

CHAPTER - IX

MUSIC AND RELIGION

A RE-STATEMENT AND CRITIQUE OF KINSHIP

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We are on the threshold of an exciting and most interesting period of Indian history. It is a period which throws open a gigantic panorama of immense possibilities.<sup>1</sup> The whole range of religion and music the world over is now available to us. The radio, the television, the super computerized system and network of services

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1. V.K. Narayana Menon : The Music of India : article in 'Readings on Indian Music', ed. by Gowrie Kuppaswamy & M. Hari Haran, College Book House, Trivandrum, 1979, p. 3.

together with easy travel have made available to us the whole vast realm of cultivated music. They can give us better perspectives, widen our musical horizon and revolutionize our musical thinking and creation. Thus we find ourselves in an era of immense opportunities and immense challenges.

In this age of advancing science and galloping technology when everything old and ancient stands challenged, scrutinized and evaluated on modern canons of rational and scientific judgment, attempts are being made to peel away Indian classical music from its religious roots and links and present it as devoid of religion and spiritual essence. Critics there are who surmise and observe in respect of music that 'the divine or mythical origin serves to emphasize the absence of a rational explanation.'<sup>2</sup> They regard that the foundation as well as the inspiration for art, especially music, is Nature.<sup>3</sup> It is always better, effort-worthy and valuable to shift history from legend, aesthetics from dogma, theory from formalism, and execution from rigid canons. In brief, efforts are being made to rediscover for music its real

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2. T.V. Subba Rao: 'Studies in Indian Music', Asia Publishing House, Madras & New York, 1965, p.13.

3. Ibid, p. 13.

essence and identity i.e., Asmita (अस्मिता).

Each nation has its own key-note in life and marches ahead in tune with that national key or ethos. India has, since the hoary day of Mohenjodarians and Aryans, preserved a unique characteristic. To the sages and seers of India, the aspects of material happiness and prosperity i.e., 'Artha' (अर्थ) and the satisfaction of desires (काम) are only a part of man's life. They declared, on the authority of experience that there are two more aspects of human endeavour, 'dharma' and 'moksha'. They built up the supra-structure of our society on the basis of this fourfold achievement, 'the Chaturvidha purusartha of dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Since times immemorial our society has been known not merely for its wealth and affluence but more for the other two aspects - 'dharma' and 'moksha' - of life. We are therefore, called "a highly moral, spiritual and philosophical people, who have kept as their ultimate goal nothing short of communion with God Himself, i.e., 'moksha'".<sup>4</sup> If this final aim of life is left

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4. M.S. Golwalkar : Bunch of Thoughts, Vikrama Prakashana, Bangalore, 1966, p. 34.

out, then what remains except the feeding of the brute in man? If it is a fact that there is a difference between man and the animal, then the concepts of prosperity and happiness for the two also must differ. If to eat, drink and enjoy abundantly is the only criterion for both, men will have to be equated with a mere beast. Says Bhartri Hari in Niti Shatakam :

‘ आहारं निद्रा भयं मैद्युनं  
 आमान्यमेतव्यशुभिर्नराणाम् ।  
 धर्मो हि तेषामधिको विशेषो  
 धर्मैव हीनाः पशुभिः समानाः ॥ ’

Therefore, we say that 'we have also to feed the spirit of the man'.<sup>5</sup> It is only when we do that we can look upon our national existence as being really great and glorious. That is the key to our national identity - 'asmita'.<sup>6</sup>

5. Swami Chidanand Saraswati: Sukhe Shanti Ka Ek Matra Upeya, Dharma, 40th Kalyana Issue (Dharmenka), Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 1966, p. 11.

6. M.S. Golwalkar: Bunch of Thoughts, Vikrama Prakashan, Bangalore, 1966, p. 34.

It is our bounden duty and solemn obligation to preserve and promote our national 'asmita' and simultaneously work out our national destiny in the upward and onward march of international community. It is in this sense that the observation and exhortation of K.S. Ramaswamy Shastri gains meaning value and strength: "We must preserve the graces and glories of our fine arts unimpaired and take them rise to new heights of achievements. We must preserve and augment their spiritual appeal".<sup>7</sup>

Prior to our making any conclusive observation about the ties that keep music and religion in natural and close embrace, it shall be both reasonable and desirable to clearly define both and then see whether and what kinship holds them together.

