

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Music is the only passion with me and it has flowed unto me as my sole and soulful inheritance from my father, grand father and great grand father who was the revered Guru of Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. The way Balkrishna Buaji¹ sang the inspired music of soul and imparted music lessons to Pt. Vishnu Digambarji had the desired impact on my father and grand father, both of whom got gradually disciplined into the art and mystical subtleties of the classical music of our country. And, the gaiety and style of their singing gave me the untutored awareness that music, as an art, is divine in its origin and orientation, religious in discipline and conduct, and kingly in the realm of all fine arts. This awareness instilled into me the natural love needed to serve this King of Fine Arts in ideal manner.

Thus I was instinctively drawn towards the delicacies of this sublime art. My father gave the first lessons in classical music and since

1. Swami Dharma Vrata : Gurumukhi Gayaki : article published in 'Sangita Kala Vihar' (Hindi monthly) Oct. 1987, A.B.G.M. Mandal Prakashan, Miraj, pp. 304-306.

then I have been employing the faculties of my head and heart in developing taste and discovering acumen to be offered with devotional dedication at the shrine of Saraswati, the goddess of all arts and sciences material as well as spiritual. The 'Veena-pustaka-dharini' instilled into me the natural longing for and spiritual affinity with Her Being and the excellent art of 'Veena' playing made its entry and permanent home in my heart. Realizing the utter sincerity and devotion which then characterized; as per my Father's version, my musical orientation; my dad was good enough to initiate me into the art of 'Sitar-Vadan'.

During the course of my Sangitopasana I made it a point to draw as much as my younger sister and I possibly could from the parental wealth of music. My sister sings but I love 'vadan' more than 'gayan', though 'shabda' brahma and 'nada' brahma are born of the same source the 'Paratpara Brahma'.

In my humble attempt to gain excellence in 'Sitar Vādāna' artistic as well as aesthetic, I was deeply impressed and highly inspired by

the two great and ace 'sitarists' produced by modern India in the person of Sri Nikhil Banerjee and Sri Ravi Shankar, but, as far as the 'sahitya' or 'prabandhas' of classical music is concerned, I had the good fortune of drinking deep from the sea of musical experience transmitted to my father under the teacher-taught tradition coming down to him from the hon'ble Balkrishna Buwaji, who was himself a wizard of music of his age as also the esteemed Sangita Guru of Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, Pt. Ananta Manohar Joshee, Pt. Narhari Balkrishna alias Anna Buwa (son), Yashwant Sadashiv Pandit alias Pt. Mirashi Buwa and Gundu Buwa Ingley etc.²

Even while as a student of music (instrumental) for the degree of Master of Arts from the Rajasthan University, Jaipur, I had the privilege of going through some standard works on the classical music of India. On certain festive or cultural occasions of the college I was asked, rather encouraged, to give stage performance in Sitar Vadana. Gradually I outgrew the feebleness and limitations of stage consciousness and was invited by the Jaipur, Jodhpur

2. Shree Keshava Gundu Ingley: Pt. Gayanacharya Balkrishna Buwa Ichalkaranjkar Yanche Charitra (Marathi Edition), 1936.

stations of the All India Radio to give 'Sitar' performance. It served as my heart opener. Eventually I came in contact with a perfect Divine Master, a Sanyasin, who 'initiated' and instructed me on the spiritual path of God-realization. I am deeply indebted to Swami Iswarananda Giriji Maharaja from whom I learnt in 1985 that Nadopasana is assuredly a royal pathway to Self-realization. Since then I have been harbouring the idea of undertaking the research work on the close ties in which our classical music and 'dharma' are held.

