

திரு ஞானசம்பந்தர்

வாழ்வு 16 வயது

வாழ்க்கைச்சரிதம் 16 வரிச்சுருக்கம்

தவப்பயனாய் அவதரித்த கௌணியக்குழவி

உமைஅம்மையால் ஞானப்பால் ஊட்டப்பட்ட

ஆளுடைப்பிள்ளை

மூன்றிலே தோடுடையசெவியனின் காட்சியை வர்ணித்த  
சத்புத்திரன்

செந்தமிழ் பாக்களை சந்தத்துடன் பாடிய இசைவேந்தன்

இறைவனிடம் பொற்றாளம் பெற்ற செல்வக்குமரன்

ஆலயங்கள் தழைக்க யாத்திரைகள் மேற்கொண்ட  
காழிச்செம்மல்

பக்திமார்கத்தைப் பாங்குடன் பரப்பிய பிரமாபுரப்பாலகன்

விந்தைகள் பல புரிந்து துயர்கள் தீர்த்த கருணைவள்ளல்

தொண்டுகள் பற்பல நலமுடன் ஆற்றிய தோணிபுரத்தோன்றல்

கூன் பாண்டியனின் வினை போக்கிய அருட்செல்வன்

திருநீற்றின் பெருமையை திட்டமாக நிறுவிய

தெய்வத்திருமகன்

வஞ்சக சமணரை வாதில் வென்ற வித்தகன்

வேதாகமசார மெய்ப்பொருளை விளக்கிய தேவாரமுதலி

சைவநெறியை ஓங்கி உயர்த்திய சமயக்குரவர்

ஐந்தெழுத்தின் மகிமையை ஐயமின்றி போற்றிய தத்துவமேதை

பதினாறில் ஜோதிமய ஐயனுடன் சாயுஜ்யமான பாலயோகி

## 'மன்னா' ஸ்ரீனிவாசன்

பண்கள்:

யதுகுல காம்போதி (இருமத்யம தோடி)/ சாம/ நீலாம்பரி/  
சௌராஷ்டிரம்/

English version:

Incarnated in 'Kaundinya' clan at Kaazhi

Due to persevering penance by devoted 'Saivites'

Blessed with breast milk mixed with gnosis by the Supreme Mother

Describing the vision of the Supreme Lord with a verse at the age of three

Hymns pouring out in inspired flow from the 'Wunderkid'

Couched in musical Tamil with musical nuances profuse

Undertaking extensive pilgrimages with missionary zeal

Reviving temple worship and devotional culture

Performing many a miracle to relieve suffering and grief

Serving the common lot ably assisted by saint Appar

Curing the burning pain and straightening the hunchback of the Pandyan  
king

Countering the evil designs of the conspiring jains

Establishing the power of the sacred ash ('ThiruNeeru') clear and loud

Propagating the glory the 'Panchakshara' mantra

Thus was the saga of courage and service

Of the immortal 'Bala yogi' in the short span of sixteen

‘Manna’ Srinivasan

## **Music in Sambandar’s Compositions and its Impact on the Revival of the Tamizh Isai Tradition**

(Paper presented by ‘**Manna’ Srinivasan**, at the Seminar Session relating to Thiru-Gnana-Sambandar, as part of the Yogi series, organized by the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in collaboration with the India International Centre, at New Delhi, on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2007)

### **TEVARAM**

Tevaram may be referred to as Garland of verses for God, offered by the three saivite saint singers, ThiruGnanaSambandar, ThiruNavukkarasar (aka. Appar), both of CE 7<sup>th</sup> C and Sundaramoorthi (9<sup>th</sup> C).

‘Vaaram’, in Tamil music (‘Isai’) terminology, refers to medium tempo; Tevaram hymns are mostly sung in this speed.

Hymns have been arranged in decads (‘patikam’), groups of ten verses.

Out of a total of 10,300 decads, supposed to have been sung by the three saints, only about 800 decads could be retrieved.

These are contained in the first seven of the twelve- section magnum opus, referred to as Panniru ThiruMurai.

The merits of Tevaram hymns are manifold.

They are products of intense devotional fervour, philosophical profundity, richness of the Tamizh language, flourish of the music tradition and the like.

The focus of the paper is on the musical dimension.

The origins of our art forms- music, dance and others- are attributed to Divine sources.

The concept of ‘OM’ as ‘pranava nada’, is unique.

In tune with our tradition of offering in our worship and thanksgiving, the best things obtained through the grace of God, music has been a principal medium for expressing devotion.

Our Gods also have special preference to such a form of worship.

