

CHAPTER - VI

MUSIC AND RELIGION :

FULFILMENT OF SĀDHANĀ -

DESHIKĀ AND DESHI SANGITĀ

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deshika and deshi sangita .

SANGITA SĀDHANĀ begins with Margi Sangita and fulfils itself in Deshi Sangita. Lessons in Margi Sangita are given to the disciple, after due initiation, by a Master musician called 'Vāggeyakāra' by our treatises on music.

A 'vāggeyakāra' is the perfect human embodiment of 'Shābdā brahma' and 'nāda brahma' par excellence. In and through him both these

aspects of Brahma find full expression. But in his graceful performance as a Guru, he introduces the music of his soul to the incoming disciple, after properly testing his eligibility, through singable 'shabdā' only and gradually processes his training in such a way that 'shabda brahma' ultimately sprouts into 'nada brahma'. The disciple's sadhana thus consists in eager and assiduous, enthusiastic and joyous journeying into 'nāda-maya-tā' of music - lore through the persistent practice of 'shabda brahma'. Regular punctual and patiently undertaken sādhanā of the Musical Word given by Guru has the power to create and clear the pathway to the divine music of Sound Eternal, the 'Nāda Brahma'. The 'Shabdā' imparted by the master for singing-practice constitutes the 'mārgi sangita' which alone, as a result of disciple's perserverance in sangita sādhanā punctuated and perfected by Guru's grace, flowers into 'Deshi Sangita'.

One firmly lodged in 'deshi' sangita is a 'Deshika'.¹ A 'deshika' has the power to create, promote and dissolve music. For he is regarded as one

1. Totakacharya : 'Deshika Sharanāgati Stotra': published in 'Stuti Sandoha' edited by Swami Ishwarananda Giri, Samvit Sadhanayan, Sant Sarovar, Mt. Abu, 1980, p. 43.

who has reached the 'desha' where from the 'shabda' brahma and 'nāda' brahma originate and receive full shape, strength and expression. For, Lord Shiva, the Fount Eternal of Music, tells his consort Parvati that such a desika i.e., Guru is human embodiment of triple divinities : Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesha. Not only this he is 'Sakshat Para Brahma'^{1, 2}

A Vaggeyakara in true sense is thus a mystic musician who as a perfect singer gives sweet and scintillating, full and faithful expression to 'Shabdā Brahma' and 'Nāda Brahma'. His musical performance is verily the worship of Lord Shiva in the time-honoured holy style, of 'Shivo Bhootvā Shivam Yajeta'.

Speaking authentically about the main characteristics of a Vāggeyakāra, Sarang Deva tells us in his Sangita Ratnākar that -

वाङ्मातुरुच्यते गेयं चातुरित्यभिधीयते ।³
वाचं गेयं च कुरुते यः स वाग्गेयकारकः ॥

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2. Lord Shiva : Guru Gita: edited by B.L. Paragi, Satchintaka Press, Ramghata, Banaras City, 1910, p. 33.
 3. Sarang Deva: Sangita Ratnaker : III.2.12. edited by Pt. S. Subrahmanya Shastri, Vol. II, Adyar Library and Research Centre; 1959, p. 149.

"Speech and song are called 'mātu' and 'dhātu' respectively (in musical texts and terminology); and he who creates both speech (shabda brahma) and song (nāda brahma) is verily a Vāggeyakāra."

Precisely thus one 'dikshita' in 'mārgi' music by a 'deshika' reaches the acme of music, through continuous sangita sādhanā, and becomes the master singer of both the 'mārgi' and 'deshi' sangita'. The 'dikshita' becomes a 'deshika'. This is how, the Guru-shisya Paramparā rolls on the twin wheels of initiation and fulfilment of sādhanā. It does not necessary imply that this tradition flows incessantly without a break. If the 'deshika' gives up his mortal coil before the one whom he initiates into 'mārgi' sangita completes his sādhanā, then there is a possibility that the 'dikshita' may fumble on the way, may not be able to seek fulfilment of 'sangita' sadhana and he may thus fail to scale the heights worthy of 'deshika' status. In that case, he may be a master of 'mārgi' sangita only; he has no access to the 'deshi' sangita.

Thus there has been in our country two streams of music : 'mārgi' and 'deshi'. The former has gained currency in all the ages of our history

though the latter remained conspicuous more by its dearth than by its absence. It was owing to this phenomenal fact that certain musicologists began to opine that 'the real object and aim of music is not to express the fleeting emotions of human life under the stress of human experiences - but to express the longings of the soul, the hunger of the human souls for unity with Divinity."⁴ And there is no better way of attaining salvation than the path of Music (गानात् परतरं नाहि).⁵

K. Vasudeva shastri has, in his 'sangita Shāstra', given the names of fifty five great musicians whom he hails as 'Vāggeyakārs'.⁶ Among them Sri Sarang Deva, Ahobal Pandit, Jay Deva, Margadarshi Shesayyengar, Rama Swamy Dikshita, Shyama Shastri, Sri Tyaga Raj, Mudda^S Swamy Dikshita, Sarang Pani etc. are well-known for excellence in music. Many others are there in the chequered history of music in India from the Vedic times who have been bracketted with Sage Singers like Narad

4. Professor O.C. Gangoly: 'Has Music Any Meaning'? published in ^{Music} Mirror of May, 1958, Vol. 1 No. 5, Sangita Keryalaya, Hathras, p. 56.

