

The Yoga of Music

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•The ancient Thirumoolar's image in the sanctum of His Samadhi-Shrine at Thiruvadu Thurai (near Kumbakonam) radiating powerful spiritual vibrations of His Presence and Power. He lived about a thousand years before.

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(Sri Aurobindo Ashram)

Tirumoolar the well known saint, sage and super-yogi and Siddhar of South India in his book of mantras called "Tirumantram" (TM) declares, "Anandam Anandam -Ā-Ī-Ū-Ē-Ōm the five centres." (ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் ஒன்று ... ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் -ஆ-ஈ-ஊ-ஏ-ஓம் என்று ஐந்து இடம்). Anandam means Bliss of the One Divine. The five main centres or chakras that are respectively evoked and activated or opened by chant of the said five long vowels **आ-ई-ऊ-ए-ओ** are as follows. **Ā** (आ ஆ) activates the spinal base or sex centre (Mooladhara); **Ī** (ई ஈ) the navel centre (Nabhi); **Ū** (ऊ ஊ) the heart centre (Hirudaya); **Ē** (ए ஏ) the throat centre (Kanta); **Ō** (ओ ஓ) the mid forehead centre (Ajna), and when **Ō** is chanted with m i.e., as **Ōm** or rather as **Ō...m...** it reaches and strikes at the top of the head i.e., the Sahasrara centre. Now these long vowels are frequently used in the Ragas. To open a particular centre one has to repeat its vowel slowly for some time, saying it twenty times or more (preferably with the loving and joyful remembrance of the one Divine). Then after stopping its chant one may observe the place or centre where the impact of its vibration has reached or struck. With a sensitive or

conscious observation one may easily feel the centre of impact and thus open the five chakras or centres by the respective five vowels which Tirumoolar mentions in his mantra TM 910. The same five centres may be also opened by the corresponding short vowels viz., A-I-U-E-O (अ-इ-उ-ए-ऌ) अ-इ-उ-ए pronounced shortly- ओ pronounced shortly). In Sanskrit and Hindi we do not have the corresponding short vowels for ए and ओ. However, one may easily adopt a short pronunciation of the said two vowels for our purpose here. We find that the pronunciation of the five short vowels has a characteristic inward or inner impact of vibration at the said five centres. Even the school going children may be consciously taught in a suitable way the method of activating a particular centre by the repeated chant of its vowel, short or long. Therefore, musicians may not find it difficult to open the main five centres as they are making a musical rendering of such vowels during Raga Alapana. If music does not help, a simple repetition of the chant of the vowels will surely cut the ice and open the centres. It is seen that the vowel ए (ऐ), pronounced in English as "I" of the first person evokes the uvula centre in the upper throat.

Now we come to the seven musical notes, Sapta Swaras or rather more appropriately to the eight notes especially from the yoga point of music. In the ascent (arohana) of the eight musical notes, Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni, Sa, evoke the inner centres (chakras) on the mid line of the body respectively at 1) the spinal base or sex centre 2) navel 3) lower abdomen below the navel i.e., Swadhishtana, 4) heart 5) uvula in the upper throat 6) mid forehead 7) top of the head (inwardly in its depth) and 8) top of the head (upwardly in its height). In the descent (avarohana) also the same

centres are respectively activated in the same manner but in the reverse order of the centres. The rhythm of centres in both the ascent and the descent is a successive order of the centres, except that as between the navel (Nabhi) and the lower abdominal centre (Swadhishtana), the former is evoked first in the ascent, whereas the latter at first in the descent. Musicians perhaps miss this important study of the yogic effect of musical notes, as they are mostly concerned with the technicalities of music, the tala and melody. Though the musical melodies and Ragas in their "nava rasas" have their own charming, sweet and melting appeal particularly at the heart centre, sometimes even with the soul-touch, the repetitive chant of the five vowels or of the eight musical notes provide a direct, conscious and simple and effective method of activating all the centres in one and all. The chant and the effect of the vowel sounds as well as of the musical notes can be consciously practised and observed by the musicians leisurely at home and it can be also taught and imparted even to the school going children without going into the technicalities of music. This will be the greatest education easily made possible even at that tender age, because life becomes more meaningful only with the opening of the centres or at the least with their conscious activation by the fundamental practice of vowels and the eight notes.

Now we may observe that the musical notes are further shortened during the course of Raga Alapana to evoke mainly the three important centres in a certain rhythm or sequence namely the mid forehead - navel - the top of head by employing respectively the respective syllables Tada - Ri (or Ra) - Nna and by lingering on the last "na" frequently with a long or short vowel of

the letters a, i, u, e, o (or Om) to make the melody of a particular Raga rich and entertaining. In short we may say that Raga Sanchalana takes place between the said three centres. It is evidently seen that "Nna" or "Na" followed by a vowel makes the combined musical note rise up directly from the Sahasrara centre. In 'Tanam' the centres are further restricted to the head region only i.e., as between Ajna the mid forehead, and Sahasrara the top head, because the syllables or letters employed now are Tada and Nna (or Nam), and these are combined to give the various shades or sounds, and all these variations can come to mean and sound "Tat Anantam" or "Tat Anandam". This reminds us again 'the rhythm of the mantra of Tirumoolar in TM 910 viz., 'Anandam Anandam is the One "Anandam Anandam - Ā-Ī-Ū-Ē-Ōm"'.