Lord Siva is particularly pleased with ‘archanai paattu’

According to a ‘bhakti’ sutra, Lord Vishnu tells Narada that ‘He does not dwell in Vaikunt nor in the hearts of the Yogin-s nor in the Sun; (but) stands there, where His devotees sing’.

(‘Naaham vasaami Vaikunte na yogirhridaye ravow  
matbhaktaah yatra gaayanti, tatra tishtaami, Narada’)

The ‘Aagama-s’, which prescribe the worship rituals in the temples and have been adopted widely in the South, particularly in Tamizh Nadu, since long, accord a very important place for music and related arts, in the scheme of ‘Shodasa Upachaara’, the sixteen types of Honours, presented to God..

Regarding ‘bhakti margam’, reference may be made to a verse in Srimad Bhagavatam(XI/5.38-40), that states ‘in Kali yug, those pursuing the path of devotion, would prefer to be in Dravida desam, where rivers like Kaveri and Tamraparni flow’.

*‘kritadishu praja rajan kalavicchnti sambhavam  
kalau khalubhavishyanti narayanaparaayanaah  
kkachit kkachina maharaj Dravideshu cha bhoorisah  
Tamraparni nadhi yatra kritamala payasvinee  
Kaveri cha mahapunya pratichi cha Mahanadhi  
Ye pibhanti jalam taasaam manuja manujeswara  
Praayo bhakta bhagavati Vasudeve amalaasayaah’*

Kabir Das has also acknowledged that the ‘bhakti’ cult originated in Dravida desam.

*‘bhakti Dravid upaji laye Ramanand  
pragat kari Kabir ne sat deep navkhand’*

Tevaram saint singers were great integrators in many respects.

They propagated a form of composite culture, integrating the ‘Vedic’ and the ‘Aagamic’ streams and the Sanskrit and the Tamizh traditions, with

emphasis on Siva worship and the 'Panchaakshara', 'NaMaSiVaYa', as the 'Taarakā' mantra.

The Tevaram saints were divinely inspired and gifted.

They were accomplished music makers, qualifying as 'uttama Vaggeyakkar-s', fashioning the lyrics as well as the music simultaneously in a spontaneous flow.

In the process, devotion and music intensified each other, benefiting and promoting both.

Tevaram hymns are referred to as 'Pann sumanta paadalgal' and 'Eezhisai InThamizh', indicating the integral nature of the musical dimension.

This dimension also proved as an effective strategy for a refreshing revival of the ancient system of Tamizh music, after some centuries of neglect.

The revival of interest was achieved through practically demonstrating the basic concepts and many nuances associated with the system, in an appealing manner through the hymns and also making many references to the rich dimensions of the art form in various places.

Music is a rich manifestation of Culture,

The antiquity and the conceptual basis of the Tamizh music tradition, are known from the information and references, contained in ancient texts like TolKaappiyam (the earliest extant Tamizh literary work, dated several centuries BCE), Sangam literature and some epics, notably Cilappadikaaram,

In this context, it may also be pointed out that the Tamizh language itself is eulogized as 'MuthTamizh', comprising three segments, viz. Eyal, Isai and Natakam (Literature, Music and Theatre).

Further, the term 'Isai' is referred to with the prefix 'Pann'. In one sense, 'pann' denotes 'raga'; it also indicates 'pann patta', cultured and refined.

In the Natya Sastra, the Dravida region is associated with 'Kaisiki vritti', a style in which, among other aspects, 'there is plenty of dancing and music'. (Ref. Chapters 14&22)

The essential ingredients of a properly evolved system of music relate to: the rational basis of the theoretical concepts regarding melody and rhythm, validity of the principles in tune with the laws of nature and physical phenomena, voice production and culture, variety of applications, growth potential, technical dimensions, developments in different branches-vocal, instrumental, solo and group, vibrancy of forms, scope for creative expressions, quality of appeal, lasting power, codified grammar, method of transmission and the like.

All these aspects are prominent in the Tamizh music system.

‘Eezhisai’, seven types of musical notes/ scales, is a basic element.