Our definition of 'dharma' is twofold : the first is proper rehabilitation of man's mind; and the second is adjustment of various individuals for a harmonious corporate existence, i.e., a good social order to hold the people together.

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7. K.S. Ramaswamy Shastri: 'Essence of Indian Music' in 'Readings on Indian Music, ed. by G. Kuppuswamy & M. Hari Haran; College Book House, Trivandrum, 1979, p. 62.

Let us take the first aspect : the 'rehabilitation of mind'. It is well-known through experience across the ages that personality of man is only a projection of his mind. As is the Sraddha or projection of a human being so is his personality - *श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषः यो यत् श्रद्धा स एव सः* <sup>8</sup>

But the mind is like an animal which runs after so many things and it is so constituted as to be one with all the desired things. Ordinarily, man's mind does not stop to consider what is right and what is wrong. It stoops to any level in order to fulfil its desires with such a mind, a man is not likely to rise higher than the level of an ordinary animal. Therefore, the mind is to be cultivated in self-restraint and certain other qualities. Those attributes of good conduct are mentioned in various context in the Bhagawad Gita and our other holy scriptures. They have described five 'yamas' for the body and five 'niyamas' for the mind.

The second is social aspect, harmonious adjustment of a human being with other ones in society. Man's life has to be attuned to the wider interests of the people as a whole.

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8. Bhagawad Gita, XVII. 3.

Thus we see that religion aims at man's self-integration through self-control and improvement, on one hand, and of man's integration with social life as a whole, on the other. Both these aspects of religion are absolutely necessary for the fuller development of human personality. In a sense thus both these aspects are complimentary to each other. Our holy books define the first aspect thus : 'यतोऽभ्युदय निःश्रेयस सिद्धिः स धर्मः'<sup>9</sup> (Yato Abhyudaya Ni-hi-Sreyasa Siddhi-hi Sa Dharma-ha), i.e., arrangement which enables and encourages man to control his desires and create within himself the competence realize the Divine Essence - asmita- even while enjoying rich material life, is Dharma. The second aspect is : 'धराणात् धर्मभिव्याहुः धर्मो धारयति'<sup>10</sup> प्रजाः which means that power which brings the individuals together and sustains them as a society is called 'dharma'. A happy and harmonious combination of these two definitions shows that the establishment of 'dharma' means the building of an organized social life where in each has realized his oneness with others in society and is imbued with a spirit

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9. Maharshi Kanada : Vaishesika Darsan.

10. Maharshi Veda Vyas: Mahabharata, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 1965, Shanti Parva: 96.45.

of sacrifice to make others material life richer and happier and develops that spiritual life which leads to the realization of the Ultimate Truth.

The blending of the development of the individual with the integrity and well being of society can also be viewed from another point of view. Our seers and saints, sages and singers of Reality, and the thought givers have been telling us ever and anon that to be religious in true sense is to be able to discriminate between the Real and the Unreal, the truth and falsehood, the eternal and ephemeral, the good and bad, permanent and impermanent. Jagad G uru Adyacharya Sri Shanker has characterized this faculty of discrimination as 'Viveka'. Keeping aside the high metaphysical and mystical implications implied in this religious orientation, we can safely emphasize that centuries have rolled by, million men have appeared on earth and disappeared beyond trace, but one thing has remained : national life countless generations have come and gone but the nation has remained. Numerous races and cultures invaded our people, conquered and ruled them but our identity as a cultural nation has survived all the deaths and

destruction and dēvastation to which our people, temples and institutions were subjected. The Muslim poet Mohammad Iqbal sang in one of his compositions of nation-wide fame 'Sare Jahan Se Achchha, Hindosthan Hamara': Sab Mit Gaye Jahan Se, Yunan, Misra, Roman, ..... Kuchha Bata Hai ki Hasti Mitati Nahin Hamari, i.e., All the glorious civilizations of Greece, Egypt and Rome have disappeared from the face of the earth. But there is 'some mysterious thing' that has not allowed our identity-Hasti- to be obliterated.

