

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

Songs of
Chidambaram

Chidambara Geetham

Specially made for Annamalai University
Music Academy



ASSA
Editions

Author's Notes

Music

It is said that songs flow like a spring when the fire of fervour melts the heart and makes it overflow with love. Music is created naturally – the voice and pitch unite and merge, the changes in melody and timing in music remain in perfect harmony, the meaning of the song is clearly understood and stirs the hearts of those who listen to it; full of emotions that melt the heart, it contains the nine shades of emotions delineated with finesse; like the sea and the spring bird, it highlights the presence of God in the arts and is designed to reform the home and the country – that is indeed music! The fruit of music is the blissful God!

Shuddhananda Bharati

Madras, 10 02 1943

Editor's Notes

We submit the *Songs of Chidambaram (Chidambaram Geetham)* at the feet of the Lord of Chidambaram. These songs were composed by Kavi Yogi Sri Shuddhananda Bharati for his own meditation and worship. Today, Tamil Nadu is celebrating the magnificence of these compositions: these songs are being presented in many music concerts and played on the radio and concerts.

Some words about the meaning of Chidambaram. Chidambaram (Tillai) is one of the most ancient and most celebrated shrines in India, located in Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu. It is of great religious as well as historic and cultural significance. Chidambaram is associated with Lord Nataraja or Shiva in his "Ananda Tandava" pose (the cosmic dance of bliss) in the cosmic Golden Hall and the Hall of Consciousness ('Chit Sa-bha'). Lord Shiva is worshipped here in the "formless form" of the Chidambara Rahasyam, and the temple is known for its Akasha Lingam (Sky Lingam), an embodiment of Shiva as formless space. This is one of the few temples where Shiva and Vishnu are enshrined under one roof. Chidambaram is also known as Tillai Ambalam.

Bowing to the wishes of the eminent classical Tamil expert and patron of the Tamil music movement, the Raja of Chettinad Dr. Sir Annamalai Chettiar, Swami had sent these compositions to Annamalai University. The Raja of Chettinad expressed his appreciation of these songs to the university faculty, listened to musicians singing these compositions and conveyed his happiness and encouragement to Swami in several letters. We are eternally grateful

for his love and enthusiasm extended for the publication of this book!

We express our gratitude to the Registrar of Annamalai University Sri N. Viswanatha Iyer M.A., L.T., who has contributed greatly to propagate these songs with the help of many eminent musicians. The photographs of the holy temple of Chidambaram and the image of Lord Nataraja included at the beginning of this book are newly taken and sent to us with the kind consent of the Raja of Chettinad upon our request; we express our gratitude to his magnanimity.

The group of musicians associated with the Annamalai University has appreciated and presented these songs. Musical gems such as Sangeetha Kalanidhi Tiger Varadachariar, M. S. Subbalakshmi, Srimathi Vasanthakokilam, Srimathi Pattammal, kings of music Chittoor Subramania Pillai, Sri M. M. Dhandapani Desikar, Alandur brothers, Sri M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar provided an aural feast to the Tamil people by singing these songs and are continuing to do so. We express our gratitude to these musicians.

Yogi Sri Shuddhananda Bharati has a profound knowledge of all religions and paths of yoga; a rare mystic with deep understanding of the principles of *Vedanta* and *Siddhanta*, he has adopted Lord Nataraja as his God of worship.

The Lord Nataraja worshipped by him is the benevolent God worthy of worship by all religions; everyone's heart is Thillai; the beloved light dancing there is Nataraja. Read its explanation in the book "*Nataraja Upasanai*". All the secrets perceived by sages skilled in the *Vedas* and the *Agamas*, all

the arts including dance, music and beauty, all the significance of *Vedanta* and *Siddhanta* and all the practices to attain pure, true enlightenment shine bright in Nataraja's form. He who is endowed with the arm that bestows grace, the hand that nurtures the divine flame, the hand that shows the sacred feet, the Vedic hand that beats the drum to create music, the holy raised foot offering refuge to devotees, the benign divine face filled with the glow of blissful light – our hearts melt with love thinking about our Father and Mother that is Lord Nataraja. We submit these divine songs composed in His worship as an offering to Him and present them to devotees submerged in their love for Him.

Out of the numerous keertanams composed by Sri Shuddhananda Bharati, we intend to select about 400 compositions and set them to music with swaras (musical notes). They will be published in a book titled "*Shuddhananda Keertanam*" at the appropriate time. May the Lord of Chidambaram bless our endeavours!

We will find in this book 115 new pleasing compositions.

It is a real pleasure for me to present *Songs of Chidambaram* to you. Thank you, Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati for having transmitted *Songs of Chidambaram*.

With the blessing of *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*.

God is Love!

Christian Piaget



Nataraja dancing



Chidambaram Temple in 1870

Courage!

*The night is through,
The chain of slavery
It is already broken –
I am full of courage!*

*Peace in the morning,
A golden sun rises
Like a lion superhuman
To accomplish my dream.*

*A hopeful smile,
Docile as a child
Who plays in the infinite
With a fiery star.*

*My journey is over;
I enjoy time;
The universe is my nest;
Of eternal spring.*

Song of Unity

*Unite. Unite, Unite, Oh Souls
Unite and play your roles
Unite in mind, unite in heart
Unite in whole, unite in part
Like words and tunes and senses in song
Let East and West unite and live long
Trees are many; the grove is one
Branches are many; tree is one
Shores are many; sea is one
Limbs are many; body is one
Bodies are many; self is one
Stars are many; sky is one
Flowers are many; honey is one
Pages are many; book is one
Thoughts are many; thinker is one
Tastes are many; taster is one
Actors are many; the drama is one
Nations are many; the world is one
Religions are many; Truth is one
The wise are many; Wisdom is one
Beings are many; breath is one
Classes are many; college is one
Find out this One behind the many
Then life shall enjoy peaceful harmony*

