

Advaitic kritis composed by Pujya Swami Dayānanda Saraswati

The song Bho Śambho Śiva Śambho Svayambho is sung by many a singer without even knowing the composer and the writer of these wonderful lyrics. It probably it reflects the greatness of Pujya Swami Dayānandaji as a teacher, where he wants the teaching to be remembered over the teacher, the song to be remembered over the composer.

Pujya Swamiji composed many such Sanskrit kritis, in praise of different devatas. Nineteen kritis to be precise to be sung upon Gaṇapati, Someśvara, Śāradādevi, Mīñākṣi, Ṣaṇmukham, Rāma, Govinda, Dakshināmurty, ĀdiŚankara and even on our dearest Bhāratavarsha. The last of his compositions was on Devi Jnāneśwari, in praise of the Veda, our Śruti māta. Each is profound.

In the Bhagavad Gitā, Chapter 7, verse 16, Bhagavān Kṛṣṇā talks about the four bhaktas - ārta, arthārthi, jijnāsu and the jnāni. Each type of bhakta is seeking or connecting with Bhagavān through his own understanding of Bhagavān. ĀdiŚankara in his bhāsyā says चतुर्विधाः चतुःप्रकाराः भजन्ते सेवन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनः पुण्यकर्माणः हे अर्जुन। आर्तः आर्तिपरिगृहीतः तस्करव्याघ्ररोगादिना अभिभूतः आपन्नः, जिज्ञासुः भगवत्तत्त्वं ज्ञातुमिच्छति यः अर्थार्थी धनकामः, ज्ञानी विष्णोः तत्त्वविच्च हे भरतर्षभ ७।१३

Pujya Swamiji's compositions connect with each of these four types of bhaktas to his personal understanding of Bhagavān.

How do the kritis touch and have an impact on each bhakta?

The ārta, arthārthi, jijnāsu can sing or listen to these kritis, connect fully with the words and thus ask Bhagavān for all that they are seeking. The jnāni sees himself as the meaning of the words themselves.

Śabda, being a means of knowledge, is capable of connecting the singer/listener to Iśvarā/paramātma and finally make him see the truth of himself. What are kritis anyways? Śabda, words woven in musical phrases and rāgas. Thus, the lyrics of the kriti forms the basis for the kriti. The music, the singing, the rāga the bhāva and the swarās further add and aid an absorption and laya of the seeking mind. Thus, along with the music and the words of connection and jñānam, each kriti becomes a prayer towards the presiding devata. Each bhakta can potentially become a nāda-upāsaka, i.e he can choose to do upāsana of the devata through śabda and nāda i.e music, relating to the lyrics and through their musical expression, finally leading him to understanding the meaning of the words and seeing himself as the very swarupa of the words, where in ultimately, the jñānam, the jneyam and the jñānagamyam are one and the same, thus making the singer, the song and the one to be sung upon as one and the same. On the other hand, the jnāni already sees himself as the basis of all the lyrics.

In such a beautiful manner, the kritis connect with every bhakta, every seeker in his entire journey of seeking the sought, ie seeking moksha. In the light of the above, we take a closer look at all the compositions and see their lyrics and their musical expressions to understand this better.

The journey of any seeker starts with the seeker recognising his helplessness in dealing with his life and seeking help from Bhagavan. From here starts his journey as a bhakta. A bhajan is a musical form of prayer. Praying is the most intelligent and objective karma that a bhakta can do. Through the musical prayer, the bhakta surrenders his efforts, his ahanmkara, his mind at the feet of Bhagavān. With this, without he realising, a change has happened. From the standpoint of karma, he has gained puṇya. And from the standpoint of his own mind, a huge shift has happened. He has dropped his notions of being self-made, of being independent and intelligent to now being a person who needs help and seeing himself helpless in his own eyes. He has now allowed Bhagavān into his life. Hence the bhajan i.e the musical prayer itself has helped the person start his journey of a seeker. From here now, what the seeker prays for, that becomes an important question.

An āṛta, आर्तः आर्तिपरिगृहीतः तस्करव्याघ्ररोगादिना अभिभूतः आपन्नः in his life and prayers, Bhagavān is just someone more powerful, whom he runs to when in trouble. Through Swamiji's nineteen kritis on different devatas, the āṛta bhakta can connect with the devata from whom he seeks help or with his iṣṭadevata, showering love and praises on him/her. The pallavis of each composition are praises upon the respective devatas. The āṛta can connect with the names of Lord Gaṇeśha in the kriti भजे विघ्नराजम् when he runs into obstacles. He can also easily relate to the words "दीनम् अतिदीनम् बलहीनम् उद्धर माम्" (I am weak and helpless, raise me) through the kriti "हे गोवि न्द हे गोपा ल". In fact the musical expression of the phrase dīnam ati dīnam so appropriately denotes the helpless āṛta bhakta himself.