What is the key point of our safety and survival ? The keynote of our survival is our utter faith in end intrinsic life of religion. Our Dharma is our Saviour.

Let it not be forgotten that it was the complete life concept of 'chatur vidha purushartha' that marked out our society and made our name shine bright on the horizon of the world. Our history is our testimony that this life - concept is not just a utopia but has been a living reality for thousands of years of our national life. The sublime character of our people as a result of the

complete life - concept - the harmonious blending of 'artha' and 'kama' with the higher values of 'dharma' and 'moksha' - that we had worked out on the individual as also on the national plane.

On the contrary, in the outside world especially in countries like the United States of America today where 'artha' and 'kama' alone constitute the core and lore of their civilized life, based on the glory and grand festive gaiety of unprecedented scientific and technological achievements, the bulk of the people, in spite of their boundless affluence and prosperity, are restless, aggressive, competitive, individualistic, violent and emotional brokes. They are victims of their money and sex mindedness. In incidence of various sorts of heinous crimes and mental diseases in all strata of society is growing at an alarming rate. Millions of people drug themselves every night with sleeping pills before going to bed. This only betrays a serious lacuna in their philosophy of life; they have ignored the roots of spirituality that alone restrain and ennoble the human mind and narture the human soul to grow and blossom in peace and happiness.

'Dharma' is thus the essence that holds life in a liberating bond of harmonious integrity : life at man's personal level and that at the level of social solidarity. It provides, on rational basis and on grounds of centuries of human experience, an insight into the game and goal of life. The first postulate of 'dharma' is that life is not a chaotic flow, but has a goal and the goal is self-discovery implying unitive understanding of self within and self all-pervading. Precisely, life is not aimless; and the aim is not one of greatness measured in terms of power, position, name or fame.<sup>11</sup> The realization of one's true nature - 'Swa Swaroopā Samsiddhi' - is what a religious person is supposed to aim at. Since the distinctive natural urge in man is to expand and express his divine nature, he will have to transcend the limitations nature and his own desires of finite body-mind-intellect impose upon him. For a life of religion means and implies an attitude and a feeling of being in a wider life than that of this worldly, selfish, little interests.<sup>12</sup> This is also his sweet love

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11. M.S. Golwalkar: Bunch of Thoughts: Vikram Prakashana, Bangalore, 1966, p. 48.

12. P.M. Upadhye: 'Religious Experiences of Nāma Deva and Tuka Ram', in Pathway to God - a Quarterly Journal, Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum, Vol. XVI, 1. Oct., 1981, p. 3.

to God and to mankind experienced by him (i.e., Nama Deva)..... Religion is a way to the unification of self with God through the gateway of total self-surrender, love for all in whom only He resides, and life of absolute purity, devotion and faith.<sup>13</sup> It is essentially a deep look within for self-purity and self-control conducive for self-illumination. For, as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan puts it, "in the depths of the spirit is the pathway to the Supreme. Our strength is in the silence where utterance is not and where definition is unknown..... Religion is self-discovery, or perhaps recovery. It is soul's dialogue with itself. Its secret is inwardness, self-scrutiny, inner cleansing, change of heart, renunciation, and unceasing attempt to create through love a new social order....."<sup>14</sup>

Religion is an ennobling and transforming experience of reality which delinks human mind from its narrow grooves of divisive and assertive ego-centredness and links it with larger and ever-widening horizons of 'virata-chetana' epitomed in the age-honoured sanskrit saying:

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13. Ibid, p. 3.

14. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: Speeches & Writings: II Series (1964-1967), Publications Division, GOI, New Delhi, p. 348.

