

4.0 Bhakti Sangeet

It is said in one of the Hindu Scriptures:

Naaham vasaami Vaikunthe

Na yogi hriday gaavati

Madbhakta yatra gaavati

Tatra tishthami Narada

“I dwell not in Vaikuntha (Heaven), nor in the hearts of yogis, nor in the sun, but where my devotees sing, Oh Narada, do I reside.” Devotional singing and music is known as bhajan, the word derived from Sanskrit root bhaj, to share or participate. Bhajan is performed to praise God, Bhagavan who possesses bhaga, good fortune. The styles of bhajan ranges from temple music to informal groups and single songs. In the Vaishnava tradition of Hinduism bhakti or devotion to God gives salvation, Moksha. In keeping with this principle a numerous poetical saints have given some of the most beautiful writings which are still very popular among the masses of ordinary people. Tulsidas wrote Ramayana in Brij language and is one of the most loved poetical work written since 16th century. The contemporary saint Kabir has also written songs and poetry in a methodical and melodious composite¹. Among women saints Meerabai, the princess of Rajasthan and a great devotee of Lord Shree Krishna, created some of the most beautiful gems of poetry. Saint Surdas, also a Krishna devotee, gave bhakti sangeet in a new dimension known as Haveli Sangeet. Other great saints include Sanit Tukaram of Maharashtra and Narsi Mehta of Gujarat. All these saints and poets have a mark on all the people of India with richness in devotional sangeet². Natya Shastra classified various elements of music as well as providing a definition of music as ‘Art of expression in sound, in melody and in harmony’. So, it is the art of sound in time which expresses ideas and emotions in significant form through rhythm, melody, harmony and colour. Classical music is a unique language by itself and it derived from ‘Nada’ the sound of all activities of

universe and eternal sound without any words which reached to people in Raga System. These Ragas being the products of emotion express the aesthetic feelings of love, anger and other mental attitudes of humanity³. Natya Shastra these elements of music: Svaras, notes, pitch, gramas, scale and Jatis as well as Parent Raga (which had their own family trees of Rags and Ragnias. The basic scale of Indian music has seven notes; Raga and Tala are the other two important elements of music. Hinduism and the Arts by Anuradha Sharma, April 2007. According to Narada Siksha the seven notes or Svaras are metaphorical as the sounds of animals and birds.

- SAdja – peacock
- RIshabha – bull
- GAndhara – ram
- MAdhyama – crane
- PAnchama – cuckoo
- DHaivata – horse
- NIsad – elephant

Richness of Indian music is not only pleasure and food of soul but also exhibits moods of all three worlds. It has magic effect on the listener to state of self absorption. Indian music as a whole always plays an important role in every aspect of cultural, religious and social phenomenon⁴.

4.1 Bhakti movement and main bhakti poets

Usually it is accepted that the most characteristic feature of the religious development during the medieval period was the movement which emphasized single-minded intense devotion to God. It was a complete surrender of oneself to God. The movement which emphasized primarily these ideas was the Bhakti movement—devotion to God. Bhakti to

God was accepted as salvation. (The Bhagavad Gita, The bhagavad puran And The Bhakti suras of Narada and Sandilya)⁵.

Main Features of the Bhakti Movement are:

- Unity of God or one God though known by different names.
- Bhakti, intense love and devotion, the only way to salvation.
- Repetition of the True Name.
- Self-Surrender.
- Condemnation of rituals, ceremonies and blind faith.
- Rejection of idol worship by many saints
- Open- mindedness about deciding religious matters.
- No distinction of different castes, higher or low
- Need of a guru for guidance advocated by some.
- Preaching's through local or regional languages and travelling from place to place for spreading the religious message.

Many doctrines of the Bhakti cult may be found in the Bhagavad-Gita. The idea of the unity of God is reflected in the words, "Even those devotees who worship other gods worship me alone." (IX 23). It is not the way of worship but the love of a selfless devotee of pure heart that matters for "Whoever offers to me with devotion, a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water ... I accept" (IX, 26). The doctrine of self-surrender is echoed in the words of Lord Krishna, "Give up all religious paths, and take refuge in me alone. I shall deliver thee from all sins." (XVIII 66). The idea of an open mind to decide for oneself in matters of religion may be discovered in the lines, " ... you do as thou chooseth" (XVIII 63).

However, the real development of Bhakti took place in South India between the 7th and the 12th centuries through the teachings of poet saints known as Alvars and Nayanar whose hymns were collected and compiled in the 10th century. The Sufi saints of the

Muslims also emphasized devotion to Allah (God). The spiritual yearning made Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mirabai, Surdas, Tulsi Das, Chaitanya and others, the great exponents of Bhakti movement⁶. To understand the impact of the Bhakti movement, we have to consider the background under which the movement gained momentum. Under the impact of the Muslim rule, the Hindus had suffered a lot materially, morally and spiritually. The Muslim rulers in general wanted to enforce the Islamic laws on the Hindus. The Muslim rule had put dread in the hearts of the Hindu masses. They wanted some solace to heal their despairing hearts. The Bhakti movement brought them hope and support and inner strength to save themselves. During the course of time, several evil practices had crept into the Hindu society. There was a lot of caste and class distinction. Several divisions had occurred. There was a good deal of bitter men between the two communities i.e. the Hindus and Muslims. Some healing touch was needed. Fortunately with the foreign invaders, some Sufi Muslim saints had also come to India and settled here. They were very liberal minded. They emphasized the virtues of love and devotion, brotherhood and equality etc⁷. This helped to bring the two communities nearer. It also helped to harmonise the conflicting interests. The saints of the Bhakti movement rejected the difference of caste and Uati'. An important factor which led to the popularity of Bhakti movement was that most of the promoters of this movement attempted to reconcile the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims by stressing that Rama and Rahim were one and the same. They condemned the hatred of the fanatic Pandits and Mullas alike. The Hindus realised that it was difficult to drive away the Muslim rulers and Muslims from India. On the other hand the Muslims also appreciated that the Hindus were in absolute majority and it was impossible to force all of them to embrace Islam. So under the impact of the new movement both sides started making efforts for coming closer to each other.

For the Hindus the effort was initiated by the Hindu saints of the Bhakti movement and for the Muslims by the Sufi Saints. The Hindu and as well as the Muslim saints

emphasized religious simplicity. They stressed human qualities and moral attitudes. They stressed that a true religious man is one who is pure in thought and action. The Bhakti saints believed in equality of man and man⁸. According to them there was no distinction and consideration of high and low on the basis of birth. Their doors were open to all classes. The Bhakti saints tried to generate an environment of good will between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Bhakti saints were social reformers also. They condemned several social evils. The Sufi Saints like Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, Bakhyiya Kaki, Nizamudin Aulia and Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Delhi etc. attempted to restrain the fanaticism of the Muslims and tried to bring them nearer to the Hindus. Several Hindus became followers of the Sufi saints but without relinquishing their own religion.

The Bhakti movement succeeded to a very small extent in realizing its two-fold objective i.e. bringing about reforms in Hinduism and developing harmonious relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. It gave birth to a new sect i.e. Sikhism. It is perhaps far-fetched to say that Akbar's broad outlook was on account of the impact of the Bhakti movement. The movement further divided the Hindu society. For instance the followers of Kabir came to be known as Kabir Panthis.

4.2 Great Bhakti Poets

Ramanuja (1060-1118)

The earliest exponent of the Bhakti movement was Ramanuja who was appointed the successor of his teacher Yamunamuni. He travelled all over India and ultimately settled down at Srirangam. He established Vaishnavism on a sound foundation. He founded Visistadvaita Siddhanta or qualified monism and according to him, the way to salvation lies through Karma, Gyan and Bhakti. He wrote Sribasya and Gitabhasya.