Fortunately for me I was allowed by Shri N.V. Patwardhan, Professor and Head of the Department of Music, College of Indian Music, Dance & Dramatics of Baroda University to go in for scientific study of the profound relationship the classical music of India enjoys with our 'dharma'. In the heart of my heart I was convinced that 'sangita' and 'dharma' in our country have a common origin as well as a healthy and harmonious growth in Divine Life and that the close kinship between the two has been strained in modern times as a result of the deepening impact of the unprecedented advancement

and progress of science and technology. But I had no authentic evidence on the point. As I began to amass facts and understand the truth of the aforesaid assertion, I became fully aware of the fact that Music Culture in our country today offers a pitiable picture and a deplorable sight since it has been willynilly divorced from its original source under the growing impact of modern industrial civilization.

Various questions have recently been raised by Indian musicologists and western lovers of Indian classical music. They ask : Is the traditional classical music of India dead ? Or, is it dying, rather breathing gaspingly on the death bed ?

Among various answers to the above query, many critics have been of the opinion that Indian classical music is on the cross-roads; that it is faced with an ordeal of fire; that it is falling into swoon because it is cut off from its main root of God-head; and that it is being dried up by the heat of mechanization and monetarization of musical performances under the stress and

strain of industrial civilization, "is to preserve our heritage - our monuments our literature, our language, our music. We must keep it at the highest standards and allow the new developments that are really implied in the system and are a real addition, not an adulteration."³

This observation of Narayan Menon shook me as if from my slumber and I grew keen to work on the lines he suggested. But the path was not clear. Luckily, I came across a book on music by Acharya Kailash Chandra Deva Brahaspati which was both persuasive and provocative enough to fire into me the need, value and importance of examining and appreciating the close relationship between music and religion not merely on grounds of curiosity, but on the ground of profound sanctity attached to this topic of fundamental import and far reaching consequences even by the muslim musicians and musicologists of renown. In this book the author gives a citation of the court-musician Mirza Nawab Hussain of Rampur state who, while admonishing his Hindu students of Indian classical music, said :

3. 'Music East and West', India Council for Cultural Relations, edited by Roger Ashton, 1966, p. 12.

"Your ancestors had been great scholars - and knowers of Music. You are their successors. If you do not undergo the austerity and discipline of understanding the ancient treatises, then who else will do it ? Believe me and have faith that no labour ever goes waste. We will not be, but our soul will enjoy peace on your success and that alone will be our 'Guru Dakshina'. If you do not do this, then you will ever remain indebted to us and our soul will be restless".⁴

The present thesis is an inspired attempt to fulfil this obligation which our Rishis have cast on us.

In the present thesis which runs into nine chapters I have amply shown with evidence originality, precision, clarity and experience that classical music of our country is mystic in origin, magnetic in appeal, majestic in expression, universal in character, pure in performance and impersonal in flow.

4. Acharya Kailashchandra Deva Brihaspati:
'Bharat Ka Sangeet Siddhant', Prakashan
Shakha, Suchana Vibhag, U.P., 1959, pp.21-22.

In the first chapter "Fountain head of Music and Religion" the traditional Indian view is re-interpreted in modern context that God is the Fount Eternal of both Music and Religion; that Man, the crown and cream of Creations, is capable enough to enter ascendingly into the Hall of Sāma Gāna (सामगान) through Nadopasana and realize the Supreme bliss and divine goal of human life in this very life; that God is the greatest musicians whose music fills the universe and who sings through the mediative depth of silence and contemplative seers of the Atman; and that Sāma Veda is the First Book of Music not only in the history of India, but in the history of mankind.

In the second chapter - 'Streams and Structures' - it is evidentially observed that the stream of music which flowed as the song of soul (God) has structured itself into divine music and mundane music; that the divine music may either be 'deshi' sangita or 'mārgi' sangita; and that 'deshi' sangita; is the siddha music of a Perfect Master while 'mārgi' sangita is a Guru given ladder of Self-realization.

I have reasons to assert that 'deshi' music, far from being a countryside or folk music as most of the musicologists have assumed and affirmed, is the divine and 'siddha' sangita of a 'Deshika' i.e., Guru or Godman who revels in the resplendence of the Supreme and through whom God himself sings. Rare ones love music; rarer are 'mārgi' musicians of pure waters; rarest are the singers of 'deshi' music.