अयं निजः परैवेति गणना ऋद्युचेतसाम् ।  
 अक्षरचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

Thus, religion liberalizes man, widens his outlook, resurrects him from spiritual gloom and lethargy, and leads him towards the understanding and experiencing of the bliss and blessedness of Truth, Light and Immortality. For, 'man is not meant for self-destruction; he is meant for self-fulfilment'.<sup>15</sup> The self-fulfilment consists in the pursuit of wisdom and practice of love which brings about an inward transformation of man's being and must rid him of any kind of greed, anger, hatred, etc. and must look upon the whole world as his kindred.<sup>16</sup> The end and aim of our religion, as our ancient teachers and seers put it, is the experience - अनुभव - of God through the steady growth in man of his spiritual awareness. That is the touch of religion.

This is the touchstone of music also. A man of music belongs to the 'desha' of sound eternal where caste, creed, culture, country, sex, etc.,

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15. Ibid, p. 105.

16. Ibid, pp. 106-107.

have nothing to do with his identity or 'asmita'; he belongs to the universe of music and all men of music irrespective of cult breed or creed, find respectful place in the wide, embrace of his insight and activities. His is a world of music and all the residents of this world are to him just like his own kinsmen. To a true devotee of music, there is no hindu, no christian, no sikh, no muslim, no king or constable; musicians are first and last musicians; all of them are regard worthy human beings. As the mystics have one single community of God-realized saints in the world, so also the musicians have one single community of music - performers or appreciators living between the earth and the sky. All musical people seem to be happy; it is to them the engrossing pursuit, almost the only innocent and unpunished passion.

'Music is the harmonious voice of creation; an echo of the invisible world; one note of divine concord which the entire universe is destined one day to sound', said Mazzini the great leader of Italian unification.<sup>17</sup> He was himself a singer of

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17. Mazzini : Speeches Before And After War : The New Dictionary of Thoughts, by Tryon Edwards and Jonethan Edwards, Standard Book Company, New York, p. 413.

good grace and regarded music as a unifier of people, though he used music to provide tune for the war-song to the marching soldiers. Music opens an inlet into the chambers of one's own soul, integrates man's personality and through musical excellence great many people are held together in big audiences. Music creates harmony in one's own heart and carves a bridge of fellowship or harmony among numerous ones who flock to musical gatherings. Music is the voice of singing heart; in the same way as the religion is the wisdom of the experiencing heart. One rules the heart of the people through rhythmic melodies, while the other rules the mind of the people through the discipline of self-improvement and integration. Music, as a discipline of singing, leads the singer to experience Nada Brahma and thereby realize his own self. Religion, as a discipline, leads the religious man to experience Swa Dharma and thereby realize his own self. Self-realization is the desideratum of both the disciplines, music and religion. And this realization serves a powerful perfecting process of human soul, which begins with self-integration, grows with harmonious integration of individuals interests and aspirations with those of social or national needs of collective

growth, and blooms in placement of both these integration at the altar of the Invisible Will that shapes the destiny of mankind.

Such is the glory and purpose of both music and religion. Fulfilment of human life is the main purpose. And, both these disciplines demand of their devotees to return to the root of life - Brahma - and seek their fulfilment there. The glory of music is in steadily taking man to the realization of Brahman through 'nadanubhava'; the glory of 'dharma' is in steadily taking man to the realization of Brahma through 'shabdenubhava'. In music the way to 'nadenubhuti' is via 'shabdanubhuti' of the 'margi' sangita. In religion the way to 'shabdanubhava' is through 'nadenubhuti' of the yoga-margis. God-realization is the goal of human existence and both music and religion are effective ways and means of achieving this supreme goal of life. Says Swami Prajnanananda: "The realization of the knowledge of the Atman is the be - all and end - all of all music artists and art-lovers. The prime object of Indian music is therefore, to get the blessed boon of the Divine knowledge that makes men free from the chain

of delusion for ever and ever".<sup>18</sup> It needs no reiteration that religion is God-centred and God-realization is its goal. Thus it is observable that Nada Brahma is of concern and glory to both religion and music.