5. Ibid, p. 56.

6. K.V. Shastri, 'Sangita Shashtra', Hindi Samiti, Suchana Vibhaga, U.P., Lucknow, 1968, pp.285-295.

and Tumbur. We shall have a glimpse of their greatness in the next chapter.

Reverting to the analysis of the paramount traits of 'Vāggeyakāra', the 'deshika', one is apt to recount that music at its highest or sublimest level is a harmonious expression of 'matu' (shabda) and 'dhatu' (nēda) aspects of the Brahman. For both these constitute the very life force of music.⁷ According to Raga Tarangini 'a 'matukara' (मातुकार) is a mere poet, and a 'dhatukara' (धातुकार) is a creator or composer of 'svara'. He who is both 'matukara' and 'dhatukara' simultaneously, is alone entitled to be regarded as a 'Vaggeyakara' :

धातु मातु समायुक्तं गीतमुच्यते बुद्धिः ।
एतन्न नादात्मिके धातुमातुरकारः सम्भवः ॥⁸

Plainly speaking, 'nadanu-sadhana' is a purely spiritual pursuit and 'nadanubhava' is a highly mystical perception of the Reality. Thus the exploratory discipline as well as the ecstatic experience of Nada are at base religious in spirit

7. Vishnu Narayan Bhatakhande : "Sri-Mallakshya Sangitam" Madhya Pradesh Sangita Academy, Bhopal, 1981, p. 374.

8. Ibid, p. 374.

and character. For, 'nada' is the soul of the universe (नादात्मको जगत्) while 'dharma' is the prop there of (धर्मो विश्वस्य जगतः प्रतिष्ठा).⁹ Music and Religion - nada and dharma - are thus the two but kindered manifestations of the discipline leading to self-realization which cannot but spring up into blissful flow of music in one way or the other.

It merits proper assessment and sympathetic appreciation that all desirous of knowing music need not be religious in the sense the term 'religion' is usually understood. There may be persons who love music as a source of recreation, or who are devotees of music regarding it as a pathway to jeevan-mukti. There are indeed some others to whom music may be a regular source of livelihood, nay as a medium of earning name, fame and pelf. Musical performance in solo or concerts for sheer economic gain or opulence is not an uncomely venture. Music may thus be a purely secular affair or a religious pursuit. The character of music, however, depends on the goal or ideal to

9. Pt. Gopal Prasad Dube: "Bharatiya Dharma Aur Sadachara Ki Vishwa Ko Den", article in Kalyana Annual Anka, No. 52 (Sadachar), p. 163.

which it is hooked. If music is geared to serve the main goal of piling up bank balances, then it is bound to be secular in character and since realization of this goal depends on mass-applause and appreciation of musical performances, recreation of public mind becomes the immediate and inevitable concern of the musician. If, however, music is inspired by the ideal of self-realization, then 'nadanusandhana' under the benign vigil of a Vaggeyakara becomes the imperative need and thereby music purely acquires the character of a religious discipline. The nature of music is thus determined by the inspiration or orientation that guides the devotee of music. Music may be sacred or secular accordingly. Secular music has never produced any Vaggeyakara worth the name. Vaggeyakara is the sole product of soulful realization of the Brahman in its twofold aspects of Shabdanubhava and Nadanubhava.

With this analysis of Vaggeyakara as the mystic creator of musical speech (वाक्) and 'song' (गीत) one may easily discern where and how far music and religion converge with each other in a happy bond of kinship and whether or

not the master musician is a truly creative and not a mere repetitive artist. In true sense, the Vaggeyakara is a creative innovator and not merely a repetitive traditionalist. For as a devotee of music he is at once the worshipper of Goddess Saraswati who holds in her hands the Book and the Veena¹⁰ - Veena Pustak Dharini - representative of the Wisdom of the written word and the wonder wisdom of the unwritten flashing forth, Intuitional creativity respectively. A Vaggeyakar is thus a reservoir of known music as well as a riverine releaser of new music, a sea as well as a source of music sublime and supreme.

Of such a mystic musician Sarang Deva recounts as many as twenty eight qualities in seven verses which merit adequate understanding and explanation in view of the real being of a Vaggeyakara as pointed out in the preceding paragraphs. In his own words :

10. Dr. S. Radha Krishnan : President Radhakrishnan's Speeches and Writings, Vol. 1, publications division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1965, p. 196.