In the third chapter - Rationale of Research - I have explained the need and the basis of the research work in hand, a glimpse where is given in the foregoing paragraphs.

In the fourth chapter, as is obvious from its title, "The Seeker or The Sādhaka, the qualifications necessary for nadopasana have been detailed with due emphasis on the need of a Mystic Musician as Guru without whom no nadopasana, in true sense, is ever possible. Since God is the root of all creation and human creativity, that man alone is considered qualified to enquire into the Supreme Reality who has discrimination (viveka), dispassion (vairāgya) calmness of mind (shānta-mana), and a burning zeal to be spiritually

free (mumukshatva). At the top of all qualities there is 'discipleship' i.e., noble emotion of utter surrender and gratefulness towards the Guru. Our music is essentially Gurumukhi Gayan.⁵ Without invincible faith in Guru, God and Gayan, it is very difficult to progressively realize the common goal of music and religion, the goal of self-realization.

In the revelation of Music religious discipline is an inevitable help; in being religious for self-realization music as 'Nada Brahma' is an inescapable divine station and succor. Music is by nature - swa-roopa-ta-ha - (स्वरूपतः) the song of the cosmos and cosmic soul. Religion is, in essence, the law of the cosmos and cosmic Being. Both religion and music are God-centred and Guru-revealed from Indian point of view.

In modern times, however, as a result of the overpowering impact of advanced industrialism, growing technology and film culture, this main aspect of our Indian view point has been given up in favour of self, power and public prestige. Hence the need to do research and to renovate the

present trend in the musical world of our country.

In the fifth chapter titled : 'The Search or Sadhana' it is maintained that Nadopasana is central to both the disciplines of music and religion; that 'nāda-brahma' of music and 'shabda-brahma' of religion are full-blooded brothers i.e., 'Sahodara-ha'; that metaphysics of music and mysticism of religion seek their origin, sustenance and final consumation in the That One (तदेकम्) of the Rig Vedic seers; that the ūpasana of both music and religion is Gurumukhi; and that nadanubhava and religious experience are both supra sensuous (atindriya) and beyond speech and mind (a - vāṅg Manasgochar).

In the sixth chapter "Fulfilment of Sadhana" alias 'Deshika and Deshi Sangita', the fructification of nadopasana is portrayed. A perfect or siddha musician is, in our music terminology called a 'Vāggeyakāra'. He is the perfect human embodiment of 'shabda-brahma' as well as 'nāda-brahma'. In and through him both these aspects of Brah̄ma find full expression. As a siddha he sings 'deshi' sangita in his contemplative samādhi;

as a Guru he introduces 'mārgi' sangita for his disciples to be able thereby to slowly and steadily walk the path i.e., 'mārga' with the supreme object of reaching the 'desha', entering it and establishing himself/herself in the 'desha' of sangita i.e. the kingdom of music supreme. The 'mārgi' music is the seed and the 'deshi' music is the fruit that grows on the Tree of Music. The former is called 'nāyaki' (नायकी) while the latter is called 'gāyaki' duly processed and perfected as per the music falling or flowing out of Sri Gurumukha.⁶ A perfect musician - a Vāggeyakār - gets automatically possessed with all twenty eight characteristic qualities or merits as described by Sri Sārang Deva in his 'Sangita Ratnakar', the magnum opus of Indian classical music.

An honest effort is also made in all humility to discover as to who amongst our known musicians can be considered as Vāggeyakāras and why?

6. Swami Dharma Vrata : Guru mukhi Gayaki : article published in 'Sangit Kala Vihar (Hindi monthly), Oct. 1987, A.B.G.M. Mandal Prakashan, Miraj, p. 305.