Curiously, enough, both music and religion have willynilly cut themselves away from Brahman, the Root of life. Both speak very high of Nada - Brahman and God, but in actual practice the votaries of music and religion have shifted their centre of inspiration from God to Gold and Glory. Much pomp and publicity surround, precede and succeed, musical concerts and religious conferences of the highest order. Many musicians worth the name are seen ~~nx~~ amassing wealth, piling up bank balances and striving hard to keep the tempo of personal fame fast. Many a man in saffron idols of million hearts in the field of religion, are observed enhancing the power of self and distinctive prestige establishing ashrams and mutt of vivid variety and organizing groups for religious conversion and conflicts. They make tall talks about God, Soul and Scriptures, but inwardly they donot seem to be free from personal

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18. Swami Prajnanananda : A Historical Study of Indian Music : Ananda Dhara Prakashan, Calcutta 1965, pp. 428-429.

jealousies a group rivalries. This has given rise to a class of people who condemn religion as "an opiate of masses", as a divider of man against man and sect against sect, religious group against religious groups. Religion has divided more than united - this is the central and running theme of the history of modern Europe and the entire Christian Society. There are hymns, prayers and psalms sung universally at dawn and dusk almost in all the churches and temples of the world; and yet no one works for the emergence of a Universal Religion for Mankind. When God is one, True Religion, in its ultimate and absolute sense can only be one; and it is one. Certainly, of course, in view of immediate and relativeness of life the same. One Religion may take many forms to match the needs of people living in differing and different climes and times. So also, the Real Music which lies at the root of creation as the Primordial Sound - Nada Brahma - is one. It may, however, find its effective musical expression in multiple notes and forms as is the case today. The call and the need of the present age is mainly to be spiritually aware of the principle of unity in diversity and to realize unity which respecting diversity with love and understanding.

This analytical discussions brings us to the acceptable observations that 'knowledge is unity' and all the disciplines of realizing and regularising life, of promoting human happiness and prosperity, of harmonising spiritual and phenomenal truths of life are organically linked with each other in a bond of the force of life. All the disciplines branching out on the tree of knowledge, which is the tree of life as well, as arts and sciences in numerous forms are thus closely allied to each other, though in course of growth and development each discipline may claim a distinctive place and personality for itself. Though the claim for distinctiveness is both valid and desirable, yet it cannot be denied that all the disciplines are related to each other because all are rooted in one life - force which our sages and seers have called Atman or Brahman. Sprinkling of water on mere leaves and fruits would only give a shine to them for some fleeting moments, but if the roots of the tree are not watered then the entire foliage, however thick and green, will be dried up in due course of time. It is in this sense that the relationship of music and religion needs to be properly viewed. Music as the prayer and song of soul is closely akin and tied to Religion which is

the basis and Light of Soul. As prayer, music is 'margi' sangita; and as song of soul, it is 'deshi' sangita. Likewise, as the base, religion is a self-integrating discipline of 'don'ts - and do's; and as Light of Soul, religion is the music of life. As a base, religion may be called 'yuga dharma' (युगधर्म); as the Light of Soul, religion may be called 'Desha' Dharma. Thus it may be precisely stated that as music is 'margi' and 'deshi', so is religion 'yuga-dharma' and 'desha dharma'. 'Deshi music' is of essence free, timeless and spaceless; so is 'desha' dharma beyond time and space. At this point of infiniteness, both music and dharma have the common characteristic feature of sanatana (सनातनता). So, in its ultimate analysis music and religion are co-eval and co-existent.

