

**CHAPTER 11 KRITIS
ON LORD SIVA
THE MUSICAL TRINITY**

Muthuswami Dikshithar

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THE MUSICAL TRINITY

During 16th and 17th
16th

16th century lived the three great composers Syama Sastri, Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar in the district of Tiruvarur. This period is the brightest epoch in the history of Carnatic music, often called the 'Golden Age' of South Indian music. All three were great composers and were responsible for making Tanjavur popular as a seat of music. They were also known as the *Vaggeyakaratrayam* of South India. The three composers were also well versed in the Vedas, Sastras and sacred lore. They were highly skilled in astrology and Mantra Sastras. The 'Trimurtis' were contemporaries, who were born in Tiruvarur and lived in Tanjavur.

The Musical Trinity are : i. Syama Sastri 1762 – 1827 A.D. ii. Tyagaraja 1767 – 1847 A.D. iii. Muthuswami Dikshitar 1775 - 1835 A.D. Among the three great composers, Muthuswami Dikshitar

has contributed the most to the propagation of songs on Lord Siva. Syama Sastri most popular songs on Lord Siva are *Parakela* and *Jhambuphala*. Tyagaraja composed many songs on Siva like in his *Kovur Pancharatnam* he sang *Sambho Mahadeva* in Pantuvarali ragam set to Rupaka talam and *Sundareswaruni* in Sankarabaranam ragam set to Adi talam. In honour of Siva at Tiruvaigar he composed the song *Ebi Trijagadisa* in Saranga ragam set to Misra Chapu talam. *Siva Siva Ena Radha* is his another popular song on Lord Siva.

Muthuswami Dikshitar Ramaswami Dikshitar and Subbulakshmi Ammal, parents of

Muthuswami Dikshitar, lived in Virinchipuram 1, near Kanchipuram.

1. Virinchipuram is about 71 Kms from Chennai.

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Consequently, Ramaswami, who brought the Hamsadvani ragam into existence, migrated with his family to Tiruvadamarudur. Ramaswami got his vocal and veena training under Muddu Venkatamakhi, who was the collateral descendent of the great Venkatamakhi author of the work *Chaturdandi Prakasikai* in which he spoke about the 72 Melakarta ragams. Ramaswami Dikshitar, the renowned composer of the *Ashtothara Sata Raga Tala Maligai* (a garland of 108 Raga Tala compositions), went to Tanjavur, Mayiladhuturai and finally reached Chidambaram. After his veena performance at the Nataraja Golden Temple, a Yogi by name Chidambaranatha who happened to be there, requested Ramaswami to go and settle in Tiruvarur.

Muthuswami Dikshitar was born on 24th March 1775 in Tiruvarur after his parents worshipped Lord Muthu Kumaraswami at Vaitheeswaran temple. His parents named him Muthuswami after the deity of the Vaitheeswaran temple. Muthuswami Dikshitar was the eldest son of the family and had two brothers named Chinnaswami and Balaswami. His sister was named Balambal.

While his father was attending a function in Manali as the chief guest, Chidambaranatha Yogi came there and spent some time with Ramaswami. The latter sent his eldest son to Varanasi with the Yogi to stay there for five years. Muthuswami learned Hindustani music particularly the Dhrupad style, and continued learning the Mantras and Sastras. When he had attained Mantra Siddhi, Chidambaranatha Yogi told Muthuswami Dikshitar to stand in the Ganges River in hip-deep water, pray to the Lord and ask for anything with the palms facing the sky. Accordingly, Muthuswami went to the Ganges and after worshipping the Lord, he was gifted a *Yali Mukha Veena* (head-piece Veena) in his hands.

After the death of Chidambaranatha Yogi, Muthuswami returned to Manali. Following the request of the Yogi,
2. Manali is found the North of India in the Himachal Pradesh State.

132 Singing with Saivite Saints Muthuswami Dikshitar went to the Tirugiri sthala, now known as Tiruttani's temple. The youngest of the Musical Trinity, stayed there for 45 days, praying and meditating on Lord Subramaniam. One day Lord Subramaniam appeared in front of him and put a piece of sugar candy in his mouth and disappeared. Instantly, Muthuswami composed his first song. *Sri Natadi Guruguha Jayati* in Mayamalavagaulai ragam set to Adi talam. He was also blessed by the Lord to use the word Guruguha as the mudra in his kritis.

