Singing, playing music and dancing are still organized on the occasion of various festivals. Even when Lord Mahavir is singing the shruti, it is seen that he is doing it through songs accompanied by instruments. In this way, in Jainism music is propagated and propagated in different strata of society.

REQUIREMENTS OF RELIGIOUS MUSIC

In fact, music is an independent spiritual practice. But still people of different religions have achieved religious advancement by using music in their own way. What should the common man do? how to do Who should see? Such doubts arise. Answers to all these have been given by religious preachers of their religion through religious music. Not only in Maharashtra, music of every religion in India is seen to be related to folk music somewhere or the other. Because the origin of music seems to have originated somewhere from folk music. It shows that most of the religious musical compositions have been passed down orally from one generation to the next. Therefore, on the one hand, there is a need for religious music for the promotion and spread of music and also for the people of different religions in Maharashtra to present those compositions in their own way and live in hand in hand.

CONCLUSION

If the water falling from the sky falls anywhere on the ground, it eventually reaches the sea through streams and rivers. Similarly, although music in different religions may appear to have different currents, they all ultimately lead to the same power. Even though the basic forms of music found in different religions in Maharashtra are different, the main purpose of all of them is the same, which is to reach and reach the divine. Therefore, Maharashtra has not been an exception to the fact that music accompanied by religion and religion accompanied by music have been traveling together for centuries and there is no doubt that this will continue in the future.

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