

Tiruvarur after whom the saint-composer was named, the house at Tiruvarur where the saint was born, the street and house at Tiruvaiyar where the saint lived, the samadhi of the saint and the Rama Idol worshipped by the saint, as also articles on other music subjects.

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SRI TYAGARAJA AND OTHER VAGGEYAKARAS

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A hundred years have rolled by since that great savant of carnatic music, Sri Tyagaraja, left his mortal coil. But his luminous spirit is ever with us acting as a safe counsellor in our life beset with perplexities and vicissitudes of a tangled nature, guiding the crazy world against unavailing pursuits in life and exhorting it to love the Lord and earn the Eternal Bliss. By a mere utterance of his name we are wrapt in a magic spell as it were and his divine personality beaming with his ardent love of God and deep concern for humanity, the vast array of the thrilling incidents of his life of devotion, the imperishable services rendered to the world—all these make an instantaneous flash upon the inward eye and we are led to tears of ecstasy. Nothing is more sacred and nothing is more imperative on our part than to cherish his revered memory and place our humble homage at his noble feet for all the good he has done for us.

As the glorious career of Sri Tyagaraja is too well known to all to necessitate a re-narration, I shall abstain from harping on the same note. On the other hand, I shall, in the following few pages, endeavour to show how Sri Tyagaraja is an off-spring of Dasakuta and how he stands along with Sri Purandara Das in an undisputed position of cultural pre-eminence. This I shall do, first, by depicting a picture of comparison between Sri Purandara Das and Sri Tyagaraja and, next, by contrasting the latter with the other leading Vaggeyakaras such as Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar and Sri Sama Sastriar.



In our exalted enthusiasm to extol the immortal services rendered to the world of Carnatic music by the celebrated Musical Trinity, we are often apt to forget the mighty role played by Sri Purandara Das. That the latter is the undisputed Karnataka Sangita Sarvabhauma and that he is the sole author of inspiration for the subsequent composers including the Trinity are facts admitted on all hands.

Even the most superficial survey of the life and work of Sri Purandara Das and of Sri Tyagaraja makes it amply apparent that the career of Sri Tyagaraja is essentially a remanifestation of that of Sri Purandara Das. Both of them dedicated their lives solely to the services of God and by their ardent and unflinching devotion to Him they attained the invaluable and peerless Bhagavatsakshatkaram (Aparoksha). Unlike the Yogis and Sanyasis who attained salvation by casting off the bonds of the world, and leading a secluded life of devotion to God, Purandara Das and Tyagaraja lived amidst the world but unattached to it, and succeeded in attaining what the Yogis and Sanyasis did in their own way. Their life was essentially an illustration of the practicability of the motto "Yisabeku Iddu Jaisabeku; Irabeku Iradirabeku (Be in and yet be out of the world)". Not satisfied with their own salvation, both of them felt keenly for the evil-stricken humanity with all its endless vice and strenuously worked for its reformation and uplift by means of their incessant and spontaneous flow of marvellous compositions pregnant with the philosophy of life. The medium they both chose to carry on their mission was no other than the art of arts—divine music. Realising the truth of innumerable sayings like "Naham Vasami Vaikunthe Na Yogi Hridaye Ravau; Madbhakta Yatra Gayanti Tatra Tishthami Narada", realising that it was only through divine music that the divine grace could easily be achieved, that it was only through the all pervading influence of music which has been so nicely brought out in the couplet "Sisur Vetti Pasur Vetti Vetti Ganarasam Phanee" that the philosophy of life could easily be driven home to the hearts of the masses around them, they resorted to music as the vehicle of the gospel. The hundreds and thousands of their compositions are verily an easily



graspable rendering of the very terse philosophical treatises like Upanishads that remain a sealed book to men of no exceptional calibre and it is on this score that their compositions are most deservedly termed the Purandaropanishat and the Tyagabrahmopanishat. It is possible to prove that every philosophical dictum contained in each of their innumerable compositions has its source in the Upanishads and Puranas. But I would like to content myself by placing before you one or two instances. The Keertanams—Hariya dasarige sariyunte and Gangadi sakala tirtha are based on *Darsanadeva Sadhava* (Bhagavata) and 'Yatra-chyutodara kathaprasangah tatraiva Ganga Yamunacha Venee.' The same ideas have been rendered in Telugu by Tyagaraja in his *kritis-Ramabhakti Samrajya* and *Dhyaname varamaina gangasnanamu*.