शब्दानुशासन¹ ज्ञानमीमिधान² प्रवीणता³ ।
 छन्दः प्रमेदवेदित्वं⁴ मलङ्कारेषु⁵ कौशलम्⁶ ॥३॥
 ब्रह्मभावपरिज्ञानं⁷ देशास्थितचातुरी⁸ ।
 अशेषभाषाविज्ञानं⁹ कलाशास्त्रेषु¹⁰ कौशलम्¹¹ ॥४॥
 तीर्थप्रिययचातुर्यं¹² हृद्यशारीरशालितां¹³ ।
 लयतालकलाज्ञानं¹⁴ विवेकोऽनेककाकुषु¹⁵ ॥५॥
 प्रभूतप्रतिभोद्भेदभाक्त्वं¹⁶ स्तुभगोयता¹⁷ ।
 देशीरिगेष्वभिज्ञानं¹⁸ वाग्पटुत्वं¹⁹ समाजये²⁰ ॥६॥
 वाग्लेषपरिव्यागः²¹ साङ्गत्वमुच्यते²² ।
 अनुच्छेदोक्तिनिबन्धो²³ नूतनचातुर्विनिर्मितिः²⁴ ॥७॥
 परीचतपरिज्ञानं²⁵ प्रबन्धेषु²⁶ प्रगल्भता²⁷ ।
 सुतगीतविनिर्मातां²⁸ पदान्तरविदग्धता²⁹ ॥८॥
 प्रिस्थानगमकं³⁰ प्रौढीर्विधिचालीप्तनेपुणम्³¹ ।
 अजवधानं³² गुणैरिभिवरो³³ वाग्गेयकारकः³⁴ ॥९॥

i. e. One who husbands these qualities (गुणैः समः वरो)

) is a Vaggeyakaraka: (i) knowledge of the discipline of 'shabda'; (Shabdanushasanam); (ii) dexterity in the happy choice of expressing the shabda (abhidhana praveenata); (iii) through knowledge of metrical discipline (chhanda-ha prabheda veditvam); (iv) expert in the use of alankar (alamkar kaushalam); (v) knowledge of the science of 'rasa' (emotion) and 'bhava' (mood)

11. Prof. G.H. Tarlekar : Sangita Ratnakar by Saranga Deva: A Commentary in Marathi in three volumes, Vol. 1 III - 3-9. Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal, Bombay 1st ed. 1975, pp. 345-355.

i.e., 'rasa bhava pariijnana; (vi) master-knower of time-place-situation phenomenon (desha-stithi-chaturya); (viii) complete knowledge of the art and science of language (a shesha bhasa jnana); (viii) expertise knowledge of the art treatises; (kala shastra kushalata); (ix) meditative and contemplative awareness and expert knowledge of all the three sciences of dance, vocal music and instrumental music (turya tritaya chaturya); (x) Sweetness and serenity in singing (hridya sharira shalita); (xi) knowledge of the art of rhythm and beat (laya- tala jnana); (xii) mastery in the art of voice or svara modulation (aneka kaku vijnana); (xiii) capacity and ability to accomplish renaissance in musical perceptions and performances (prabhoota pratibhodbheda bhavatvam); (xiv) magneticism in musical performance (subhagageyata); (xv) perfect realization of Deshi Sangita (deshi ragabhijnatva); (xvi) expert of speech (vak - patutva); (xvii) completely free from the passions of anger, attachments and envy (raga duesha patityaga); (xviii) full of compassion (Sardratva); (xix) apt awariness of 'oughtness' or courtesies in music (uchitajnata); (xx) power and ability of original compositions (anu-chhistokti-nirbandha - kshamata); (xxi) imaginative and

artistic creativity of evernew 'dhatu' textures (nutan dhatu vinirmitti kshamata); (xxii) expert in audience psychology (para chitta pariijnana); (xxiii) acumanship in 'forms' (prabandha pragalbhata); (xxiv) intuitive ability to create songs - gita - spontaneously on the spur of the moment (druta gita Vi-nirmana yojnata); (xxv) flaming imagination and power of transcendence in singing forms of other master musicians (padantara vidagdhata); (xxvi) maturity in 'gamaka' singing in all the three octaves with natural ease, flow and felicity (tri-sthana gamaka-praudhatva); (xxvii) creative skill in the play of 'aalapa' in expansive multiple variations (aalapta-naipunya); and (xxviii) thorough awareness or consciousness of the totality of music under play (ava-dhana).

In this perspective of a Vaggeyakar as furnished by the great Sangitajna Sri Sarangadeva in the foregoing Sanskrit couplets, says Prof. Ramchandra Ichalkaranjkar of Gwalior Gharana in his 'unpublished speeches' at Datar Mandal, there is not a single musician in the panoramic galaxy of Indian musicians today who can be counted or honoured as a Vaggeyakara.¹² The Indian classical

12. Prof. Ramchandra Ichalkaranjkar, Unpublished Speeches at Datar Mandal, 1981, Vol. 1, p. 21.

musicians of international repute today right from the late Omkarnath Thakur to Pt. Bhimsen Joshi and Kumar Gandharva are the master musicians of the time but none can lay claim to the hallowed status of a Vaggeyakar. A Vaggeyakar as portrayed by Saranga Deva seems to be a non-entity.

This may, however, be true that some among the famous musicians have varying five to six qualities of a Vaggeyakar as per Sangita Ratnakar's delineation, while some others might have a few less or more or different qualities. For, none has established himself as yet as one who is the author of both music and sahitya of a musical composition. It does not mean that they are not great musicians, it only means that they are not 'Vaggeyakars' in the strict sense of Saranga Deva's conception there of.