Nimbarka

The next leader of the Bhakti movement was Nimbarka, a younger contemporary of Ramanuja. He was worshipper of Krishna and Radha. He founded Dvaitadvaita or dualistic monism. He wrote Vedanta Parijata-saurabha, a commentary on Brahmasutras. He settled in Mathura.

Madhavacharya

He ranks with Sankaracharya and Ramanuja as one of the three principal philosophers of the Vedanta system. He propounded Dvaita or dualism. According to him, the final aim of man is the direct perception of Hari which leads to Moksha or eternal bliss.

Vallabhacharya (1479-1531)

Born in Varanasi, he propounded Suddhadvaita Vedanta (Pure non-dualism) and philosophy called Pustimarga (the path of grace) He founded a school called Rudra Sampradaya. He identified Brahman with Sri Krishna, characterised by Sat (Being), Cit (consciousness) and Ananda (bliss). According to him, salvation is through Sneha (deep rooted love for God). He was the author of a number of scholarly works in Sanskrit and Brajbhasa, the important being Subodhini and Siddhant Rahasya.

Kabir

Born near Benaras, he led the life of a normal householder. A disciple of Ramananda, his mission was to preach a religion of love which would unite all castes and creeds. He emphasised the unity of god whom he calls by several names, such as Rama, Hari, Allah, etc. He strongly denounced Hindu and Muslim rituals. He strongly denounced the caste system, especially the practice of untouchability. However, he was not a social reformer, his emphasis being reform of the individual under the guidance of a true guru. His dohas and sakhi (poems) are found in the Bijak. After Kabir's death, his Muslim disciples organised

themselves in Maghar, and the Hindu disciples were organised into an order by Surat Gopala, with their centre at Banaras.

Sri Chaitanya

Sri Chaitanya or Lord Gauranga was a prominent spiritual master who lived in Bengal during the 16th Century. Originally Sri Chaitanya was a great scholar and pundit. He used to defeat the leading pundits in debates about religion. However at the age of about 22 Sri Chaitanya became dedicated to worshipping Sri Krishna. Sri Chaitanya became absorbed in the consciousness of Krishna, he was filled with divine ecstasy and lost all interest in dry intellectual discussions. He became determined to renounce the world and live as a wandering sannyasin. Despite the objections of his mother Sachi Sri Chaitanya became a monk and spent his time in meditation and prayer. For hours at a time he would sing Bhajans about Krishna such as 'Hari Bol'. His intensity and absorption in God consciousness attracted many disciples.

Unfortunately not many of Sri Chaitanya's songs survived from the 16th Century in which he lived.

‘Chant the Name of the Lord and his glory unceasingly,

That the mirror of the heart may be wiped clean

And quenched that mighty forest fire,

Worldly lust, raging furiously within.’

Mirabai

Mirabai was a princess who lived around the time of the mogul emperor Akbar. Mirabai was devoted to the worship of her beloved Krishna. Her family vehemently disapproved and eventually she was forced to lead the life of a wandering mendicant. Her fame became widespread and many came to listen to her beautiful bhajans. She composed

many songs expressing her heartfelt longing for union with Krishna, whom she often referred to as Govinda.

“O my mind,
Worship the lotus feet of the Indestructible One!
Whatever thou seest twixt earth and sky
Will perish. “

Sri Ramakrishna

Sri Ramakrishna was a devotee of Mother Kali. He sang many bhajans composed in honour of Mother Kali. His favourite poets were Ramprasad and Kamalakanta.

“Though I am never loath to grant salvation,
I hesitate indeed to grant pure love.
Whoever wins pure love surpasses all;
He is adored by men;
He triumphs over the three worlds.. “

Sufi Masters

Sufism has its base in Islam. The great Sufi master Jaluddin Rumi was very knowledgeable about the Qu’ran it is also unlikely they had any knowledge of Bhakti yoga as practised by Hinduism. However through their poetry we can see that they had a powerful and absorbing love for the divine which is in the greatest tradition of Bhakti yoga.

Other Nirguna saints were Dadu Dayal, who founded the Brahma Sampradaya or Parabrahma Sampradaya, Malukdasa a follower of Kabir, Sundardasa and Dharanidasa. The bhakti saints of Maharashtra were the proponents of Maharashtra Dharma. Jnandeva; Namadeva, Eknatha, Tukaram and Ramdas were some of the great Bhakti saints in Maharashtra⁹.

4.3 Role of Pushtimarg in development and Growth of Bhakti sangeet

According to Shree Mahaprabhu Shree Vallabhacharyaji, the only reason of the appearance of this Universe is the desire of the Supreme Being, Lord Shree Krishna, for divine play. Parmatma took form in the Universe as a Brahmin i.e. Shreemad Vallabhacharyaji. The Roop Shruti and Naam Shruti are the discovery of Paramatma himself. From the same Parmatma's Shree Mukharvind appeared the Naad Shruti. Thus, Parmatma's one of the names is "Naad Brahm". The Shrutis of Vedas also says "Naado Brahm Ne Samsyati". Realisation of this Naad Brahm can be done by musical instruments and nritya i.e. dance. Thus, music, kirtans and dance constitute to form the Sangeet i.e. Naad Brahm.

In Shreemad Bhagwad Geetaji, Shree Krishna declares himself to be the "Samveda" amongst all the Vedas. Samveda consists of musical Shrutis. Thus, Bhagwan resides in each and every Naam Mantra in form of Naamatmak Swaroop. Thus, the reciting and singing his name is Bhagwad Gungaan¹⁰. While doing this, the Rasas are experienced by our body through ears by hearing and becomes stationary in our heart. Thus, this helps in stabilizing and establishing the bhagwad Ras in bhakta's heart. Due to this it is said that crores of pooja is equivalent to one stotra. Crores of stotras are equivalent to one Naam Jap and crores of Naam Jap is equivalent to One Kirtan¹¹.

These kirtans are sung in different ragas whose origin is Samveda. The Richas (verses / hymns) of Rigveda are also sung according to the Aroha and Avroha of Ragas. This is known as Samgaans. These Ragas are composed of Swaras. In the Samgaan, there is the importance of mainly three swaras

- Uddhat: Which is the swara of Aroha
- Anuddhat: Which is the swara of Avroha
- Swarit Swara: Which is Madhya swar.

The expansion of these three swaras is 7 swaras, which are enlisted below:

- Madhyam: Ma
- Gandhar: Ga
- Rushabh: Re
- Shadaj: Sa
- Dhaivat: Dha
- Nishad: Ni
- Pancham: Pa

The main aim of these 7 swaras is to be used in the composition in praise of Lord. We do not get the exact meaning of “Bhakti” in Vedas and Upanishads, but in various statements of it, the bhakti bhava is implicitly felt¹². Thus, just like Gyan and Karma margas, bhakti marg is also described in Vedas. Shree Naradji and Shandilya Muni has written BHakti Sutras, wherein the description of Bhakti is found. After that, we find the description of bhaktimarg in Shreemad Bhagwad Geetaji and Shreemad Bhagwat Mahapuram. Bhaktimarg flourished mainly during 1000-1100 AD. In Bhaktimarg, the aim is to keep Lord happy by constantly serving Him without any greed. This can be achieved by developing the pure love towards the Lord¹³.

The Kirtan tradition in pushtimarg is known as “Dhrupad Style of Composition”. This is one of the one of the oldest styles of classical music still in vogue. In 1100 AD, a Bengali bhakta and poet Shree Jaydevji initiated and popularised the Dhrupad style. Thus Shree Jaydevji is regarded as the first bhakta poet to start this parampara. His famous composition, “*Geet Govind*”, is written in Sanskrit¹⁴. Although it is in Sanskrit, it is not written to be sung in chandas but to be sung in different ragas. Shree Jaydevji has composed his other works in different ragas known as Ashtapadis. Several of his ashtapadis are also accepted to be sung in pushtimarg and have been embedded in our utsav routine.