Tirumoolar in fact proceeds to give in TM 912 the most profound and secret rhythm of the five powerful vowels ever revealed to the mankind and which puts one in contact with the divine Dance of Truth-Vibration (Kooth thu.) The mantra runs thus: "Kooththē. Ī-Ū-Ā-Ē-Ōm, Kooththē-Ī-Ū-Ā-Ē-Ōm .. Kooththē-I-Ū-Ā-Ē-Ōm. It may be seen that in the last part of the manthra the only change is that the long vowel Ī (ॐ ई) is changed into the short vowel I (ॐ इ). Chant of this rhythm integrates and harmonises the mind, heart, life and the senses, the nervous system and the body at all levels of one's nature - outer, inner and the inmost - and prepares the system as a whole effectively not only for the spiritual realisation of soul, self and the Divine but also for transformation of one's nature and body into the divinised perfect nature and golden body. By practice of this chant one actually observes in silence the slow but graceful dance-like leaping movements of consciousness from the depth of one centre to another in the said order or rhythm of the powerful

vowels. At its best this rhythm of the five vowels puts one also into contact with the divine Dance and thereby brings the transforming divine Light, Bliss and Amrita into the system (adhara) and even into the physical body. Thus the same vowels as in TM 910 but cast in the said new rhythm or order as in TM 912 answer all the requirements of yoga connecting the music with the dance and that too with the divine Music and the divine Dance set to the rhythm of divine musical sounds.

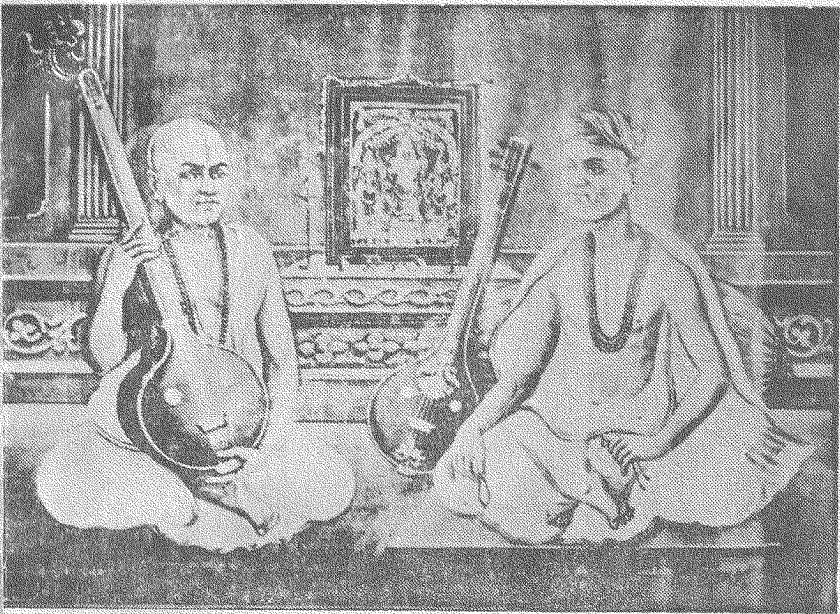
This yoga of music is meant not only for musicians or learners of music but also for all music lovers and connoisseurs of music and even of the musical dance-rhythms. But this can be consciously imparted to students also by suitable methods of repetition of vowels—for e.g. as in the style of Sama Vedic chant of vowels—and of the musical notes and phrases followed by conscious observation of the effect of the chant. The Divine as Nada Brahman becomes real only with the opening of centres by the sound of vowels or of the musical notes. As the yoga of music has come into revelation very recently because of the Spirit of Music working on the eve of the Bi-centenary celebrations of Sri Venkata Ramana Bhagavathar, the great composer and singer and worthy, faithful and saintly prime disciple of the great Saint Thyagaraja, it is dedicated at their holy Feet and to the Music-World at large.

By Courtesy to
Sri Venkata Ramana Bhagavathar
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தீருமத்திரம்: TIRUMANTRAM

- TM 910. ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் ஒன்றென் றறைந்திட
மந் ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் ஆ-ஈ-ஊ-ஏ-
ஒமென்றைந்திடம்
ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் அஞ்சம தாயிடும்
ஆனந்தம் ஆனந்தம் அம்-ஹிரீம்-அம்-சும்-
ஆம்-ஆகுமே
- TM 911. மேனி யிரண்டும் விலங்காமல் மேல்கொள்ள
மந் மேனி யிரண்டும் மிகார விகாரியா
மேனி யிரண்டும் ஊ-ஆ-ஈ-ஏ-ஒ-என்னும்
மேனி யிரண்டும் ஈ-ஒ-ஊ-ஆ-ஏ-சுத்தாமே.
- TM 912. கூத்தே சிவாய நமமசி வாயிடுங்
மந் கூத்தே-ஈ-ஊ-ஆ-ஏ-ஓம்-சிவாயநம வாயிடுங்
கூத்தே-ஈ-ஊ-ஆ-ஏ-ஓம்-சிவாயநம வாயிடுங்
கூத்தே இ-ஊ-ஆ-ஏ-ஓம் நமசிவாய கோ
ளொன்று மாறே.
- TM 913. ஒன்றிரண் டாடவோ ரொன்று முடனூட
மந் ஒன்றினின் மூன்றூட ஒரேமும் ஒத்தாட
ஒன்றினால் ஆடவோர் ஒன்பதும் உடனூட
மன்றினில் ஆடினான் மாணிக்கக் கூத்தே.



SRI VENKATA
RAMANA
BHAGAVATHAR

SAINT
THYAGARAJA
SWAMI

Saint Venkata Ramana Bhagavathar the great Composer, Singer and Musician of Carnatic Music (1781-1874) who had been the saintly and faithful prime disciple of the great saint Thyagaraja Swami and whose Bicentenary Jayanthi celebrations are now being celebrated in Tamil Nadu.