Muthuswami then proceeded to Kanchipuram and sang in praise of Lord Siva at the Ekambareswara temple. The compositions sung on Lord Siva as Ekambaranatha are:

Song Ragam Talam

- 1 Ekamranatham bhaja Purvi Kalyani Adi
- 2 Ekamranathaya Veera Vasanta Rupakam
- 3 Ekamranatheswarana Chaturangini Adi

Muthuswami composed four Ragamaligais (Garlands of ragams). The '*Sri Viswanathan*' Ragamaligai in 14 Ragas is called the '*Chaturdasa Bhuvana Rupa Ragamaligai*'. The *Pallavi* is in Sri and Arabhi ragams. The *Anupallavi* is set to Gauri, Natta, Gaulai and Mohana ragams. The ragams Sama, Lalita, Bhairavam, Saranga, Sankarabharanam, Kambhoji, Devapriya and Bhupalam made up the *Charanam*.

Dikshitar has composed many group Kritis among which, the *Pancha Lingam Kritis* of Tiruvarur and the *Pancha Bhuta Kshetra Kritis* are well known. The *Pancha Lingam Kritis* of Tiruvarur are:

Song Lingam Ragam Talam

- 1 Sada Chaleswara Achaleswara Bhupalam Adi
- 2 Anandeswarena Anandeswara Ananda Misra Chapu Bhairavi
3. Tiruttani is 86 kms from Chennai.

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3 Hatakeswara Hatakeswara Bilahari Rupakam

4 Siddhisvaraya Siddhiswara Neelambari Misra Chapu

5 Sri Valmikalinga Valmikalingam Kambhoji Ata

The *Panchabhuta Kshetra Kritis* are the five compositions Muthuswami has sung in praise of the five holy places of pilgrimage (Kshetra) where Lord Siva is the main deity and is found in South India. They represent the five elements namely, earth (Prithvi), water (Appu), fire (Tejas), air (Vayu) and ether (Akasha), Muthuswami has sung beautifully at all these sacred shrines and some of them has become very popular. The *Pancha Bhuta Kshetra Kritis* are:

Song Ragam Talam Element Place

1. Chintayam Bhairavi Rupaka Prithvi Kanchipuram
2. Jambupate Yamunakalyani Tisra Ekam Appu Trichy
3. Arunachalanatham Saranga Rupaka Tejas Tiruvannamalai
4. Sri Kalahastisa Huseni Jhampa Vayu Kalahasti
5. Anada Natanam Kedara Gowlai Misra Chapu Akasa Chidambaram

Another group Kritis Muthuswami composed is the '*Siva Navavarana Kritis*' consisting of eleven compositions in praise of God Siva as Tyagaraja for the Tiruvarur sthala. It is said that Muthuswami would sit at the entrance of the northern gopuram of the Tiruvarur Temple and compose those songs:

Song Ragam Talam

- 1 Tyagaraja Daryam Darbar Adi
- 2 Tyagarajam Bhajare Manasa Rudrapriya Adi
- 3 Tyagaraja Maha Sri Adi
- 4 Tyagarajam Bhajare Re Yadukula Kambhoji Misra Chapu

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5 Tyagarajam Bhajeham Neelambari Rupakam

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6 Tyagaraja Palaya Gaula Adi

7 Tyagaraja Namaste Begada Rupakam

8 Tyagaraja Krtya Saranga Jhampa

9 Tyagarajanesam Salaga Bhairavi Adi

10 Tyagaraja Virajate Athana Rupakam

11 Tyagaraja Yoga Vaibhavam Ananda Bhairavi Rupakam

Besides group kritis, Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed many famous compositions like '*Bhajarere Chitta*' in Kalyani ragam set to Misra Ekam at the Vaitheeswaran temple. He also sang '*Brihadeeswaram*' in Sankarabharanam set to Adi talam on Lord Siva at the Tanjavur Big Temple. Muthuswami also sang the composition 'Sundaramurthim Asrayami Siva' in Takka ragam set to Rupaka talam on Sundaramurthi Nayanar.

In the composition '*Sri Kalahastisa*' from the '*Pancha Bhuta Kshetra*' Kritis, Muthuswami makes reference to Kannappa Nayanar, another Saivite Nayanar. In the last part of the song he said, "*GnanaGuruguba Satchidanandaraya Murthe Hinajati Kiratakena Pujita Kirtē*" saying to Lord Siva "You are Pasupati - The Lord of all beings and received the Gnana Upadesa from Gurukula. You are the embodiment of existence, knowledge and bliss and, You have the fame of being worshipped by a hunter of low social status."