It is certainly that the composers keep 'alive' the system, the flow and flame of music by exploring ever new channels of musical expression, on the one hand, and by keeping alive, rather promoting the taste for music in public, on the other. By bringing to fore new dimensions of expression, they not only 'impart vitality to

country's music but also give fresh food for thought"¹³ even to the performers of music. The new and complicated techniques of their compositions result in the development of new techniques in styles of rendering. A composer thus helps a system of music to grow. Indian composers in classical music today are either 'dhatukar' only or 'matukar' only; they are rarely both. A Vaggeyakar in true sense is the gracious mint of both the music and the sahitya. "He is both a Sangita Kavi and Sahitya Kavi".¹⁴

Such a state of affairs led Saranga Deva to the rightful analysis-cum-conclusion that composers can be classified as 'uttama', 'madhyama' and 'adhama' according to the quality and merit of their performance and real contribution. For many stumble and stay on the path of 'margi' sangita without making adequate effort to fulfil the task the journey entails; few others may have, touched the fringe of 'shabda brahma' only or 'nada brahma' only by way of certain stray

13. P. Sambamoorthy : Great Composers : Book I; II edition, The Indian Music Publishing House, G.T. Madras, 1962, p. 2.

14. I bid., p. 2.

or sundry experiences during the course of musical performances or sadhana. It is rarely that 'margi' sangita is taken very assiduously with austere devotion and, as such, the sadhana of 'margi' music fails to fulfil itself into 'deshi' sangita, which alone is its alpha and omega, its source and destination as well.

In his analysis of 'Vaggeyakars', thus, Saranga Deva sings out the following verse:

विदधानोऽधिकं धातुं मातु मन्दस्तु मध्यमः ।
 धातुमातुविदः प्रौढः प्रबन्धेष्वपि मध्यमः ॥
 रम्यमातुविनिमाता प्यधमोमन्दधातु कृत¹⁵ ।

i.e., Expert par excellence in the creation of 'dhatu' i.e., music or song, but quite inadequate in the creation of 'matu', i.e. speech (मातुमन्दः) is a 'middling' (मध्यमः) Vaggeyakar. He who is a 'knower' of both 'dhatu' and 'matu' (धातुमातुविदः), but is immature (अप्रौढः) in form compositions (प्रबन्धेषु) is also (अपि) a 'middling'

15. Prof. G.H. Tarlekar : Sangita Ratnakar by Saranga Deva : A commentary in Marathi in three volumes, Vol. 1 III. 10-11. Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal, Bombay, 1975, p. 355.

Vaggeyakar. But he who is an adept at the creation of 'ramya matu' (entertaining speech) but is weak or inept at dhatu-creation is only a lowly one (अधमः).

It is thus clear that one in whose musical composition there is a commendable harmony in both 'dhatu' and 'matu' creations is the best (uttam) type of Vaggeyakar. Saint Sangitajna Tyaga Raj is the 'uttamottam' - first among the best -Vaggeyakars in as much as the bulk of his compositions emanated from him as a combined 'dhatu-matu' stream¹⁶ i.e., a song stream during the ecstatic and inspired moments of nadopasana. It is not that tune was sketched by him at one time and suitable sahitya set to it at a later time or vice versa.¹⁷

In the poetic lines given above Saranga Deva has provided an aphoristic pen-picture of 'madhyama' and 'adhama' kinds of Vaggeyakar only because he had already detailed out the qualities and merits of a true Vaggeyakar in the foregoing seven verses. This classification and distinction

16. P. Sambamoorthy : Great Composers : Book II , II edition, The Indian Music Publishing House, G.T. Madras, 1962, p. 3.

17. Ibid, p. 3.

is made on the main basis of stark imbalance or disharmony in the creation of 'dhatu-matu-compositions'.¹⁸ P. Sambamoorthy points out by implication that "a madhyama Vaggeyakar is one who is the author of the music (dhatu) alone and has appropriated the sahitya of another composer in his composition: People who set tunes to others' sahityas will come under this head."¹⁹ He continues to tell : "an adhama Vaggeyakara is one who appropriates the music of another composer and inserts his own sahitya."²⁰ The authors of duplicate sahitya for well-known tunes will come, he says, under this head.

Sambamoorthy, however, finds out some exceptions to this general assumption. He says that great composers have written their own sahityas for the well-known folk tunes of the land just to give performance to those tunes. Also, there are instances of composers who although wrote sahityas to the verna mattus of others, yet

18. Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande: Srimallakshya Sangitam: M.P. Hindi Grantha Academy, Bhopal, 1981, p. 381.