Thus, both Sri Purandara Das and Sri Tyagaraja start from a common plane to arrive at a common goal.

The semblance between the two masters becomes overwhelmingly striking when we make a comparative study of their compositions.

Broadly speaking, their compositions can be classed under nine categories.

1. In the first place, there are compositions which are records of the unique instances in their life. To this category belong Kirtanas like *Yindinadinave Subhadinavu*.....Purandara vitthalana sandarsanavenagaytu; Kanugontini Sri Ramuni- (Kirtanas referring to their Aparoksha); Ninna nodi Dhanyanade Srinivasa, Teratiyagarada (Kirtanas referring to incidents at Tirupati); Muyyake muyya tiritto (reference to incident at Pandarpur) and Naradagurusvami (Kirtana in token of Sri Narada maharishi's blessings on Sri Tyagaraja).

2. Secondly, there are compositions which portray the interesting incidents and episodes in the Puranas. *Ninyako Ninna Hangyako*; *Haridarshanakagi Naradaru baralue*, *Ambe-galikkutali* (Dasavatara Varnana); *Yantaninne vernintunu sabaribhagya*, *Majanaki*, *Badalikadira* are examples of this class of compositions.



3. Thirdly, there are numerous compositions which vividly reveal how keenly they were moved by and how they evinced heart-felt pity on the corrupt world in the grip of Arishadvargas, Dharmakke Kaibaradikala, Dudukugala are instances in point.

4. Next, there are compositions which convey to the world the basic philosophic truths and the golden codes of morality. "Samsaravemha Bhagyavirali kamsari neneva saubhagyavirali manava shodisabeku, holati holaya yivaravaralla, Nambadiru, yideha, yaru sangada bahavarilla; Samsaralita yemayya, Manasunilpa sakti, Yentaranithanakenta poni,-compositions of this type are full of philosophy. Yidu Bhagya, Harikotta kalakke, Muthaideyagirabeku; Santamuleka Saukyamu ledu, Bhuddi radu, are some of the innumerable compositions pregnant with moral.

5. Compositions that belong to this category are mainly devotional, exposing to light all the nine kinds of devotion (Nava vidha Bhakti). Of the several Kirtanas that fall to this group one for each type of devotion is taken from each of these authors and given below :—

<i>Navavidha Bhakti.</i>	<i>Purandara Das's Kritis.</i>	<i>Thyagaraja's Compositions.</i>
i. Sravanam.	Kathasravanamado.	Ramakatha
ii. Kirtanam.	Harinamakirtane.	Atade Dhanyadu namakirtana parudu.
iii. Smaranam.	Smarnevonde salade.	Smarane Sukham.
iv. Padasevanam.	Bide ninna padava.	Sri Rama Padama.
v. Archanam.	Karagaleradu ninna narchisali.	Namakusuma.
vi. Vandanam.	Saranuninagembe.	Vandanamu Raghu
vii. Dasyam	Dasanamadiko	Dasoham
viii. Atmanivedanam	Matapitaru Ninage ande maridarena	Svantamunu saroja- munu samarpanamu jeya
ix. Sakhyam	Yendappikombe.	Atade.....salpamana- yundu.



6. Having fully realised the basic truth—Anyatha saranam nasti tvameva saranam mama,—both Sri Purandara Das and Sri Thyagaraja have, in a number of their kirtanas such as Nina-garu sariyilla yenage annyagatiyilla, balavu balave ninna bala-vallade, Nivantidaiva, Grahabalamemi Sri Ramanugraha balame,—vividly brought home to the minds of the people the greatness of God and the littleness of man (Naichyanusandhana) and the entire dependence of the latter upon the Supreme Lord. It is their firm conviction that it is only through this system of Nava vidha Bhakti, that one can cherish an unstinted, unbounded love of the Lord. At the same time, they are fully aware that this path to Salvation is not a mere bed of roses so that anybody can embark upon it and reach the desired destination. There is a pretty large number of kirtanas such as Mudaballane Dri-dha Bhaktiya, Sadaravallavo Nija Bhakti, Adikadu Bhajana, Etulainabhakti, Dehi tava Bhaktim, Urake galguna Ramuni Bhakti—wherein they have warned us against the endless impending obstacles in our way to cherish the unswerving Love of the Lord who would be the last to be pleased by the travesty of Bhakti. They have pointed out to the world in the clearest possible terms that Truth and Virtue are of far greater value than rites and ceremonies and that it is the inward purity of mind and no longer the pomp and parade of religion that can help us to materialise our long cherished ideal.