An arthārthi, अर्थार्थि धनकामः who has a give and take relationship with Bhagavān seeks comforts, profits and pleasures from Bhagavān, looks towards Bhagavān as a beneficiary who can grant boons and pleasant situations in life. He connects with the words of the kriti on Devi

Mīnākṣī as "संताप हारिणी" (Remover of pain) and on Gaṇapati as "तापत्रययुत भवरोग भैषजम् (Remover of the ills of life fraught with three fold pain) and "शतको टी विघ्न-परि हारचरणम् (Remover of countless obstacles) and on Kṛṣṇā as "कल्पद्रुम , as a wish fulfilling tree granting countless desires". He prays to Subramāṇyam as a bestower of "पशुपुत्रकलत्र-स्वगां दीष्ट-कामतत्रो" i.e wealth, children marriage heaven. He recognises himself as "संचित-सर्व-कलुषकलापम् - a bundle of gathered impurities." He may also pray to Rāma as "नित्यधर्म-चारिणम् ,दण्डिनं कोदण्डिनं दुराचार-खण्डनम्" so that dharma is at the centre of his being.

The āṛta and the arthārthi are seeking dharmārthakāma whereas a jijnāsu जिज्ञासुः भगवत्तत्त्वं ज्ञातुमिच्छति यः is basically a mokshārthi, he is seeking a way out of the samsāra, as he has seen the limitations of "जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-व्याधि-दुःखदोषाः" (seen the limitations of birth, death, old age, disease, dukha) and he prays to Rama for their भवहरम् ie freedom from them. Generally, in the kritis, the jijnāsu, can connect with the words of the anupallavi or the first part of the charaṇam. In the kriti paripālaya karivarada, the jijnāsu has seen the limitations of actions, he seeks protection from the fire of samsāra in which he is afflicted with rāga and dveṣa अविद्यादि पञ्च-क्लेशादि तप्तम् He prays to Śambho as the भवसागर-तारक one who helps to cross over the ocean of becoming. The jijnāsu, who is seeking knowledge and hence adhikāritvam for the knowledge, asks for and prays to Lord Someśvara as "शमदमादि युक्तेन प्रतिपद्यमानम् (who is known for his mature mastered mind and senses) and prays to Śāradādevi for a "स्वच्छहृदय" (pure heart) and "शुद्धसत्त्व" (pure sattva) and to Ṣaṇmukham so as to take care of the shadripus as "कामादि-षड्रिपु निघनम् (destroyer of the six enemies) and to be centred on dharma prays to Lord Rāma. He prays to Kalyāna Subramaṇyam as the "पशुपाशमोह-विनाशक" (as the dispeller of attachment to wealth, cattle and more). A jijnāsu also prays for the teaching to Lord Rāma so that he can see truth of "वशीकृत-माया-कारित-वेशम्, (lord of maya, the cause of all beings) and to Lord Dakshināmurty as "जिज्ञासु-मनोगत-हृण्मूर्ते" who is residing in the jijnāsu's heart. Through doing seva to the people of Bhāratavarsha "कुरु सेवाम्" (reach out and join in seva), a jijnāsu is able to get a mature and fertile mind, for the knowledge to be seen clearly. In the kriti on Devi Jnāneśwari, the jijnāsu asks help from Śruti Māta to cross over the ocean of samsāra, "तारयमाम्" . The jijnāsu is reassured and ensured that no matter he the worst sinner, the jnānam will help him cross over the ocean of samsāra in the kriti त्यजरे भव-भयतापम् अपि चेदसि पापकृतमः सर्वम् वृजिनम् सन्तरिष्यसि त्वम् Swamiji also imparts the teaching to a jijnāsu in two of his kritis त्यजरे भव-भयतापम् and भावये परमात्मानम्. In त्यजरे भव-भयतापम्, Swāmiji brings in the mahāvākya of the Gita ch13 verse 2. इदम् शरीरं क्षेत्रं हि विद्धि। क्षेत्रं यो वेत्ति सर्वेषु क्षेत्रेषु स हि परमात्मा अहमिति पश्य समाहितो भूत्वा i.e understand and know the body to be the kshetram within which the knower of the kshetra abides, know him to be the Paramātmā, the limitless self, I aham, with a calm pure and composed mind.

Thus from preparation of the mind up to the understanding, through śravaṇam and mananam, the jijnāsu, if he understands these words from a brahmaniṣṭha śrotriya guru, will be able to see the truth of himself. In the Kriti bhāvaye paramātmānam, which is a very contemplative kriti, for niddhidhyāsana, the jijnāsu contemplates on the limitless self.

As we move from an āṛta to an arthārthi to a jijnāsu bhakta, each can easily connect with ekarūpa bhakti to anekarūpa bhakti and move towards arūpa bhakti.