19. P. Sambamoorthy: Great Composers, Book I, II edition, The IMP House, G.T. Madras, 1962, p. 3.

20. Ibid., p. 3.

have improved upon the others, sahityas by introducing technical grace-notes or beauties like chitta svara etc. The ragamalika sahitya 'Pannagadrisa and the 'kriti' sringar lahari in the Nilambari ragas are examples on the point.²¹

Sambamoorthy has given some more kinds of Vaggeyakars. This classification is also merit-worthy and commands our attention and appreciation as well. According to him 'Vaggeyakars' may be (i) prolific or otherwise; (ii) versatile or others; (iii) major or minor ones, (iv) 'Sahaja' or otherwise, (v) creative or otherwise, (vi) public heroes or otherwise.²² Prolific are they who, like St. Tyaga Raj, Kshetrajna, Purander Das, St. Surdar, have more than a thousand compositions to their credit. A composer like Pallavi Gopalayyar has only a few compositions to his credit but still he is honoured and remembered because of the extraordinarily high quality of his composition. Secondly, a versatile one is he who has produced

21. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

22. Ibid, pp. 4-9.

different types of musical compositions. For example, Tyaga Raj is such a 'rare example' who has created

(a) Kritis; (b) Kirtans; (c) Divya Nama Kirtans; (d) Utsava Sampradaya Kirtans; (e) operas (three) Like Prahlad Bhakti Vijayam; Nauka Charitan and Sita Rama Vijayama; (f) Kirtan Satkam; (g) Sataraga Ratna-malika; (h) Ghana Raga Pancha Ratnam.²³

But Kshetranya has left behind him only one class of compositions - the 'Padmam'. Tyaga Raja is thus both a prolific and a versatile composer while Kshetranya is not versatile though he is very much prolific. Patnam Subramanya is a versatile composer, but not at all prolific. Examples may be multiplied on the point on these twin touch stones. Thirdly, there may be major or minor composers. On this count what matters most is the intrinsic musical worth of the compositions. The Musical TRINITY are instances of Major

23. Ibid., p. 4.

composers. They are : (i) Sadguru Tyaga Raj Swami (1767-1847), (ii) Pt. Shyama Sastry (1763-1827), and (iii) Nada Jyoti Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar (1775-1835). It is these mystic masters of Nadanusandhana that lent lustre and ushered in the Golden Age in the history of carnatic music, a part and parcel of the classical music of India. Rightly does write R. Ranga Ramanuja Ayyangar : "Even Marga Music was not an end in itself. It was only a means to achieve life's ultimate goal."²⁴ Ayyangar has characterized Tyaga Raja as the "greatest figure" of South Indian music who "represented all that is highest and noblest in South Indian culture, a practical philosophy of life and conduct that can serve as one panacea for all the ills that afflict the benighted world of today, despite the manifold gifts of science and technical skill".²⁵ Upanishad Brahman set before him models of Sangita and Sahitya. The inherent beauty and irresistible appeal his numerous compositions cast a magic spell on one and all give him a pride of place in the councils of music. Suffice it to say that Tyaga Raj

24. R. Ranga Ramanuja Ayyangar : History of South Indian (Carnatic) Music, 'Sabarmati' Saint Colony, Madras, 1972, p. 221.

25. Ibid., p . 223.

was essentially a 'Nada Vidya Upasaka' to whom music was 'an Upadeva and a means of Adhyatma Sadhana, and who wove philosophy and mysticism into his music."²⁶ His songs clearly bring him out as a great man, an erudite scholar, a peerless creative genius, a moralist, a satirist of sweet gentleness, an aesthete of serene temperament, as a teacher, poet, nadopasaka and, above all, a mystic Ram Bhakta. Narad's present to Sri Tyaga Raja of the treasurable treatise - Svararnava (स्वराणिव) containing a dialogue between Rajata Girisudu and Nagaja i.e. Parmeshwara and Parvati on the principles of music, and the homage he pays to Narada as his Guru support the belief that he was, as an excellent singer of Ananda Ramayan, his own 'dhatu-matu' creation, an incarnation of Valmiki to interpret the epic again in classical music par excellence. In short, he represents "the perfect Vaggeyakara whose qualifications are laid down by Saranga Deva in Sangita Ratnakar and Govind Dikshitar in Sangita Sudha."²⁷ Thus it was that he became the architect of a new era in the history of classical music in the southern India called the era of Tyaga Raja.

26. Ibid., p. 227.

27. Ibid., p. 229.

This brings us to the next class of a "Sahaja Vaggeyakara" (born composer) or the one who receives training with a view to becoming a composer or one drifted into composing by accident. Tyaga Raja rises atonce as a 'Sahaja Vaggeyakara' but sri~~n~~ivas Ayyar of Madurai became a composer ~~by~~ on account of the grace of Goddess Minakshi desending upon him on a particular occasion.²⁸ Then there are composers who compose in one language and those who compose in more than one languages. Tyaga Raja and Shyama Shastri have composed in both Telugu and Sanskrit. Sadasiva Brahmendra composed only in Sanskrit. One more category of composers is of those who are poets also. Tyaga Raja is an example of this category. The verses adoring his opera testify to his poetic genius.²⁹ There are still others who are creative in the sense that they have created new forms of musical renderings like the Tana, Kriti, Javali and Tillana. On this very count Panchchi Adiyappaya is called "Tana Varna marga darshi".³⁰ Composers are who appeal to both

28. P. Sambamoorthy: Great Composers; Book I, II Edition, The IMP House, G.T., Madras, 1962, p. 5.

29. Ibid., p. 5.

30. Ibid., p. 6.

the classes and masses, and composers who appeal to masses alone or classes alone. Composers who give an improved shaping to nascent, nebulous and underdeveloped forms and technical beauties. For example, the form 'Kriti' was perfected by Tyaga Raja. The form 'Svara-jati' was perfected by Shyama Shastri.³¹ Composers who are brilliant performers and musicologists i.e., 'lakshana-lakshya' vidvans as well.