For example, from Vasant Pancharni to Maha Sud-Poonam, Shree Jaydevji's ashtapadi is sung. This is originally sung in Raag vasant. In trutiya gruh of Kakaroli, on the day of Jeth Sud-Dasam and in the gruh of *Shree Navnitpriyaji* on day of Jeth Sud-Poonam, the ashtapadi "*Rati sukh saare dhir samire*" in raag Bihag is sung¹⁵. During *ushnakaal* ie summer, when Shree Prabhu is offered *chandan*, at that time "*Chandan charchit neel kalevar*" ashtapadi is sung.

After Shree Jaydevji, several other Krishna Bhaktas contributed a lot to this tradition by writing Krishna leela poems in their own languages. Krishna bhakta shree Vidyapati from Bengal, Chandidas from north India, Kabir, and Narsinha Mehta from Gujarat also composed several padas. Shree Vidyapati, from 1404 to 1438 A.D, wrote about his experience of various leelas of Shree Krishna. The padas describing his experiences have been accepted in the kirtan pranalika of Pushtimarg. For example, the kirtan of khandita "*Bhali kini bhor bhaye aaye mere angana*" in ramkali raag. Another pad of Hilag in Raag Asavani is "*Nayana mai nahin karat kahyo*" same way, the kirtan sung during vasant which is famous "*Nav Vrundavan nav nav. Tarugan, nav nav vikasat phool*" are all works of Shree Vidyapati¹⁶.

12th century, is regarded as the Golden period of Bhakti marg. During this period, the Bhaktimarg progressed a lot. During this time, the four major Acharyas disseminated the principles of Bhaktimarg. The first one was Shree Ramanujacharya, preached for Vishnu bhakti. He installed the Mandir of Govind Raj in Tirupati. He also stressed the importance of singing the padas and prepared the collection of about 4 thousand *prabandhas*. He also wrote a book called sangeet mala.

Second Acharya to disseminate the principles of Bhaktimarg was Shree Nimbarkacharya. He also stressed on singing the padas. The third Acharya was Shree Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhuji¹⁷. He established the kirtan tradition in a suitable way. At the same time in vrindavan, there were several other Krishna bhaktas like Swami Haridasji and

Shree Heet-Harivanshji also disseminated the Bhaktimarg and contributed much towards bhaktimarg.

4.4 Role of Shri Vitthalnathji in *Ashta Chhap* Bhakti Sangeet Poets

Vallabhacharya gave importance to premlakshana-bhakti (loving devotion like the Gopis) and emphasized seva (worshipful service) of Lord Krishna by following the daily activities of, most popularly in the sect, Krishna Gopal (the baal svaroop or child form of Lord Krishna) at 8 periods (from early morning to evening during the day, and across the 6 seasons of the year). The kirtans (devotional songs) sung during the periods are called astachhap or asthasakhas. (Vallabhacharya initiated 4 poets, Kumbhandas, Surdas, Parmananddas, and Krishnadas¹⁸. Surdas was the great blind poet devotee. Vitthalnathji initiated 4 poets as well, Govindswami, Chitswami, Chaturbhujdas, and Nanaddas.) 84 shrines (called "baithaks") have been established where Vallabhacharya rested during his three pilgrimages across India. Devotees also read what is called "84 Vaishnavs," which gives the story of 84 disciples of Vallabhacharya.

4.5 Ashta Chhap Poets

Poetry sung in the haveli reflects on the wonderful literary achievements of poets of a bygone era. Most frequently sung are the poets of the 15th and 16th century, who wrote at the time of Shri Vallabhacharyaji and Shri Gosaiji. During the tenure of Shri Gosaiji, he created a very select group of singers and musicians in the main haveli at mount Goverdhan. These were led by eight main poet singer devotees of the time - Surdas, Kumbhandas, Parmanaddas, Nanadadas, Krishnadas, Chitswami, Chaturbhujdas and Govindswami.

4.5.1 Surdas

Surdas was born at Sinhi near Delhi in V.S 1535 (A.D 1478). Surdas ji came with Shri Mahaprabhuji to Gokul after first meeting at Gaughat. He had darshan of Shri Navnitpriyaji there and he sang childhood sport (BAL leela) of Shri Krshna in front of Shri

Navnitpriyaji. After the repairs of Goverdhannathji temple, Seva rites there also commenced. Shri Acharyaji, accompanied by Shri Surdasji came to Shri Goverdhan and started the system of kirtans as per the different timings of seva¹⁹. Thereafter, Shri Surdasji sang kirtans, before Shri Goverdhannathji, till he left this world in V.S 1640 (A.D 1583)²⁰.

Once when Shri Mahaprabhuji was camping at Gaughat, Shri Surdasji came and offered his Shastang Dandvat Pranaam. Shri Mahaprabhuji asked Surdasji to sing songs of glory of Bhagwan (God). Surdasji sung one song related to the agony of separation with Bhagwan, which he usually used to sing^{21,22}. Shri Acharyaji after hearing this told Surdasji “why you are singing such a sad song? Sing any song describing Krshna’s sports (leela). Shri Surdasji expressed his ignorance of Bhagwad Leela²³. Shri Mahaprabhuji then instructed him to have a bath in Shri Yamunaji and come in Apras (i.e. without touching anybody). Surdasji followed his instructions and then Shri Mahaprabhuji bestowed him with Bramhasambandha initiation and removed all his defects since birth. By his self-offering (Samarpan) he imparted in him Navdhabhakti (Nine bhaktis describing the scriptures and by narration of “Dashamskandha Anukramanika” of Shri Bhagwat. He established Shri Krshna’s Sampurna Leela (Sports) in his heart. “Chakiti chali charan sarovar”: He sung this song in raag Bilaval at that time²⁴.

Once Shri Surdasji went to Gokul with Shri Gusaiji. There he had a look (darshan) of Shri Navnitpriyaji. Then and there he sung a kirtan (song) narrating adoration (Shringar) which Shri Navnitpriyaji wore at that time. Shri Gusaijis sons got surprised that Surdasji could narrate the exact adoration though blind, Shri Thakorji must be dwelling in his heart and make him experience the swaroopanand (eternal joy of his own Self). Next day, to test the capability of Shri Surdasji, these sons decided not to offer any Shringar to Shri Navnitpriyaji²⁵. Shri Giridharji asked Surdasji when he came for the darshan of Navnitpriyaji to sing kirtan after the darshan. Surdasji had divine experience at the time of darshan and he

spontaneously sung “dekh ri hari nangam nanga” in raag Bilaval. Hearing this all the Acharyas said to Surdasji “what is this that you have sung?” Surdasji at once replied that I had marvelous darshan of the marvelous Shringar offered by you and accordingly I described the same in my Kirtan²⁶.

One day Shri Gusaiji was offering Shringar to Shri Goverdhannathji at Jagmohan. He did not find Surdasji there. He asked his disciples about him. They said after Mangala Aarti darshan he went away towards Parsoli after wishing Bhagwat smaran to everybody here. Shri Gusaiji soon realized that Bhagwan wished to call back Surdasji to his eternal sport (Nitya Leela). Shri Gusaiji told the then present disciples that Pushtimarg-ship is leaving, if you want to have any benefit from that please go to Surdasji and have it²⁷. I will reach there after Rajbhog Aarti. Shri Gusaiji reached there and inquired about Surdasji. Shri Surdasji offered Dandvat Pranaam and sang a kirtan in Raag Sarang. Shri Chaturbhujdas humbly asked Surdasji that “all the time you have sung kirtans for Shri Thakorji but not a single kirtan describing the glory of Shri Mahaprabhuji”. Surdasji replied, “I don’t have any difference between Shri Thakorji and Shri Mahaprabhuji. I have never understood them as separate. But I thought that I would have sung separate kirtans²⁸. Both of them are dwelling in my heart as one”. Saying this he sang the kirtan “Dradh in charnan kero bharoso” in raag Bihagra²⁸. Surdas ji describes a number of raga-raginis in his “Sursagar” and “Sursavali”. Sursagar written by surdas ji includes below mentioned Ragas^{29,30}.