At Chidambaram Nataraja temple, Muthuswami has composed many songs and some well-known are:

Song Ragam Talam

1 Chidambara Nataraja Namasraye Kedara Gowlai Adi

2 Chidambara Nataraja Murtim Tanu Kirti Misra Chapu

3 Chidambareswara Dhunibhina Shadjam Adi

In Nagapattinam, Muthuswami Dikshitar composed the song '*Sundarajam Asraye*' in Brindavana Saranga ragam set to

Singing with Saivite Saints 135 Adi talam. He also sang on Lord Dakshinamurti the composition '*Dakshinamurti*' in Sankarabaranam set to Jhampa talam at the Tiruvarur sthala.

One day Dikshitar went to Tirukilvelur for having the Darshan of Lord Siva. Tirukilvelur is now known as Kivalur, situated between Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam. The temple is also known as Peruntirukkoyil. The unique feature of the temple is that God Siva appeared before Saint Agastya in the form of Lord Nataraja, with the right foot lifted in dance.

Just as Muthuswami Dikshitar was entering the temple the priest closed the doors asking him to come the next day as Lord Siva certainly would wait for him. Full of fervor he sang the composition '*Akshayalinga Vibho Swayambo*' in Sankarabharanam Ragam set to Chapu talam. Immediately after, the doors of the temple opened and Dikshitar had the blessing of Lord Siva.

Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed songs on almost all deities. On Lord Siva he has sung around 112 compositions. Generally there is only one Charanam in his songs, unlike those of Tyagaraja swami. Madhyamakala Sahityas are abundantly found in Dikshitar's kritis. The songs contain many decorative extra angas like *Gopucha Yati*, *Strotovaha Yati*, *Chittaswaram* and *Sollukkattus* which reveal his skill in Sahityam.

Muthuswami is the musician who perhaps visited the largest number of sthalas in South India and has sung on the presiding deity in each one of them. Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed around 500 songs, most of which are widely sung in music concerts today. Each of his compositions is unique and brilliantly crafted. His compositions also contain much information about musical instruments and history of the temples. Dikshitar had as disciples his two brothers Chinnaswami and Balaswami. The Tanjore Quartet namely; Sivanandam, Ponnaiya, Chinnaya and Vadivelu, composers of music for Bharatanatyam, learnt from Dikshitar. Suddha

136 *Singing with Saivite Saints* Mridangam Tamibiyappa is another prime disciple of the great composer. At Ettayapuram⁴ on 21st October 1835, Muthuswami Dikshitar asked his students to sing. While they were singing the line “*Meena lochani paasa Mochan?*” in the Gamakakriya ragam, Muthuswami raise his hands, saying ‘*Sive Pahi?*’ and left his physical body.

3. Ettayapuram is 133 kms from Madurai, in the Tuticorin district, in South Tamil Nadu.

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MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR KRITI

“ Pancha Bhutha Kriti” (Chidambaram)

Ragam: Kedara Gowlai **Talam:** Misra chapu

Pallavi : Ananda Natana Prakasam Chitsabhesam
Asrayami Siva Kamavalli nesa,

Anupallavi: Bhanukoti Kotisankasam Bhukti
Mukti Prada Daharakasam Dinajana
samrakshana Canam Divya Pantanjali
Vyaghrapada Darsitakunjit Abjajaranam

Charanam : Sitamsu Gangadharam Nilakandharam Sri Kedaradi
Kshetra Dharam Bhutesam Sarddu Lacharmambaram Chidambaram
Bhusura Trisahasra Muniswaram Visweshwaram Nava Nitahridayam
Sadaya Guruguhamadyam Vedaredyam Vitaraginammaprimeya
Advaita Pratipadyam SanGita Vidya Vinodatandavajata Bahutara
Bhedacodyam

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MEANING

Pallavi Blissful dance of Light in the Halls of Consciousness I seek
refuge in the Beloved of Sivakaamavalli

Anupallavi Of infinite brilliance Granter of salvation Protector of
the weak The beautiful, divine Feet that Patanjali and Vyaagrapada To
Him, I surrender.

Charanam On His Head he bears the Ganga, blue-throated is He
He abides in such Holy shrines as Kedarnath As He does in the
elemental temples, as Space in
Chidambaram Lord of the Worlds Always in the heart of 'guruguha'
Source of Vedas and Giver of knowledge The Non-dual Lord of
music and dance In many ways can You be praised!



Siva Temple - Kivalur
Tyagesar Temple - Tiruvarur