Thus we see that according to P.Sambamoorthy the Vaggeyakaras may be studied under various heads. But all the Vaggeyakaras can be either of 'uttama', or 'madhyama' or 'adhama' quality as broadly and rightly viewed by Sri Saranga Deva in his monumental work Sangita Ratnakar. Among the great ones who had really reached the ideal glory and status of 'uttama' Vaggeyakara the names of Jaydeva, Purandar Dasa, Narayan Tirtha, St. Haridas, St. Sur Dasa, Ashta-Chhapa Poets of Vaishnavá tradition, Tana Sen, Tyaga Raja, Shyama Shastri, Muthuswami Dikshitar and few more may be counted. The list can not be exhaustive because it is difficult to say as to who, among the famous musicians of modern India, fulfil the requirements of a Vaggeyakara laid down by Saranga Deva.

31. Ibid., p. 7.

In ancient times, the following were the inspiring and ideal heroes of music who with reverence were virtually worshipped and rembered before beginning the practice or performance of music : Lord Siva, Siva, Brahma, Saraswati, Bharata, sage Kashyapa, Matanga, Yashtika, Durga Shakti, Shardula, Kohala, Vishakhila, Dantila, Kambala, Ashvatar, Tumbura, Narada, Anjaneya, Matrigupta, Ravana, Nandikeshwara, Bindu Raja, Kshetra Raj, Rahul, Somesha, Abhinava Bhatta, Lollata and many others.³² It is said :

अन्ये च बहवः पूर्वं ये संगीतविशारदाः ।
अगाधं लोच्य मन्मेन तेषां मतपयोनिधिम् ॥
निर्मध्य भी शङ्कि देवः स्मरौद्वारमिमं व्यधात् ।³³

In medieval times too there were great Vaggeyakaras' worthy of Saranga Deva's appreciation. In modern times too there have been Vaggeyakaras of great note but it is well-nigh difficult to say that any one of them satisfied all the twentyeight canons of the 'dhatu-matu' creator master musician. Susheela Misra, herself a performing musician of eminence, has given a critical evaluation of twentysix 'great masters' of Hindustani Music among whom twenty had lived in the light of twentieth

32. R. Ranga Ramanuja Ayyangar ; History of South Indian (Carnatic) Music, Sabarmati Saint Colony, Madras, 1972, Appendix III, p. XXIX.

33. Ibid., p. XXIX.

century : Kudau Singh Pakhawajiya (1815-1910),
 Ustad Khurshid Ali Khan (1845-1950), Chatur-
 pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1936),
 Ustad Allauddin Khan (1862-1972), Pt. Vishnu
 Digambar Paluskar (1872-1931), Ustad Abdual Karim
 Khan (1872-1937), Ustad Mushtaq Hussain (1872-1964),
 Ustad Ahmad Jan Thirakwa (1878-1976), Ustad Faiyaz
 Khan (1880-1950), Sufi Inayat Khan (1882-1921),
 Raja Bhaiya Poochwale (1882-1956), Ustad Yusuf Ali
 Khan (1887-1962), Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan (1888-1972),
 Smt. Kesar Bai Kerker (1890-1977), Pt. Omkar Nath
 Thakur (1897-1967), Dr. Sri Krishna Narayan Ratan-
 jankar (1900-1974), Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan
 (1901-1968), Smt. Siddheshwari Devi (1903-1977),
 Ustad Amir Khan (1912-1974), and Begum Akhtar
 (1914-1974).³⁴

Ustad Faiyaz Khan was indeed known as a great musician to the extent that he was hailed as the 'Aftab-e-Mausiqui', the sun in the world of Music. He really belonged to the category of musicians who not only won admiration but also earned affection from audience because he brought so much cheer to them through his music. Very

34. Susheela Misra: Great Masters of Hindustani Music, HEM Publishers, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1981, contents.

aptly he has popularly been called as the 'King of Concerts' - Mehfil ka Badshaha.³⁵ His main aim was to gain ascendancy over the audience, either by conquest or through persuasion. "To achieve an 'effect' was of primary importance and he was hardly satisfied by an aesthetic realization of the Ideal."³⁶ Though an excellent tactician in the use of both 'aparichita' and 'parichita' raga, he, inspite of his magnetic appeal to the audience, could not attain to the heights which fetch or confer the title of a 'Vaggeyakara'. Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, a darling of everyone including wizards of music, was a God-fearing devotee of music. "The amazing pliability of his voice, his unpredictable svara, combinations, the incredible speed of his tons, and the ease with which he could sway his audiences by his emotional renderings"³⁷ made him the most favourite of the classical musicians of India. Yet he can not with all his known glory and greatness, be called an 'uttam Vaggeyakars. For, he does not satisfy more than four to five canons of a 'srestha' Vaggeyakara.