- Asavari,
- Adana Zizoti,
- Vihag,
- Jangala,
- Multani,
- Dhanashree,

- Nayki,
- Jaijivanti,
- Jaitshree,
- Gaud,
- Meghmalhar,
- Shree,
- Parasi,
- Ramkali,
- Alhaiya Bilaval,
- Todi,
- Maru,
- Natnarayan,
- Jaitshree,
- Purvi,
- Kalyan,
- Ramgiri,
- Bilaval,
- Gujri,
- Suhi,
- Devgandhar,
- Sarang,
- Vihagaro,
- Vibhas,
- Soradh,
- Kedarou,

- Gundmalhar,
- Malar,
- Sordhi,
- Kafi,
- Sudhrai,
- Devsakh,
- Gnadhari,
- Lalit,
- Iman,
- Sankara-Bharan,
- Bhairav,
- Hamir,
- Puriya,
- Bhupali,
- Vibhas,
- Bilbata,
- Shreeraji,
- Shreehadhi,
- Ragragi-malar,
- Basant,
- Paraj,
- Kanhara,
- Malavkaushik,
- Ragragini Bangali,
- Hidol,

- Davgiri,
- Malav,
- Pancham,
- Shatpadi,
- RajragiRamgiri,
- Ramgopal,
- Vasanti,
- Sankirn,
- Rag Hori,
- Multani Dhanashree,
- Bilaval Ramkali,
- Rag Dhamar,
- Sanut.

His contribution shows that he was a great musician of Pushtimarg.

4.5.2 Shri Kumbhandas ji

Shri Kumbhandas ji was born in V.S 1556 (A.D 1499) at Jamunavata. Shri Goverdhannathji revealed to Shri Mahaprabhuji while he was at Jharkhand during his Bharat pilgrimage (parikrama): “I have manifested myself at Shri Goverdhan. Get me out and start system of service (seva prakar)”³¹. Shri Mahaprabhuji then went to Anyor. Shri Kumbhandasji and his wife met Him at Anyor at that time and requested Him to take them in His refuge. Shri Mahaprabhuji constructed a small worship place for Shri Goverdhannathji and started the system of service (seva prakar) there. Shri Mahaprabhuji deputed Shri Kumbhandasji for the kirtan seva of Shri Goverdhannathji at that time. Shri Kumbhandasji then settled there and performed this duty throughout his life³².

Shri Mahaprabhuji according to Shri Goverdhandhar's wish returned to Shri Goverdhan from Jharkhand during his pilgrimage and got the swaroop of Shri Goverdhandhar out up the mountain (Giriraj). After that he went to Anyor to Sadu Pande's house to help him start the seva of Shri Goverdhandhar. Shri Kumbhandasji who was staying at Jamunavata on receiving this information told his wife that some great personality has arrived at Anyor and has got Shri Goverdhandharji up on the mountain of Shri Goverdhan³³. Many persons have become his followers and it will become beneficial if we too become His followers. Both then went to Anyor and requested Shri Mahaprabhuji to take them under His refuge. Shri Mahaprabhuji bestowed them with Ashtakshar Diksha (Naam Mantra). Shri Mahaprabhuji after that got Shri Goverdhandharji established in a temple there and deputed Shri Ramdas Chauhan for seva and Shri Kumbhandasji for kirtan seva.

Kumbhandasji's kirtan became so popular that Emperor Akbar sitting at Fatehpur got anxious to hear him. He therefore sent his attendants to call Shri Kumbhandasji. Receiving the call order from Emperor Akbar, though not willing Shri Kumbhandasji had to go to Sikri Fatehpur³⁴. Emperor Akbar ordered Shri Kumbhandasji to sing Vishnu's pada. Unhappy Shri Kumbhandas at that time sang 'Bhakt ko kaha sikri ka kaam. Avat jaavat kanhaiya tuti bisri gayo Harinaam'. (Meaning what a devotee has to do with Sikri. He will only get torn his slippers and on top will forget to remember Hari's name). Emperor Akbar thought that had he any greed for anything he would have flattered me. But he has the relation only with his Lord. Ultimately Emperor Akbar requested Shri Kumbhandasji to express his desire for anything he loves to have³⁵. Shri Kumbhandasji at that time suggested to Akbar that he need not be called again like this in future.

Shri Gusaiji knew from his followers that Shri Kumbhandasji has paucity of funds. He therefore on suggestions of his followers insisted that Shri Kumbhandasji should accompany him to Shri Dwarika. How could Shri Gusaiji be disobeyed? Shri Kumbhandasji hence went

with Shri Gusaiji unwillingly. They came at the camp at Apsara Kund. Here Shri Kumbhandasji came out of the tent and while he was pondering upon the situation the agony of separation from Shri Goverdhandharji increased immensely³⁶. Tears started flowing from his eyes and the kirtans of separation started coming from his mouth. Shri Gusaiji saw this and thought that Shri Goverdhanji also must be feeling similar agony of separation from Shri Kumbhandasji. Immediately Shri Gusaiji ordered Shri Kumbhandasji to return to Shri Goverdhannathji for his darshan and told him not to accompany him to Shri Dwarika.

Vallabhdasaji himself praises the melodious voice of Kumbhandasajee :—

“Sau Kumbhandasa kirtan sundar gavatei,

Kanthahu into bahaut sundar hatau,

Tasaun Kumbhandasa saun shree Acharyajee aapre kahai,

Jo tum samay samay ke kirtan nitya shree

Govardhan nath ko sunaiyo |”

Shri Kumbhandasji had seven sons. Once Shri Gusaiji asked him “How many sons do you have?”. Shri Kumbhandasji spontaneously replied: “One and a half”. Shri Gusaiji said :”You have seven sons then why you are saying like this”? In reply Shri Kumbhandasji told:”My five sons are attached only to the material world. So how can I call them my sons? One is Shri Chatturbhujdas and half is Shri Krshnadas. Chatturbhujdas stays near Shri Thakorji, worships him, does seva and experiences joy of swaroop (swaroopanand) and thereby gets himself absorbed in his union. When Shri Thakorji goes to Vraj for grazing cows he gets absorbed in the agony of separation of Shri Goverdhandhar³⁷. Likewise he gets experiences of both union and separation. One who has such experience is said to be a complete vaishnav. Krshnadas is attending cows and also has darshan of Shri Thakorji but does not have the experience of the sport (leela) of Shri Goverdhandhar. Consequently does not have any experience of the agony of the separation. Hence he is my half son.

After Shri Kumbhandasji became old and very weak, he sat at Shankarshan Kund near Anyor. His son Chatturbhujdas told him to take him to Jamnavata village where he used to live. Shri Kumbhandasji refused to go there and said “only little time is left for me to leave this body”. Meanwhile, Shri Gusaiji came there. Shri Kumbhandasji offered him dandvat pranaam and sang some kirtans of childhood sport and lastly his mind got engrossed in Shri Goverdhannathji and he left this world singing the pada of His leela³⁸. Shri Gusaiji remained very much upset that whole day and expressed his feeling that Bhagwadiya (divine soul) exists no more. He has unrevealed himself³⁹.

He gave such a beautiful colour to music, the colour of devotion that the whole world began to use music as a strong base to please God⁴⁰.

*“Gavat Giradharan sang param mudit raas
rang Urpati rayamaan leta Nagar – Nagaree”*

Sa Ree Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Udyat kala sabad Sukh
lag drat leta taal ati ujugaree.