This can refer to the seven basic notes (‘Narambu’):

<u>Tamil</u>	<u>Carnatic</u>	<u>Western</u>
Kural	Shadjam	Do (C)
Tuttham	Rishabam	Re (D)
Kaikkilai	Gaandhaaram	Me (E)
Uzhai	Madhyamam	Fa (F)
Ili	Panchamam	So (G)
Vilari	Dhaivatam	La (A)
Taaram	Nishaadam	Te (B)

This is also meant to indicate the seven major (basic) scales (‘Paalai)

:

CemPaalai-----HariKambhoji  
 Padumalai-p-Paalai-----NataBhairavi (Kurinchi Yaazh)  
 Cevvazhi-p-Paalai-----Todi (with both ‘madhyamam’)  
 ArumPaalai-----Sankarabharanam  
 Kodi-p-Paalai-----Karaharapriya (‘Maruda Yaazh)  
 Vilari-p-Paalai-----Todi (Ceeri Yazh)  
 MerCemPaalai-----Kalyani

Some other important elements of the system are:

Twelve tone (‘swarasthaana’) scheme of development;  
 Concordance with Zodiac signs, ‘Vatta-p-Paalai’ arrangement;  
 The principle of the cycle of fifths (‘vanna-p-pattadai’);  
 Derivation and identification of 103 ‘panns through the process of modal shift;

Association of principal melody types with respective land categories of Hills, Woods, Plains, Seaside, and Desert; ( Kurinchi, Mullai, Marudam, Neidal and Paalai)

Classification of Pann-s according to time divisions of morning, daytime, evening, night and those, which are common;

Evocation of different emotions-‘suvai’ or ‘rasa’- through singing in appropriate variety of the ‘pann-s’;

[In this context, reference may be made to a verse in Thiru-k-Kural that states a ‘pann’ should provide full scope for singing (as per the norms prescribed); otherwise they would be like eyes without the power of sight’.

(‘Pann enaam paadarku iyaibu inrel Kann enaam kannottam illaatha kann’)]

These characteristic elements of the Tamizh music system are amply and eloquently reflected in the Tevaram hymns. In other words, the richness of the system, which could only be inferred through the textual sources, primary and secondary, was made evident in a convincing manner, in the Tevaram hymns.

Sambandar’s prodigious contribution in particular, all within a short life span of 16 years, excels in several respects.

The musical setting of the Tevaram hymns, includes the two types of ‘Pannaangam’, ie. with ‘taalam’/ time measure and ‘Suddhaangam’, without the time measure, giving scope for free singing, as in the case of ‘viruttam’.

The hymns can be rendered solo as well as in group (‘Aarittal)

From the available Tevaram hymns and the identified ‘pann-s’, 24 in all, the following points emerge:

### **Pann types employed in Tevaram Hymns and the corresponding\* Raga-s in contemporary practice**

-Natta-p-patai/ Naivalam-----	Gambira Naattai/ Naattai Kurinchi
-Cevvazhi-----	Yadukula Kaamboji (Todi with both
	Ma; VeePaKa Sundaram)
-Takka/ Takkesi-----	Kaambhoji
-Puraneermai-----	Bhoopaalam/ Bauli
-Panchamam-----	Aahiri

- Antali Kurinchi-----Saama
- Kaantaaram |
- Piyantai Kaantaaram |-----Navaroj/ Cenchuruti
- Kolli/ Kolli Kauvaanam |
- Pazham Panchuram-----Sankarabharanam
- Megaraaga Kurinchi-----Neelaambari
- PazhanTakka-----Aarabhi/ SuddhaSaaveri
- Kurinchi-----Kurinji/ HariKaamboji/ Surutti  
(NataBhairavi; VeePaKa)
- Natta |----- Pantuvarali
- Saataari ----- (Mohanam; VeePaKa)|
- ViyazhaKurinchi----- Sowrashtram
- Centurutti-----Madhyamaavati
- Intalam-----MaayaaMaalavaGaula  
modification of Todi; VeePaKa)
- KaantaaraPanchamam-----KedaaraGaula (6 notes, omit Ma;  
VeePaKa)
- Kausikam-----Bhairavi
- Ceekaamaram-----Naadanaamakriya
- Yaazhmuri-----Atana
- Tiuttaantakam-----HariKaamboji (not a ‘pann’;  
VeePaKa)

Note: May not be identical in all cases but approximate only.

There is variation between the (differing) opinions of musicologists and the singing tradition of ‘oduvar-s’.

#### References

TamizhIsa KalaiKalanchiyam, Dr. Vee Pa Ka Sundaram, Bharatidasan University, Tiruchirapalli;

PazhanTamizhar Aadalil Isai, Dr. Gnaana Kulendran, Tamil University, Thanjavur.

Of these, 22 ‘pann-s’ feature in Sambandar’s compositions.

Some of these ‘pann-s’- ‘Cevvazhi’, ‘AnthaaliKurinchi’, ‘MegaragaKurinchi’, ‘VyaazhaKurinchi’- feature only in Sambandar’s hymns.