It is in this background that the branching out of music as sacred and secular music, and of religion as 'desha dharma' and 'yuga dharma' needs to be understood and appreciated. When the devotee of 'margi' sangita, having considerably learnt music at the hands of a Vaggeyakara, chooses to sell his music or decorate himself with pelf and prestige and earn glory in society, he is preferring

personal progress and affluence in material life to his spiritual evolution culminating into 'nadanubhuti' and fulfilment of life thereby. It is just like staying mid-way at Haridwar or Rishikesh without completing the journey to Badrinatha or Kedarnath; and starting there a factory or some manufacturing concern to earn a viable economic foothold with a view to enjoying the glory of richness and beauties of the material world. The midway temptation to carve a life of good fortune puts a lid on the further march or development of 'margi' into 'deshi' sangita, which is the only musical roadway to self-perfection in this art of singing as also to self-fulfilment thereby. One may, for illustration, recall the eventful turn which befell the life of Gopal, the brought up and trained child of the famous Baiju Bawara, the noted Vaggeyakara and the divine Guru Bhai of the illustrious Tansen, one of the nine gems of the Moghul court of Emperor Akbar. Baiju, as observed earlier, was the beloved disciple of St. Haridasa, the great master of Divine Music. Once he heard a child's cry while he was coming out of his musical trance into which he used to leap during many of his soulful meditations of

classical and devotional music. He walked towards the direction from which the cry was coming and on reaching the spot he found the lone child wailing and crying in wilderness. He brought the baby to Sri Guru's presence and as per his advice the boy was named Gopal, brought up with parental love and concern, and was imparted lessons of music in such a way that the child soon picked it up with devotional fervour and zeal without compeer. Gopal sang with Baiju with ease to the comforting satisfaction of the Divine Master, Sri Haridasji. It was quite unusual in so small an age to produce mature music of an expert vocalist. No wonder, Gopal soon became the idol-boy of the musical world in Brindavana. Calls of marriage poured in and Baiju arranged for Gopal's marriage. As years rolled by, a female child was born as a ripened fruit of marriage. She was given 'Mira' as her name. Now, as luck would have it, once while Gopal was singing in the forest during his musical meditation, a royal caravan of Kashmir King's retinue passed by and the royal scion of Kashmir and the courtiers were so attracted by the wondrous sweet melody that Gopal was accosted and asked to be the Court Musician of Kashmir. The temptation was

great, especially in view of the utterly simple hut economy of Baiju and Swamiji's humble means of ashrama life. Without caring for the milky affection of his father like Baiju and the loving concern of Swamiji, Gopal stole out of the house with his wife and the new born baby Mira and joined the caravan to Kashmir without informing anybody. It was a bolt from the blue for Baiju who got upset, became much disturbed and turned 'bavara', semi-mad. Gopal, however, got a decorative place in the King's court and became the hero of the musical world in Kashmir. He began to roll in luxuries, became rich beyond imagination, rose in the highest esteem of the King and the commoners alike, and his excellence in classical music brought much appreciation and applause, gold and glory of Gopal. His 'margi' music, though brought undreamt of fame and fruit to Gopal's material satisfaction, failed to fructify in its onward spiritual journey into his own soul, the seat of nada-brahma'. It lost its sacred character. It became secular. His music retained the power of 'loka-ranjana' (लोकरंजन), but lost touch with the power of 'loka-rakshana' (लोकरक्षण). Recreation he could impart to people in plenty, but protection through sublimation of soul he could never. He could never established in 'deshi'

sangita. When he realized this late in life in the presence of the aged but agile Baiju Bawera who once happened to be Kashmir, his heart grew full of agony and remorse. It was as if his 'suicide' because he then died without 'nadanubhava' the devotional ecstasy and divine realization of his own self.

Secularization of music, under the duress of any temptation, is suicidal to the cause of fulfilment of 'margi' into 'deshi' music. Religion holds the human mind back from a fall into the trap of temptation and puts in on the right track of realizing the supreme truth of life.

Speaking about religion, Swami Vivekananda soulfully sang :

"Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control, or philosophy - by one or more, or all of these - and be free.

This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."<sup>19</sup>

Speaking about the nature of real music Swami Prajnanananda made the following observation: "the realization of the knowledge of the Atman is the be-all and end-all of all music." Music is thus a divine discipline inspired by the sole objective of self-realization and self-revelation through 'i) 'deshi' sangita for God's worship and (ii) 'margi' sangita for the inspired and the initiated pupils to work out their destiny on the path of self-discovery.