*Charvit tambool deta, dhruva taal gati leta, gid, gidata
Gid, gidata, tata, yuga theyee alag laagaree |”*

Kumbhandasji terms were included in “Kumbhan Das” by Vidhya Vibhag Kankaroli. Total 362 terms are there which includes;⁴¹

- Shree,
- Raysao,
- Ramkali,
- Bilaval,
- Dhanasiri,
- Sarang
- Gandhar.

- Kanharao,
- Gaudi,
- Kedarao,
- Malavgauri,
- Malav,
- Vihagarao,
- Vihag,
- Devgandhar,
- Vasant,
- Natnarayan,
- Kalyan,
- Bhairav,
- Malar,
- Soradh,
- Purvi,
- Nat,
- Toudi,
- Ramgree,
- Sameri,
- Adano,
- and Lalti.

Kumbhandajsji use four types of instuments⁴²,

- Benu Bina,
- Kinnari,
- Mrudang Rabab,

➤ Mahubari.

By using third part of music Dance and its different position, Expression and different words likes tata tat thai, gra gra, lag, urat and thung thung he gives a beautiful introduction of dance music^{43,44}.

4.5.3 Shri Parmanand das ji

Shri Parmanand das ji was born on V.S 1550 (A.D 1493) at Kanoj. He left the world in V.S 1641 (A.D 1584) at Surbhikund⁴⁵. Once he went to Prayag for Makar Snan (i.e. taking bath in the river Ganga). He wanted to meet Jalghariya Kshatri Kapur. So he went to Adel. He met Shri Mahaprabhuji on the bank of river Yamunaji for the first time. After meeting on the bank of river Yamunaji at Prayag, Shri Parmananddasji stayed with Shri Acharyaji and sang childhood sport (BAL leela) kirtans there⁴⁶. Shri Acharyaji delegated him the service of singing kirtans at different times before Shri Navnitpriyaji. When Shri Mahaprabhuji went to Gokul, Shri Parmananddasji also went with him and there he wrote many padas related to childhood sport (BAL leela) at Gokul. He requested Shri Mahaprabhuji to allow him to stay with him at Gokul for his service⁴⁶. Shri Mahaprabhuji offered him also kirtan seva before Shri Goverdhannathji. However, as Shri Mahaprabhuji had bestowed him with joy of the childhood sport he wrote thousands of kirtans of the secret sentiments of childhood sport⁴⁷.

One 11th bright night, Shri Thakorji told Parmananddas that He heard his kirtans sitting in the lap of Jalghariya Kshatri Kapur⁴⁸. Shri Navnitpriyaji appeared before Him in million times beautiful form than that of Kamdev (God of Love) that he could not resist going to Adel to have darshan of Shri Navnitpriyaji and to meet Kshatri Kapur. There on the banks of river Yamuna he saw Mahaprabhuji doing Sandhya rituals and in him he had darshan of Shri Krshna Himself in him. Shri Acharya asked Parmananddas to sing kirtan of Shri Krshna's leela. He sang the song of agony of separation. Shri Mahaprabhuji asked him to sing the songs of sport related to childhood of Krshna⁴⁹. Shri Parmananddas humbly with

folded hands said that he does not know anything about that. Then Shri Mahaprabhuji asked him to take a bath in Yamunaji and come back. After that Shri Mahaprabhuji bestowed him with the initiation of Hastakshar and Bramhasambandh and also narrated him to “Dashamskandh Anukramanika” (index of the incidents of the tenth chapter of Shri Bhagwat). Consequently according to Shri Mahaprabhuji’s order he sang the songs of childhood sport of Shri Krshna in Ashavari, Bilaval, and Kanhara ragas⁵⁰.

Once Shri Parmanand dasji invited Shri Mahaprabhuji to his house at Kanoj. Shri Mahaprabhuji asked him to sing songs of glory of Bhagwan Shri Krshna⁵¹. Parmanand das started singing “Hari teri leela ki sudhi aave”. Shri Mahaprabhuji just on hearing this got deeply absorbed in the Bhagwat Leela and opened his eyes on the fourth day. Shri Parmanand das seeing this decided never to sing such songs by which Shri Mahaprabhuji could get absorbed in Bhagwat Leela and might not return in this world for liberation of the divine souls⁵².

One day Shri Parmananddasji after offering Dandvat Pranaam to Shri Gusaiji climbed down the mountain and offered Dandvat Pranaam to the Dhwaja (flag) of Shri Goverdhannathji desiring to leave the body came to Surbhi Kund and lied down over there. Shri Gusaiji not seeing Parmananddasji at Rajbhog Aarti inquired about him. One disciple said that he has gone to Surbhi Kund in a condition of deep anguish. Shri Gusaiji then went to Surbhi Kund to enquire about him⁵³. Shri Parmananddasji seeing Shri Gusaiji offered him Dandvat Pranaam and created and sang “prit to shri nandnandam sao kije” in raga Sarang before Shri Gusaiji. One disciple requested Parmananddasji to show him some means by which Shri Thakorji bestows his grace on me. Shri Parmananddasji sang “pratsamaye uthkariye shri laxmansut gaan” in raga Bhairav and said that if you sing this with concentration then you will get the fruits⁵⁴. Shri Parmananddas after that concentrating his mind the Jugalswaroop (twin idols) sang in Sarang “Radhe baithi tilak sav arti” and left the

body. Shri Gusaiji remarked at that time that there were two “oceans” in Pushtimarg i.e. Surdasji and Parmananddasji.

According to research of dindayalu gupta some of Granth created by paramanand dasji such as Danlila, Dhruvcharitra and Parmananddas ji’s pada are available in collection. In “Parmanandsagar” Parmananddasji’s Krishna leela are sing in different Ragas⁵⁵.

- Malav,
- Gauri,
- Gujri,
- Vihagaro,
- Devgandhar,
- Basant,
- Todi,
- Lalit,
- Ramkali,
- Vibhas,
- Paraj,
- Sarang Bilaval,
- Bilaval,
- Malshree,
- Jangala,
- Malar,
- Jaitshree,
- Yaman,
- Kalyan,
- Gaurikanharo,

- Dhanashree,
- Kedar,
- Shyam,
- Jaijivanti,
- Sarang,
- Suhabilaval,
- Nat,
- Purvi,
- Kanharo,
- Vihag,
- Adano,
- Suho,
- Nayki,
- Maru,
- Suhaasavari,
- Malharpurvi,
- Bhairvi,
- Malkans,
- Bhupali,
- Soradh,
- Asavari,
- Hamir,
- Kafi,
- Multani Dhanashree.

Padas created by Paramanaddasji musical word such as Tad, Alap, Gan, Geet, Sur, Tala and raga were used. In his Padas description of different musical instrument are available like⁵⁶,

- Rabab,
- Kinnari,
- Mrudang,
- Patah,
- Duf,
- murli.

He also gives palce to Dance in his word. Description of One tala, four tala and three tala are also available⁵⁷.

4.5.4 Shri Krishnadas ji

Shri Krishnadasji was born on V.S. 1553 (A.D 1496) at Village Chilotra in Gujarat and left the world in V.S. 1636(A.D 1579)⁵⁸. Shri Krshnadasji once decided to leave his house & go to Vraj for pilgrimage. During his pilgrimage moving from one place to another he came to Shri Goverdhan. At that time the temple of Dev Daman was being constructed & Shri Dev Daman was to be set there. On hearing this, from the people he went for darshan of Shri Dev Daman. Here he came in contact with Shri Goverdhannathji & Shri Mahaprabhuji. Later on, Shri Mahaprabhuji established the idol of Shri Goverdhananthji in the temple on third day of Bright Vaishakh. He deputed Bengalis for the seva of Shri Goverdhannathji living nearby & appointed Shri Krshnadasji as Bhetiya i.e. to go to the various parts of the country & collect Bhet (donations) for Shri Goverdhannathji. Afterwards Shri Mahaprabhuji appointed him as Adhikari (manager) of the temple of Shri Goverdhannathji⁵⁹.