35. Ashok D. Ranade : On Music and Musicians of Hindustan: Promilla & Co. Publishers, New Delhi, 1984, p. 165.

36. Ibid., p. 166.

37. Susheela Misra : Great Masters of Hindustani Music, HEM Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1981, p. 158.

Omkar Nath Thakur, famous for his 'nadopasana' and loving worship of God Sri Rama, has gone down big in the history of Indian classical music. Very few can claim the dignity and demeanour with which he gave his musical performances punctuated by a happy and uncommon combination of classicism and romanticism in music. Technically a perfect craftsman in the employment of both the registers - lower and upper - of his voice with flawless felicity and effect, he became the idol of the million hearts in music and made such an abiding impression on experts and ordinary one in music that the Government of India was pleased to honour him with 'Padma Sri' (1955). And yet when Sri Thakur requested an elderly music/genius in Calcutta, as to the quality of former's musical performance, the latter simply said : "Changala (i.e. good). But when Omkar Nath urged him to tell his real opinion, he said :

ज्यांच्या अवळ शिकला तस गात नाहीं आणी
ज्यांना तुम्ही शिक्या देता त्यांची नकळ करता

Meaning that you do not sing as taught by your great master; you only imitate artists whom you abuse." Imitation is suicide, for it kills creativity required of a genuine Vaggeyakara.

Creativity is a divine gift bestowed, without asking for it, on all those who hear and enjoy the communion with 'Nada' Brahma during the course of intense Sadhana. This is the Eternal Divine Music - which creates and permeates the whole universe. It is this music which Lord Christ refers to as the 'Word'. The Mohammedan Saints call it 'Kalma' while the Hindu scriptures hail it as 'Sruti', 'Nada' or 'Akash Vani'.³⁸ This science of word as practised and taught by almost all the mystic saints or mystic musicians of India is regarded as the quickest, the easiest and the most natural of all the sciences that conducts the 'margi' into 'deshi' sangita.³⁹ Nadanubhava is the experience of the inner music of the soul which pushes and purifies margi sangita into 'deshi' sangita. Deshi Sangita, the ultimate and divine destination of all music, is the 'yoni' of 'shabda brahma', of all the 'dhatu' and 'matu' creativity. It is the fulfilment of Margi Sangita.

38. St. Kirpal Singh: The Japaji, Ruhani Satsanga, Sawan Ashrama, Delhi, 1959, p. 6.

39. Mrinal Pandey: Satya Se Anshika Sakshatkara', an article in 'Kala Vinoda', edited by Ashoka Bajapeyi, National Publishing House, New Delhi, 1982, p. 38.

Here in one comes in direct contact with the 'original' beauty of Pure Music - 'mool saundarya of shuddha sangita' - "but, alas, where is it now-a-days? It is gone away".⁴⁰ Margi Sangita, in this context and from this point of view, is just like an idol-worship which when carried to its furthest limit flowers into God-realization in the way in which when 'shabda' brahma or 'moorta sangita' when practised under the benign and bountiful guidance of the soulful musician into Nada Brahma or 'amoorta sangita' in all its divine aura and splendour.⁴¹ It is an extremely difficult sadhana, walking as if on a razor's edge. The eminent musician Kishori Amonakar once said to Mrinal Pandey in an interview:

"It is true that in music we have to travel from the 'moorta' to the 'amoorta' but the 'utsa' - source - of music which at once its starting as well as consummation point, is human emotion or feeling which is essentially formless..... There does come a moment, how sover transitory, under the acute spell of 'intensity' during musical performance---

40. Ibid., p. 40.

41. Ibid., p. 40.

a moment of supreme fulfilment - having touched or seen which I return towards Raga, towards Svara, towards the listeners. It is a moment of self-forgetfulness, face to face with Nada, where nothing but Music supreme is glimpsed and wherefrom return to raga or 'svara' is ^{as} good as a return from 'amorta' to 'moorta' music..... My music is an eternal search, a ceaseless hunt, a quest to seek the Truth of Life..... It is the realm of pure bliss where there is no art, no artist, no goal, no going..... But this journey is a long and a lonely journey, as if a journey into death....."⁴²

Deshi Sangita is not the death but the divine bath and destination of 'margi' sangita. A dip into it makes the sangita sadhaka a siddha, par excellence. Kishori Amonakar was perhaps not fortunate enough to shed her human lustre and enshrine her sadhana with the ^csanctifying halo of this divine bath. She was probably content with a mere glimpse and a feeling of 'touch', as she says. She was not prepared to take a plunge into what she calls 'death' which by its' very nature has an immortalizing effect or content. Very few on the

42. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

path of classical music have even such a glimpse or touch which is enjoyable only after a ceaseless, sincere and sacrosanctly intense sangita sadhana. Rare are they who enter this gateway of death of 'moorta' sangita in order to rise and live in 'amoorta' sangita which is the ^ehaven and heavenly home - 'desha' - of Music Eternal.