7. Both Sri Purandara Das and Sri Tyagaraja have composed several keertanas that belong to Utsvasampradayam—a significant feature of the Dasakuta. “Yelayya Belagaytu, Melu-kovayya; Yekaratiya noduva banni, Patikiharatire; Kanda halukudiyo, Aragimpave, Dhamboolavakollo, Vidamuseyave; Lali, Lali; are examples of this type of compositions. The fine ideas so well expressed in these kritis give us a glimpse of their close intimacy with God.

8. Next, we have the Divyanama kirtanas—a type of compositions suited for chorus singing “Jayatu Jayatu Sri Janaki” by Sri Purandara Dasa and Tyagaraja's Jaya Jaya Sitharam illustrate this group of kirtanas.



9. In addition to the above kinds of compositions we have the Ugabhogas and Suladis of Sri Purandara Das and Prahlada vijaya, Naukacharitra etc., of Sri Tyagaraja.

10. Lastly, but by far the most important of all, we have a number of kirtanas such as Guruvina Gulamanaguvatanaka, Gurulekayatuvanti, Harinama kirtane anudina malpage, Mokshamugalada, Sangitagyana vihinahalu, Sangeetagyana mu Bhaktivina, Talabeku takka melabeku, Sogasuga mridanga, Svararaga sudharasayuta bhakti, Ramakathanandadiyuta sangita sastragyana mu sarupyasaikyada etc., etc., wherein they have laid stress on what they consider the surest and the easiest path to Salvation. That Divine Grace (Aparoksha) would be attained by means of devotional music through Gurupadesa is the keynote of their gospel. While 'to be in and yet out of the world' should be the fundamental basis for life in this world, 'Bhaktiyuta Sangitagyana through Gurupadesa' is the way out of it.

Thus, by this comparative study of Sri Purandara Das and Sri Tyagaraja we are led to the inevitable conclusion that as poets, as composers, as reformers, as devotees, the similarity between them is so overwhelmingly conspicuous that both these day-stars on the firmament of carnatic music may be said to have their common home in the Dasakuta and that Sri Tyagaraja's life mission is nothing but a continuation of that of Sri Purandara Das.

Even as this comparison of Sri Tyagaraja with Sri Purandara Das has proved the supremacy of that great genius, so does in unequivocal terms the contrast of Tyagaraja with Muttuswami Dikshitar and Sama Sastriar—the two leading personalities of his time. A great devotee of Sri Amba and a Vaggeyakara of exceptional capabilities as he was, Sama Sastriar has not brought forth to light his reforming zeal in the same manner and to the same extent as Tyagaraja has done. Similar is the case with Muttuswami Dikshitar. He was an eminent scholar who had a deep and profound knowledge in Mantrasastra, Yoga-sastra, Astrology, Advaita philosophy and his kirtanas are simply flooded with his vast knowledge in these sastras. His



compositions are again a genuine reflection of his ardent love of and deep knowledge in the Sanskrit language and the virile and dignified phrases of Sanskrit speech, delightful and graceful yati, prasa and antyanyamas with which his compositions are so diligently knit out are almost inimitable. As a staunch follower of Sri Venkatamakhi, he is an obvious contrast to Tyagaraja. The simple, soft-sounding, elegant, graceful and spontaneous outflow of Sri Tyagaraja's compositions stand in vivid contrast with the highly scholarly, dignified and diligently worked out compositions of Dikshitar. Again these kirtanas of Dikshitar are severely lacking in the reforming and the philosophic zeal that is so strikingly predominant in the kirtanas of Tyagaraja. From the data so far available neither Dikshitar nor Sama Sastriar seem to have to their credit compositions that fall to the category of Utsavasampradayam and Divyanama kirtanas and compositions of the type of Prahlada Bhakti Vijaya and Naukacharitra by Sri Tyagaraja.

Thus, while in view of the lofty ideal before him, the medium through which he carries on his mission, and the results he has reaped of his efforts, Sri Tyagaraja stands in unison with Purandara Das, by virtue of his divine art, dignified language, elegant style, and variety of subject matter he has carved out for himself a position of unsurpassed pre-eminence in the realm of carnatic music.

## THE POETRY OF TYAGARAJA

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Of love with silence blending,

Slow to begin, yet never ending,

Of serious faith and inward glee.'—Wordsworth.

Sri Tyagayya lived throughout an emotional life and it is no wonder that he has left us a continuous record of his lyrical effusions in his kirtanas. We see in them the transmutation