Shri Krshnadas came to Shri Goverdhan once when he was on pilgrimage to Vraj. At that time, the temple of Shri Dev Daman was being erected & so he went for darshan there. He met Shri Mahaprabhuji & Shri Goverdhannathji at that time. Shri Mahaprabhuji appointed

him as a Bhetiya to collect Bhet from various places for Shri Goverdhannathji. Later on he was appointed as Adhikari (manager) of the temple. As an Adhikari Shri Krshnadasji had given to one vaishnav rupees three hundred for digging a well. The vaishnav utilized Rs. 200 for digging & kept Rs. 100 for himself, which he kept under a mango tree. Shri Krshnadasji went to see the unfinished well where his stick slipped off & he fell into the well. His body was not found & he had attained the ghost body & was staying on a pipal tree⁶⁰. After some days, Shri Gopinath gwal came there searching for his buffalo. Shri Krshnadasji requested him to go & request Shri Gusaiji to free him from this ghost life. Accordingly he passed on his request to Shri Gusaiji. Shri Gusaiji gave Rs. 100 to the new Adhikari & ordered him to complete the remaining construction of the well & thereafter went to Mathura & performed Shraddh of Shri Krshnadasji on Dhruv Ghat & relieved him from the ghost life & got him divine body & then Shri Krshnadasji entered into Divya Leela⁶¹.

Shri Krshnadasji decided to leave the house & go for pilgrimage of Vraj. During his pilgrimage he reached Shri Goverdhan via Mathura. The new temple of Dev Daman was being erected there & after some days the swaroop of Dev Damanji was to be set over there. At that time Shri Mahaprabhuji was performing Rajbhog Aarti. On beholding the swaroop of Shri Goverdhannathji Shri Krshnadasji's mind got absorbed in the swaroop of Shri Goverdhannathji. However simultaneously Shri Goverdhannathji also kept staring at Shri Krshnadasji. Then Shri Goverdhannathji informed Shri Mahaprabhuji that Shri Krshnadasji who has been separated since long has arrived⁶². Then Shri Mahaprabhuji asked Shri Krshnadasji to take bath in river Yamuna & meet him. After that he gave samarpan Diksha to Shri Krshnadasji in front of Shri Goverdhannathji. On this third day of Bright Vaishakh Shri Mahaprabhuji got Shri Goverdhannathji set in the temple & appointed the nearby Bengalis for the seva of Shri Goverdhannathji & appointed Shri Krshnadasji as Bhetiya of Shri

Goverdhannathji i.e. to visit various places in the country & collect bhet (gifts, cash etc) for Shri Goverdhannathji⁶³.

Bengalis served Shri Goverdhannathji for many years. One day Shri Goverdhannathji ordered Shri Avadhutnathji one of the sevaks of Shri Mahaprabhuji “Ask Shri Krshnadasji to remove these Bengalis from my service. I want to increase luxuries/richness of my seva system. These Bengalis are hiding one Devi Deity in their hair & place the deity during Rajbhog besides me. Therefore relieve them from my seva as early as possible”. Avadhutnathji met Krshnadasji & narrated this incident to him. Krshnadasji immediately went to Adel to meet Shri Gusaiji & acquainted him with the instructions of Shri Goverdhannathji. Moreover these Bengalis used to pass over whatever bhet they received for Shri Goverdhannathji to their Guru residing at Vrindavan⁶⁴. Therefore Shri Gusaiji according to the order of Shri Goverdhannathji agreed to remove Bengalis from the seva. Shri Krshnadasji took two letters from Shri Gusaiji one for Raja Todarmal & one for Shri Birbal & gave to both of them. He discussed the matter with them for about two hours & returned to Rudra Kund where Bengalis were staying in huts. He put on fire all those huts. Bengalis seeing this left the temple & seva of Shri Goverdhannathji & rushed down to save their huts. Shri Krshnadasji at that time placed his men on all the gates & stopped Bengalis to come up. Like this he got rid of the Bengalis. Shri Gusaiji later came to Shri Goverdhannathji from Adel & appointed Shri Krishnadasji as Adhikari (manager) & honored him by wearing him Khes⁶⁵.

Once a few vaishnavas came to Shri Kumbhandasji & requested him to explain the principles of Pushtimarg. Shri Kumbhandasji advised them to go to Shri Krshnadasji. The vaishnavas requested him to accompany them & they all together went to Shri Krshnadasji. Krshnadasji got very much pleased by seeing them & received them respectfully by singing a song “Giridhar jab apno kari jaane”. Shri Kumbhandasji then requested Krshnadasji that

these vaishnavas want to understand the principles of Pushtimarg. Krshnadasji first sung kirtan of sentiment of Hastakshar “Krshna Shri Krshna Sharnam Mamaha Ucchare” & after that one of the sentiment of Panchakshar “Krshna he Krshna man mahi gati jaaniye”⁶⁶. Krshnadasji by these two kirtans explained the principles of the Marg to the vaishnavas & removed all doubts from their minds.

Referring to the incident of Gangabai Chhatrani Shri Gusaiji told Shri Krshnadasji “You are suffering the results of your deeds”. These words hurt Krshnadasji. He therefore resolved in his mind to stop Gusaiji from Shrijis darshan. He approached Shri Purushottamji the son of Shri Gopinathji & told him “you are the eldest son of Shri Gopinathji & you are eligible for the position of Tikait of the family & so to come to mandir after taking bath & offer Shringars to Shri Goverdhannathji.” Shri Krshnadasji then did not allow Shri Gusaiji to come up. When he came for seva, after bath & told him that he should come to darshan only after Purushottamji the Tikait allows him. Gusaiji offered Dandvat to Dhvajaji of the mandir & went to Parsoli where he started feeling experience of separation of Shri Goverdhannathji. Birbal knowing this arrested Krshnadasji & put him behind the bars & informed Shri Gusaiji that he can restart seva of Shri Goverdhannathji⁶⁷. Shri Gusaiji at that time told Birbal “I will take my food & perform seva of Shri Goverdhannathji only after Krshnadas returns”. Krshnadasdji thus being freed from prison came to Shri Gusaiji & offered Dandvat respect to him & sung one pada “Param krupal Shri Vallabh Nanadan” in raga Kanhara.

One vaishnav was given Rs. 300 for digging one well. Out of that he hid Rs.100 under a nearby mango tree & started digging the well. Due to shortage of funds he could not complete the work. One day, Shri Krshnadasji visited that place. He put his stick on the land & got slipped & fell into the well. People tried to find out his body but they could not trace it. Krshnadasji then attained ghost yoni & used to dwell on a Pipal tree there. Once Shri Gopinathdas Gwal while searching for his lost buffalo came near that tree, the ghost of Shri

Krshnadasji told Shri Gopinathdas Gwal to request Shri Gusaiji to free him from this ghost life. Accordingly he passed on his request to Shri Gusaiji. Shri Gusaiji gave Rs. 100 to the new Adhikari & ordered him to complete the remaining construction of the well & thereafter Shri Gusaiji went to Mathura & performed Shraddh of Shri Krshnadasji on Dhruv Ghat & relieved him from the ghost life & got him divine body & then Shri Krshnadasji entered into Divya Leela⁶⁸.

Krushnadasji mostly creates a padas of Raslila. Raslila is a type of leela in which singing, music and dance are seen at its best level⁶⁹.

Dr. Gupt included eight grantha of Krushndas in his book. Which are as follow,

- Jugalman-Charitra,
- Bhaktmal kar tika,
- Bhramar geet,
- Prem satya Nirup,
- Bhagvat-Bhashanuvad,
- Vaishnav Vandan,
- Krushnadasji ki Bani,
- Prem Ras.