Music wakes the soul, and lifts it high, and wings it with sublime contemplation, and fits it to listen to and bespeak the formless soul. In this way, music is the prophecy of what life is to be; the rainbow of promise translated out of seeing into hearing the seven svaras and several ragas. In his Sri Raga 'Pancha Ratna', Tyaga Raja describes the Lord "as revelling in the sacred music of Sama Veda - 'Sama Gana Lola' - "as Raga Rasika". Raso Vai Saha (रसो वै सः)⁴³ and living and manifesting Himself in the seven notes: "Sapta Svara Chari" (in Sripepriya in Athana).⁴⁴ It comes as one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God effective enough not only to create

43. C. Ramanujachari : The Spiritual Heritage of Tyaga Raja, Sri Rama Krishna Mission Students' Home, Madras - 4, 1957, p. 40.

44. Ibid., p. 40.

communion with Him but to create and communicate His Vision in musical compositions intelligible and enjoyable by fans and favourites of the goddess of music in the ever-fascinating lores and forms. Thomas Carlyle, a French literary luminary and connoisseur of art criticism, felt inspired to say : "The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect music has on us ? A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that :⁴⁵ Deshikas are these angels and this divine music of the angelic mystics is 'deshi' music. That is one reason why Carlyle calls music as the "speech of angels."⁴⁶

Martin Luther who was the main architect of renaissance in religion in the Sixteenth century Gemany was inspired by the divinity of this angelic music when he said : "Next to theology I give to music the highest place and honour. And we see how David and all the saints have wrought

45. Tyron Edwards, D.D., : "The New Dictionary of Thoughts", Standard Book Company, New York, 1951, p. 415.

46. Ibid., p. 414.

their godly experiences and constructs into verse, rhyme, and song."⁴⁷ Such masters of angelic music or 'deshi sangita' were kind and compassionate enough to teach music to the yearning or seeking disciples; and the way they led them to these mystical heights in music is, in our scriptures of musical lore called 'margi sangita'. The 'margi' sangita has thus been devised by our singing saints as a royal road to 'deshi' sangita which is the logical culmination and fulfilment of margi sangita. It is this 'desha' which is the home eternal of Omkar, Soundless the Primordial Sound. This abode is full of light which becomes 'Shabda' brahma or 'nāda' brahma at will and fills the universe with undying, divine music. It is experienced in heart by the Nada Yogis who in their ecstatic moments of nadanubhava sing melodies beyond description. The very soulfulness of this ineffable music has found magnetic appeal and majestic expression through the immortal songs of all the mystic musicians across the centuries down to saints like Nanak and Tyaga Raja. Nanak sings in Raga Bilawal: "The one Omkar, wholly apart,

47. M.K. Ray & D.D. Harsha : Introduction to Social Sciences : The Students' Book Company, Jaipur, 1966, p. 156.

immortal, unborn, without caste, wholly free, ineffable, without form or visible sign, but searching I perceived Him in every heart" (Bilavalu Thiti, A.G.,)⁴⁸ He continues to sing: "Nanak, all we perceive is by the grace of the Beneficent One i.e., Guru".⁴⁹ The glory and greatness of Dēshika and Deshi Music, which is the crowning and creamy development of 'Margi' sangita, is godly in nature and is thus beyond the powers of mind and speech to express or encase it in words.

Such musicians of 'deshi' depths of mysticism are the real cradles and creators of sacred music. The celestial song of Lord Krishna, Srimad Bhagwad Gita sung in Samadhi Bhava, is an example on the point. All those "who belong to such line of musician saints have employed this noble art of 'deshi - inspired 'margi' sangita for the moral and spiritual upliftment of themselves and humanity."⁵⁰ For long time since the hoary days

48. W.H. McLeod: Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968, p. 174.

49. Ibid., p. 176.

50. C. Ramanujachari: The Spiritual Heritage of Tyaga Raja, Sri Rām Krishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras, 1957, p. 41.

of Vedic Sama Gana, music had played in this country an effective role as the hand maid of religion. "The best sort of music is, said Coleridge, "what it should be sacred."⁵¹ But to become sacred music has to reach the Atman, its holy home. Only when the Deshika, in his graceful and compassionate mood to initiate and introduce the yearning soul to learn music into the Hall of Music Eternal descends to the level of the initiate, he creates the 'margi sangita' to enable the disciple to slowly and steadily step up into the realm of the heart and discover as well as discern for himself the beauty and marvel, might and majesty of the 'margi' sangita to gradually transform and shape itself into the holy music of the heart. As a seed eventually transforms itself into a tree, so does margi sangita develops and finds its complete fulfilment in Deshi Sangita. The fulfilment of margi into deshi sangita transform s the hitherto human music into Music Divine and the sangita sadhaka becomes a siddha, a perfect master musician worthy to express in and through his person musical excellence of both the Shabda and Nada Brahma. Precisely, Deshi sangita is the fulfilment and holy home of Margi Sangita which has, in its initial stages, a human apparel.

51. Ibid., p. 41.