It is established in this chapter that the fulfilment of 'mārgi' into 'deshi' sangita transforms the human music into Music Divine and the Sangita Sādhaka becomes a Siddha Sangitagya i.e., a perfect Mystic Musician.

The seventh chapter which speaks of the 'Devotional Music of Divine Masters' tries to uphold that 'deshi' sangita is the divine seed of devotional music; that devotional path is an uphill path demanding lofty moral life of its followers; that the nine-faceted Devotional stream of man's life is co-terminus with Ātma Nivedana i.e., utter self surrender and sublimation of jeeva into Brahma; that God dances and stays at a place where His devotees sing music perfected by the holiness in human heart; that Tān Sen and Bāiju Bawārā of Emperor Akbar's epoch were masters and great devotees divine music. That Tan Sen himself speaks of 'mārgi' and 'deshi' music ⁱⁿ the same vein of our present thesis; and that he who has risen to the peaks of the devotional music can, with conviction, say:

"When I go from hence let this be my
parting word, that what I have seen is
unsurpassable."⁷

7. Rabindra Nath Tagore : Gitanjali, Mac Millan India, Delhi, 1973, No. XCVI, p. 63.

The eighth chapter is on 'Music and Moksha'. In quite an original way this subject is considered and analysed in three perspectives : (i) Music in moksha, (ii) Moksha in music; and (iii) Music as moksha. All the three aspects have been aptly illustrated by examples drawn from the musical songs of great and glorious and godly musicians such as St. Tyāga Raja, St. Mutthu Swamy Dikishitar, St. Shyāmā Shāstri etc.

In the last chapter 'Music and Religion' the kinship between these two disciplines of self-discovery and self-dissemination has been critically re-examined, re-interpreted and restated in context of twin purusharthas ('artha' and 'kāma') and quadruple purusharthas (dharma, artha, kāma and moksha). Very identity or 'asmita' of music and religion is at stake today as a result of the pressure which the modern industrialism, so-called secularism and film-world have impinged on our classical music. As such our music which is being delinked from religion is afraid of becoming rootless. It is in this perspective that the real nature of both music and religion has been thoroughly examined on basis whereof this conclusive view comes to the forefront that both

are and should remain in the unitive embrace of the divine thread of self-realizations if classical music of India is to survive the bane of secularism and industrialism, safeguard its glorious inheritance and score evernew lofty ideals and standard of musical performance.

In my humble attempt to finalize and present my formulations on Music and Religion, I am deeply indebted and highly obliged to hon'ble N.V. Patwardhan, Professor and Head of the Department of Vocal Music, College of Indian Music, Dance and Dramatics, M.S. University, Baroda, without whose constant guidance, encouragement and grace this work could not have reached this shape.

.-JYOTSNA ICHALKAR&NJIKAR.

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“ नादानुसन्धानं नमोस्तु तुभ्यं
त्वां साधनं तत्त्वप्रसङ्गं जाने ।
भवत्प्रसादात् पवनेन साकं,
विलीयते विष्णुपदे मनो मे ॥ ”

— आद्य शंकराचार्य

" I salute thee, O, divine discipline of sound,
(For) I have known thee as the (best) means
of realizing the Supreme. By thy grace my mind,
with the breaths, has merged in the meditative
contemplation of that All-Pervading Vishnu".

-- Ādi Samkar.

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"WHEN will I be able to hear the sound of
silence, the Music Eternal, the Song
of God ? ", the disciple asked.

"WHEN ? - You ask a wrong question. Now or
never. Hear it now ! because it is
there, the music is on, the music is all
over. Just you need to be silent so
that you can hear it. But never say
'When ?'; 'When' means you have brought
future in; 'when' means you do not want
it now. And it is always now. It is
always now - time. Eternity is ever
now. Music is as God is. Nay, "God is
Music and music God" was the whispered
muse of the Master".

- The Royal Song
of Sarāha *.

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* Acharya Rajneesh; The tantra Vision. vol.1
Rajneesh Foundation; 1977 P.23.