Different ragas used by Krushnadas are as follow,

- Avasari,
- Malar,
- Ramkali,
- Sua,
- Todi,
- Purbi,
- Vihagarou,

- Kafi,
- Sarang,
- Sudhrai,
- Pancham,
- Bilaval,
- Dhanashree,
- Iman,
- Nayki,
- Gujri,
- Basant,
- Gaud,
- Gandhar,
- Kanaro,
- Nat,
- Malavgaud,
- Devgandhar,
- Vibhas,
- Bihag,
- Hindol,
- Maru,
- Gauri,
- Shree,
- Malkans,
- Meghmalar,
- Lalit,

- Jaijivanti,
- Chaitigauri,
- Raysou,
- Kedaro,
- Gaudi,
- Hamrikalyan,
- Soradh,
- Kalyan,
- Bhairav,
- Ramgri,
- Hamir,
- Malav,
- Khat,
- Khanmachi,
- Iman Kalyan.

Including this One tala, Jatitala, Eight tala, Rupaktala's description also available in his padas.

In his Padas different musical instruments were described with different words of Mrudang Tavla like Dra Dra n na dhidhikat Titi kat, Gidi-Gidi and Dhidhi are used⁷⁰.

4.5.5 Chitswami

Chitswami was born in V.S 1572 in Mathrua. He is traditionally associated with Vitthalnath, a link confirmed by his poems written in praise of this guru.⁷¹ Aside from such explicitly sectarian compositions, Chitswami also wrote poetry in praise of Krishna, which tends to be more elaborate and uses more Sanskrit than his contemporaries. To date, his works have not been translated, perhaps because interest in them is limited to a small sect.

There is a rare raga in Purvi that. It has the reflection of Hindol, Sohani, Basant, Lalit and Shadaj. The very name of this raga is Krishna Basant. Devotees like Chhitsuami alone could give form to verses adorned with the grace of Basant ritu. By the combination of notes a beautiful raga could be composed. The sweetness of devotion added to it renders it the colour of uniqueness. Such a devotion gives immortality to this raga too⁷².

Raga Krishna Basant

Aroha Avaroha

Ni, Ren, San, ga, Mamamaga, Madhani San
Madhasan hen hi dhaSan hi dha pa, magamaresa,

Taal Chartaal

“Laal lalit lalitudik sang liyen

Viharat ri vara Basant ritu kala sujan ||

Foolan Ki kar genluk liye, Patkat pat uraj cchiyen,

Hasat lasat hilimili sab Sakal guna nidhan || 1 ||

Khelat ati rasa jo rahayo, rasana nahi jaat kahayo

Nirakhi Parikhit dhakit bhaye saghan gagan jaan ||

Chhitsuami Giridhar Shree Vitthal Padpadmarenu Vara

Pratap Mahimata kiyo kirti gaan || 2 ||

“Chhitsuami was an ardent ‘rasik’ of ‘Brajrasa’. In one of his poems he has requested Brahma that he should be born in a house near the house of Nanda so that he would be able to have the vision of his Parama ishta shyam sundar, the grace and beautiful smile of his ishta.1
“On the one hand Chhitsuami was famous as an ardent devotee of Shri Krishna⁷³. There are many anecdotes in varta sahitya. In one of the incidents Chhitsuami with his friends went to Gusainjee Vithalnath to offer one forged coin and a coconut full of ashes. The moment he

had the darshanas of Gusainjee he felt very guilty and prayed to take the refuge of Gusainjee.” In this way a change came in the vritti (tendencies) of

Chhitsuwami and he completely and solely took the refuge of Shri Krishna. A natural devotional heart led to the singing of the glory of the ‘Rasamayee leela’ of Radha – Krishna. Chhitsuwami decided to colour his music with devotion, by keeping a heart full of love for God; and offering ‘Swarpushpas’ (flowers in the form of notes) at the feet of God⁷⁴. There is one such verse of Chhitsuwami in which the intimate leela of maharasa accompanied by the musical phrases of dance in ‘Raga Yaman’ and tall chantaal in the form of Sankeertan.

Raga Yaman (Taal Chartaal)

Laalsang raasrang leta maan rasik khan Gragrata

mragrata tattattat dheyi dheyi gati lane |

Saa ri ga ma pa dha ni dhvani suni Braj Rajkunwar gawatree

Ati jaati sangeet nipun ta na na na na aani aani gati cheene || 1

|| Adit mudit Sarachand band toote kanchuki ke

Vaibhav nirakhi nirakhi koti madan heene |

Biharat bun raas vilaas dampattiman isad haas

‘Chhitsuwami’ Giriwasrdhar rasa basa taba beene || 2 ||

“Aughar taan bandhan, sapta sura madhwe madhwa mura lika bajawe.”

Chhitsuwami has included notes, rhythm, tempo, which are the base of classical music. But without devotion music is just an art it carries forward its meaning when the verses adorned in notes enjoys the exhibit of the ishta⁷⁵.

“Taal Pakhawaj bansa dhuni bajan

Bich murali dhuni sahaj suhayee

Dhol nisaan dudumbhi bag

Madan bhairi bajat sahanayee
Roop muraj aran jhanjh jhalaree
Bajat kara kathataal upanga
Aru Pinaak kinnaree shree mandal
Madhur jantre bajat mukha changa” 2

There is another such poem in which Chhitsuami has mentioned the names of many instruments:

The Ashta – Sakhas of Pushti Sect have given importance to the rules and regulations followed in the singing of ragas. Further, its significance was acknowledged by him only when devotion was included. Chhitsuami saw Krishna deeply in love with Radhajeet doing ‘Rasaswadan’ of her love. He always sang the song that Shri Krishna is even under the control and subjection of Radhajeet⁷⁶.

Where there was devotion, in the intimacy of rasa, there was awakening and abandonment. “The chief among the five bhavas madhurya bhava is the spiritual version of shrinagar rasa. Shrinagar rasa is of Bramapalesha for this reason it is called madhurya bhava or juuwal rasa.” Chhitsuami with Gopi bhava and madhur dipped in ganges of love his notes made him swim in water as ever before⁷⁷.

Book Published by Vidhya Vibhag Kankaroli “Chhitsuami Jivan aur Pada sangrah” which includes 201 padas. And this padas are found to be of following Ragas like⁷⁸,

- Kalyan,
- Kanharo,
- Bhairo,
- Jaounpuri,

- Basant,
- Kedaro,
- Ramkali,
- Malvagora,
- Malar,
- Vihigaro,
- Avasari,
- Lalit,
- Iman,
- Vibhas,
- Todi,
- Purvi,
- Kedarnath,
- Devgandhar,
- Nat,
- Adano,
- Hamirkalyan,
- Bilaval,
- Dhanashree,
- Kafi,
- Gujri,
- Hamir,
- Jaitshree,

- Soradh,
- and Vihag.

In his Padas he included musical instrument⁷⁹,

- Bajat Ghanta tala,
- Veen,
- Mrudang,
- Murli,
- Basuri,
- Mrudang chang.

Also included dance words in his padas^{80,81},

Gragrata, Gragrata, tat tat tat thei thei gati line.^{82,83}

‘upar tirap sulap let dharat charan khanche.