This view of music and religion is an integral part of Advaitic perspective of life and the world. The main feature of Advaita darshan centres round the theory of 'adhyāsa' (अध्यास), the concept of 'Brahman', the theory of causation i.e., 'vivarta-vada', (विवृतवाद) and the concept of 'moksha'. Though not identical these cardinal concepts apply to a large extent, symbolically though, in the conceptual and practical world of music.

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19. Swami Vivekananda : Selection from Swami Vivekananda: Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1975, XI.

Literally 'adhyasa' means super imposition. For example, owing to darkness or ignorance a string seems like a snake and causes fear. Here, we have the super imposition of the idea of a snake on the factual presence of a string. Super imposition or 'adhyasa', therefore, means the placing or positing of the qualities of one object on another. 'Avidya' or nescience lies at the root of 'adhyasa'. Adyacharya Bhagawan Bhasyakar Sri Sankar says that all sciences are born of 'avidya' or 'adhyasa'. In music, too, one finds that certain attributes are superimposed on every note, and then on every 'raga'. This 'adhyasa' vanishes that very moment when one imbibes the spirit of Harmony and realizes that music is the song of soul sung on the wings of 'rasa' from the seat of Nada Brahma. Every raga is a rasa-maya (रसमय) manifestation of the principle of Harmony.

"The Vedantic concept of 'Brahman' may be considered ", writes Dr. Shakuntala Gayatonde, a musicologic of renown, "as the origin of the concept of Nada Brahma in music, who is sentient, is 'ananda - swaroopa', and is without a second. This is also symbolized in the practical aspect of

music. For, Sadja ( षड्ज ), the first note of saragam (octave) symbolizes the principle of Harmony, Brahman. It is pure, devoid of any traits such as 'suddha', 'komal' or 'tivra' and illumines the other notes like a lamp. With the assistance of Maya, in the form of the skill of the musicians it creates the permutations and combinations of notes, and names and forms such as the 'ragas'."20

Dr. Gayatonde stretches the point further and observes that every being, according to the Vedantic thought, is an apparent modification (vivarta) of Brahman, Likewise, every note in music is a 'vivarta' of the 'sadja'; and an 'amsha' of the sadja is found in every note. This is evident from the fact that if we hear any two notes bearing the same relation as the 'sadja' (the first note) to the 'madhyama' (the fourth note), or the 'sadja' to the 'Pancham' (the fifth note), they sound the same as the latter notes. Besides the concept that every note is manifestation of 'sadja' is evident in the rule that is followed in Samagana, viz., that the note which is indicated at the beginning

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20. Dr. Shakuntala Gayatunde: 'Vedanta and Music', in 'Readings on Indian Music' ed. by G. Kuppuswamy & M. Hariharan, College Book House, Trivendrum, 1979, p. 65.

of the Saman is to be taken as 'Sadja'. Pratyekam Sadja Bhavena'.<sup>21</sup>

Moksha is the attainment of freedom from the thralldom of 'astadha prakriti' which is 'trigunat-mika' and lodgement of one self in the Supreme Self, the Brahman, and realization of the reality of the identity of one's own self with the Brahma. Sravana ( श्रवण ) (manan' ( मनन ) and 'nididhyasana' ( निदिध्यासन ) are the means, known to Vedantaa for this self-realization. In music, Nada Brahma is the goal to be achieved and these three are the means to it, as discussed in details previously. Music has thus the power to flood the audience or the solo soulful listener with ecstasies of divine nature and to enliven the hearer with rapturous melody. It is thus the onus of the lovers of music to seriously fathous the depths of the ocean of notes and to solemnly unravel the mysteries of 'ragas', and to soar higher and higher into the transcendental regions of its spirituality, where they might realize the truth of music in religion, of religion in music and of the unitive embrace into which are held both music and religion for ever.

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21. Ibid, p. 65.