‘Yaazhmuri’, involving variation of gait (‘isai nadai maatram’) in the same line, was a special innovation of Sambandar.

Application of many nuances like microtones (‘nutpa sruti’);

Zig- zag pattern ('Eerumaaru' or 'vakra gati');

'Yati' pattern ('muzhakku Kolam'), weaving the words in a graded manner; as for instance, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines in the hymn 'Ciraiyaarum mada-k-kiliye'; are sung in a 'Pyramid' type build up;

piraiyaalan  
    ilam piraiyaalan  
        tulangum ilam piraiyaalan  
            purattheesan tulangum ilam piraiyaalan  
                thoni purattheesan tulangum ilam piraiyaalan  
                    kadal thoni purattheesan tulangum ilam piraiyaalan  
                        turaiyaarum kadal thoni purattheesan tulangum ilam piraiyaalan

Speed variation in singing, for different lines, as in the case of the hymn 'Idarinum talarinum').

Variety of metrical pattern ('Candam'); Sambandar was the trailblazer for this aspect, later employed so distinctly in 'Thiru-p-Pugazh', by Arunagirinathar, who has acknowledged to the fact.

Reference to a variety of musical instruments, associated with the Tamizh music tradition.

'Chitrakavitvam' (palindrome), brilliant and ornamented word play.  
'Thiru-t-taala-c-chati', involving a variety of gaits etc.

When Sambandar started visiting several temples and singing the praise of the respective deities, one ThruNeelakanta Yaazhpaanar, hailing from the traditional musician community, played along on the stringed instrument, 'Sakota' Yaazh.

It is said that an uncle of Sambandar who traveled along with him, had written down the songs with the tunes.

Singing Tevaram hymns became part of temple worship practices; however, only a small portion was in circulation and repeatedly rendered.

The devout Chola Empereor, RajaRaja, who ruled from Thanjavur from AD 985 to 1014, was so inspired by listening to the hymns, that he made concerted efforts to retrieve all the hymns offered by the three saint singers, Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar.

When the available manuscripts containing the hymns were recovered, a female descendant of the Yaazhpaanar, -'Paadiniyaar' - was traced to demonstrate the method of singing.

This enlightened Chozha Emperor, also the 'builder' of the Brahadeswara Temple at Thanjavur, developed a system for the regular presentation of the Tevaram hymns, as part of the worship rituals in all the Siva temps in his kingdom, by making arrangements for the appointment of trained singers, called 'Pidarar' (later referred to as 'Oduvar'), for the purpose, also providing for percussion accompaniment on 'udukkai' and 'kotti mattalam'.

(The names of those, initially engaged for such service at the Brahadiswara Temple at Thanjavur, are found inscribed in the north western corner of the outer wall of the temple).

Such an arrangement, which is prevalent even now, though to a much limited extent, has proved so useful in preserving the tradition of Tevaram singing and of the Tamil isai in general.

In fact, the cultural efflorescence, so much associated with the Thanjavur region, could be traced to the farsighted temple- centred support system, set up by this great king.

The system continued through the centuries, developing devotion- based musical culture and atmosphere that spread to other regions also, due to the preponderance of the temples in Tamil Nadu, dotting almost every village.

Art music benefited a lot from such a devotional base created by Tevaram music and enriched further by the Bhajana sampradayam that spread later.

Such a conducive atmosphere prevailed for many centuries, during the Nayak and Maratha rules, and was a significant factor, facilitating the great composers like Tyagaraja, to make their monumental contributions and enrich the musical legacy.

In this context, it may also be of interest to know that the illustrious 'Thanjavur Quartet', Chinnayya, Ponnayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu, the four brothers, credited with the fashioning of the Bharatanatyam format, that is so widespread and popular, belonged to the 'Oduvar paramparai', hailing from a family of traditional singers of Tevaram in temples.

Gangamuthu 'Annavi', grandfather of the Quartet, had composed a 'kavuthuvam', an invocatory piece, as a tribute to Thiru Gnana

Sambandar, who is venerated as the 'Aadi Guru' by the 'Oduvar' community.

(In this context also, it may be pointed out that chance listening by the then Maratha ruler, to the rendition of Tevaram hymns by two 'oduvar-s' (father and uncle of the Quartet), at a village temple, resulted in their being invited to serve as Temple and Court musicians in Thanjavur. The Quartet grew up in such an environment benefiting further, by their discipleship under Muthuswami Dikshitar. The rest is history)

What an impact!

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