‘Ranan bhunan dharat pav ki kini vichitra rav’

4.5.6 Chaturbhujdasa

Amongst the Ashta Sakhas of Pushti Sampradaya Chaturbhuj as in leelatmak swaroop was a big friend^{84,85,86}. As sakhi he is famous by the name Vimla Sakhi. Her Sankeertan place Rudra kunda is quite famous. Chaturbhujdas was a leela rasik. Shri Krishna and Radhikajee enjoying the bliss of premmayee leela forgot themselves. Chaturbhujdas was the younger son of Kumbhandasjee. The effects of the nearness of kumbhandasjee came in the form of sprouting devotion^{87,88}. He received the training of music from his father. His father kumbhandajee also taught him this music is meaningful only when one sings with devotion in one’s heart and surrender towards God. Chaturbhujdasjee adorned all his Padas (poems) with rhythem and instrumental music. They gave it the form of Sankeertan and offered it at the feet of God. There is one poem in which the lover is playing raga Todi on flute and his

beloved is relishing the music as the audience. It is quite clear that the ragas are expressed in their original form when God himself plays those ragas on his flute⁸⁹. Then the devotee would become 'bhavamayee' and would reach to that state where one could listen to 'Krishnanada'.

Chaturbhujdas was a leela rasik. Shri Krishna and Radhikajee enjoying the bliss of premmayee leela forgot themselves⁹⁰⁻⁹³. In this state only the notes overpowered by devotion which presents the leela of that 'Paramanandamayee Chitwan' that has fascinated the Whole World:-

Chitwan teri jeeya basi |

Jab Braj Khori ulti Hari mohe, Ishid haas hansi |

Mohan mukha aturta ati sakhi, chali de naina masee |

'Chaturbhuj' Prabhu Giradhar path chitwat, rasikan manjh rami |

There are total 365 Pada in Chaturbhujdas's padas published by Vidhya Vibhag Kankaroli. In all padas ragas are used which are as follow⁹⁴:

- Devgandhar,
- Adani,
- Nat,
- Lalit,
- Sarang,
- Vibhas,
- Bhairav,
- Jaitshree,
- Dhanagiri,
- Malar,

- Kedarao,
- Vihag,
- Kafi,
- Ramgri,
- Kalyan,
- Todi,
- Ramkali,
- Bhupali,
- Sameri,
- Iman,
- Maru,
- Gauri,
- Purvi,
- Sankaramaran,
- Malshree,
- Vilaval,
- Gandhar,
- Suho,
- Natnaryan,
- Asavari,
- Basant,
- Sordhi.

Paribhasik words used in his padas.

‘Tan bandhan sujan sahaj me bahut anagat lavhu.

Shruti sangit kari parimiti tahu mai shratati badhavah.

‘Pratham nad-bal dhairi nikat lei, murli saptak sur bandhan sau’.

‘kabhuk kar-tal tal bajavati.

‘tanan tanan tan gan, leti juvti, surbandhan.

Following words of dance were used in his padas⁹⁴:

- Pakhavaj,
- Dhol,
- Dundbhi,
- Bheri,
- Kinnari,
- Pinak.

4.5.7 Nand Das

Nand das is also regarded as a contemporary of Surdas and probably died around, 1625 A.D⁹⁶. We get some information about him from the book, *Do sau Vaisnavo Ke Varta*. According to this book, Nandas was the brother of Tulsi Das and since Tulsi was a disciple of Ram and Nand das worshipped Krishna they did not get along^{97,98}. However this cannot be proved with certainty^{99,100}. His most famous work is *Ras panch Dhyani*, in which he describes the childhood of Krishna in beautiful verses. A lot of works are attributed to him and these include, *Rukmini Mangal*, *Siddhanta Ranch dhayayi*, *Rup Manjari*, *Ras panchdhyayi*, *Virah manjari*, *Brahmar Geet*, *Anekath Manjari*, *Gyan Manjari*, *Anekatha nam mala*, *Dan Leela*, *Man leela*¹⁰¹. However only four works are now available namely, *Ras*

panchdhyayi, Anekath Manjari, Brahmar Geet and Anekatha nam mala. Nanddasji has more interest in classical music¹⁰². In Vallabh community he sung shree gusauji's padas in ragas¹⁰³. After becoming the student of vitthaldasji he sung several new padas in Ragas. That's why written in that,

‘...So yah nayo pad karike tamsemai nanddas ne gayo so

Sunike shree Gusai ji bahot prassan bhaye.’

Then he also sung several padas of Bagtvalila¹⁰⁴,

‘Bhagtvalila sambandhi bahut pad naye karike Gaye’

From the above it can be predicted that nanaddasji interested in music from childhood, besides this he has natural interest in kirtan,

In Nanddas ‘Granthavali’ total 195 padas are there¹⁰⁵. And this padas include following Ragas,

- Vibhas,
- Avasari,
- Nat,
- Bhairav,
- Kafi,
- Vihag,
- Ramkali,
- Jaijaiivanti,
- Gauri,
- Sarang,
- Rayso,
- Gaudi,
- Hamir,

- Purbi,
- Pancham,
- Devgandhar,
- Todi,
- Lalit,
- Bilaval,
- Iman,
- Malkans,
- Maru,
- Kedaro,
- Nayki,
- Dhanashree,
- Kalyan,
- Vihagado,
- Malar,
- Adano,
- Kanhar,
- Basant.

Use of musical instruments in his padas¹⁰⁶,

- Dudunbhi,
- Duf,
- Mrudang,
- Manjir,
- bina.

Use of dance in his padas,

‘Tat thei tat thei sabad sakal ghat, urap tirap mano pada ki patak.’¹⁰⁷

Tatthei sabda karat sakal nrutya bhed sahit

Sulap rachi urap tirap let nagri.

Gatadrim drim ta tatthei gati bole.

4.5.8 Govindadasa

Govindadas was born in V.S. 1562¹⁰⁸. Govindswami was completely dedicated to Krishna. While rendering kirtan seva he always felt that God could hear him. When he didn’t feel that God was listening to him he left the kirtan seva the only. The mental state of Radha was sung by Govind Swami in his verses¹⁰⁹. All through his life, he tried to take the consciousness of his devoted to that ‘Ahladini state’ by the help of devotion dipped in the melody of music. Govind Swami Gusayin was the disciple of Shri Vitthalnath¹¹⁰. He had the privilege of singing the intimate plays (antarang leelas) like “Shreedama Sakha”, “Chandrauli”, and “Bhama Sakhi” from Kadamkhandi gate. Govinddas lived in the ‘Antari’ v illage of Bharatur. Before being initiated under Vallabh Sampradaya he was a conspicuous scholar of music and poetry¹¹¹.

In this context in the varta it has been distinctly mentioned that;

“Aur Govinddas Kavi Kahe | so aap pad katen |

So jo kou unke pad seekhi K shree Gusayin jee ke aage gave |

Tinke upar shree Gusayin jee Prasanna hote

Being a maestro (sangeet shiromani) when he got an opportunity to sing amongst the singers of Ashtachap his talent became synonymous to divine music¹¹². The same kind of story is available in varta sahitya as well. We find the evidence how Shri Krishna and Govind Swami used to coax each other. Even God becomes the servant of such a simple mindd devotee, who sing so ardently¹¹³.

“So Ve Govind Swami mahaban ke tekra per nitya gaan karat hate |

Shree Nathji nitya sunibe Kun Padharte hate |

Or Shree Nathjee sang gaan hun karat hate ... |

So Koyi samen shree nathji chukte so Govindswami bhool kaadte |

Or Govind Swami chukte jab shreenathjee bhool kadte |” 1

It is famous for the musical ability and talent of Govinddas ji that even emperor Akbar was his fan and admirer. Even maestro Tansen considered him as the best singer and wanted to learn from him¹¹⁴. “Govinddasji was completely dedicated and faithful to his guru. When he came to know about the death of Shree Gusainjee his heart sank and he left the mortal abode.” 1 This extreme sentimentality could be the trait of a devotee’s heart, an artist’s heart. The collection of verses of Govinddasji were offered by him at the feet of Lord Shri Krishna by decorating them with a classical touch and ornaments¹¹⁵. There is an impressive presentation of notes, rhythem, raga, instruments, the musical phrases, and dance bhavas etc¹¹⁶.

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