For a jnāni ज्ञानी विष्णोः तत्त्वविच्च he clearly sees arupa Gaṇapati as "प्रशस्तम् तटस्तम् समस्तम् परमपदम् नितान्त-शुद्धान्त" (altar of praise, changeless, source of all beings, limitless, bestower of blessings, ultimate goal) and arupa Śambho as "स्वयंभो निर्गुण-परब्रह्म-स्वरूप निजगुह-नितान्त, आनन्त-अक्षय, नित्य-निरंजन" (self existent, free of all attributes, Brahman, residing in the heart, untouched, limitless, not declining, incomparable, eternal, pure). Nirguṇa Someśvara as "पूतम् पवित्रम् प्रणव-स्वरूपम् नित्य-निरीहम् निगमान्तगम् कालान्तकम् (pure, purifier, in the form of Om, known through Vedanta, lord of time)

Śāradādevi as "स्वप्रकाश-रूपिणिम् शुभदाम् परापरविद्या" (self illumining, confers ultimate freedom, para and apara knowledge) Devi Mīnākṣī as परमगुह्य परब्रह्म सहाये (hidden in our hearts, creative power of limitless Brahman). Ṣaṇmukham as प्राज्ञं प्रणवार्थ-देशिकम् (all knowledge, meaning of Om). Subramaṇya as विश्वाकार-ओंकार-तत्त्वार्थमूर्ते, स्फूर्ते, सुकीर्ते (in the form of the universe, meaning of Om, manifest consciousness, lord of all glories) Lord Kṛṣṇā as "भावाभावानिर्वचनीयमाया सच्चित्त-घनरसमूर्तिम् पुण्यमनोरथपूर्तिम् हृत्स्फूर्तिम् " (in the form of maya, essence of existence consciousness, fruition of all punya, illumining all hearts) Dakshināmurti as "मूर्ते अमूर्ते आगमसार-परिपूर्ण-आत्म प्रसीदहृश अधीहि ब्रह्म " (formless and with form, vision of the Vedas, atma, limitless, lord of my heart). In the kriti on Śankarācharya, the jnāni can relate to the words of विज्ञात-परात्म-निजस्वरूपम् ज्ञेयं ध्येयं गेयम् ie he knows his atma as the paramātma, the one which is to be known, contemplated upon and attained. Thus a jnāni can completely see the truth of the words of the kritis as arupam, and ātma as paramātma, himself.

Although, a jnāni can connect and understand the truth of the entire kriti, the lyrics that the jnānis see themselves as, are in the second part of the charaṇam or in the second charaṇams of the kritis. In the Bho Śambho kriti, the ultimate culmination of the jīva-jagat-īśvara-aikyam can be understood through its words which are put together in such a way that one cannot but look at the truth of Advaita revealing satyam and mithya and thus Oneness. Where there is the clay satyam, there need not be the pot mithya, but where there is the pot mithya, there definitely is the clay satyam". Swamiji has added a final tarāṇa in the kriti as the second charaṇam, dimita dimita dimi.. which depicts the tāndava nritya of naṭeśa, naṭarāja śambho, indicating the dance of Isvara in the form of the entire jagat. Thus for a jnāni, who sees that where there is mithya, definitely there is satyam; where there is Prakriti, there is the Puruṣa sees the only One, the Himself in everyone and everything, thus depicting the Oneness.

Bhagavān Kṛṣṇā in the Gita ch10, says, I am the Sāma Veda amongst all the Vedas. वेदानाम् सामवेदोस्मि

All music has its origin in the Sāma. In fact, all the four Vedas are chanted, not read. With music as a form of expression, through the rāga, bhāva, swarās, tune and phrases; the śabda pramāṇa, the words come alive and establish an immediate and direct connection with the mind of the bhakta.

The āṛta, arthāṛti, jiṣṣāsu can sing or listen to these kritis, connect fully with the words and each kriti becomes a prayer towards the presiding devata and each bhakta has the potential to become a nāda- upāsaka. In this manner, the kritis connect with every bhakta, every seeker in his entire journey of seeking the sought, seeking moksha. The understanding of the jnāni resonates with all the words of the kriti as he sees himself as the swarupa of all forms and has understood that he was always mukta.

Thus, no bhakta, no one, is denied Oneness. No one is rejected. No one left out. As Advaita, all are in Me and I am in all, I accept all as myself. मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि .And Pujya Swamiji, through his melodious Advaitic kritis continues being true to the name conferred upon him of being Dayānanda, the one who is all compassionate, all inclusive, denying no one, accepting each and every one, as all are in him, and he is in all.

Om Tat Sat.

By Sonali Ambasankar

(Sonali Ambasankar is a student of Swamini Brahmajnanananda. A singer with training in Hindustani classical music, Sonali has learnt the kritis of Pujya Swamiji from Darshanaji.

sonali@discoveratma.com)

References : Compositions of Swami Dayānanda Saraswati, published by Swami Dayānanda

Satabhishekam Celebration Committee, Coimbatore. Compositions of Swami Dayānanda Saraswati, from the Teachings of Swami Dayānanda app by Arsha Vidya Research and Publication Trust.

Swami Sadatmananda Ji released a book during the 60th Birth Day celebration of Perur Adheenam Sri Marudhachala Adigalar on 3rd February 2020. Swamiji also presented a three-face rudraksha mala to the pontiff.