Peace Anthem

*Peace for all, peace for all
For all the countries peace
Joy for all, joy for all
For all the nations joy
A rosy morning peace
A smiling summer joy (Peace for all)*

*All for each and each for all
This is the golden rule
Life and Light and Love for all
For all that live our love (Peace for all)*

*Work and food and clothes for all
Equal status for all
Health and home and school for all
A happy world for all (Peace for all)*

*No idle rich, no more beggars
All are equal workers
No more tears, no more fears
The heart is full of cheers (Peace for all)*

*No atom scare, no fat mammon
No room for war demon
Like leaves in the trees, like rays in the sun
We are one communion,
One Divine communion (Peace for all)*

*The good in you is good for all
Your life is life for all
The God in you is God for all
Your love is love for all (Peace for all)*

*For he or she or it or the rest
This collective life is best
This Universal Life is best
North or South, or East or West (Peace for all)*

*Peace for plants and birds and beasts
For hills and streams and woods
Peace in Home – land and air and sea
Dynamic peace we see
Peace for all, peace for all*

Immortal Peace for All

Presentation of
Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati
11th May 1897 – 7th March 1990
The wise one to the cosmic age

Although more than 90 years old, in his school in the south of India, *Kavi Yogi Maharishi* (great divine visionary, wise poet), Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati worked like a young man of twenty. When he was asked his age, he answered: "My age is Courage!"

The Yogi wrote several hundred works in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Sanskrit: five thousand songs, and fifteen hundred poems in French. The magnum opus of the man conscious of the presence of God in him, *Bharata Shakti*, (in 50,000 verses) described his ideal: only One Humanity living in communion with only One God in a transformed world! *Bharata Shakti* is a monumental and unique work. The Yogi depicts the gasoline of all the religions, of all the prophets and saints, all the approaches of *Yoga* and all the cultures on an allegorical fabric. It is a book for any age which all spiritual researchers and all nations should read and meditate on. This work was completed and appreciated by Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Romain Rolland, Annie Besant, Bertrand Russell, George Bernard Shaw, Dr. Suzuki and so many others. It installs the author among the great, men such as Dante, Homer, Racine, Shakespeare, Vyasa, and Valmiki.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati is the greatest Tamil poet, having translated into this language: *Gita*, *Upanishads*, *Veda*,

the *Bible*, the *Koran*, *Avesta*, the *Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha* and *Tattvartha Sutra*, the life and teachings of Lao-Tseu and Confucius. From their original languages, he also translated into Tamil *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, the tragedies of Racine, the comedies of Molière, the dramas of Corneille, Shakespeare, Goethe and the novels of Anatole France, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and others.

Shuddhananda's works are innumerable. Malcolm Macdonald, who chaired the Congress on the Unity of the Conscience in Singapore, said in his short speech about him: "He is such a remarkable man, having such a diversity of raised gifts, that it is difficult to know where to start and where to finish when one speaks about Kavi Yogi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati. Few men have achieved as many things in only one human life." His name appears moreover in the Encyclopaedia of the World's Great Men, which says: "Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati is the author of literary works of varied styles: works epic and lyric, melodramas, operas, comedies, pastoral, romance, novels, biographies, commentaries on famous works and texts. *Bharata Shakti* is his magnum opus." He had a presentiment that he would receive the Nobel Prize for Peace or for Literature but did not live to see it. His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, "*Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul (Expérience d'une Âme de Pèlerin)*."

God I loved and lived in him,
Making His commandment
Leave to Man his entire talents
This is my will!

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati
Editions ASSA, Christian Piaget

Invocation song

Tiruthandagam

O Divine fruit that sprouted in the pristine flood of bliss,
Thou who is the mountain of grace-filled light that capti-
vates my mind everyday

The Lord who redresses the grievances
of the devout taking refuge in Him

Siva who performs the cosmic dance in the heart
with anklets tinkling to the sound of Aum

Supreme Lord, bless me with a little grace so I may worship
Thee with words in sweet Tamil and attain redemption!

Shuddhananda Bharati

Songs of Chidambaram

1. In the heart filled with love

Meditation – Ragamalika

In the heart filled with love,
Thou shall dance joyously as the gracious witness,
Thou shall create streams of music in the tongues
of devotees who chant Hara Hara Sivayanama!
I know nothing other than Thine flower-like feet;
I yearn only to sing about Thy greatness in exalted Tamil
And spread Thy glory in the whole world!
Bestow Thy grace on me, Thou who is the sun shining
in the cave of the heart day and night,
My Father who says 'here it is' and bestows whatever
one desires
My Mother who feeds and nurtures me!
Sweet light, the enchanting experience
that arrives in solitary silence!
Thou who provides solace and the light of liberation,
Supreme Lord Siva of Chidambaram!

2. At the feet of Nataraja

Raga: Thodi – Tala: Aadhi

I surrender at Thine feet Nataraja

Thou are my supreme Guru

Lord I surrender at Thine feet

O supreme God of shining light

I meditated always on Thee with the beautiful Shakti

by Your side

Lord I surrender at Thine feet!

Reaching the divine court with a pure mind

Singing with a conscious mind immersed in meditation

Dancing to the beat of 'thathimi' in a delirium

of devotion

I sought only the boon of supreme bliss;

Have mercy on me, bless me with Thy grace

Be with me and in me always!

Lord I surrender at Thine feet!

3. Pitch perfect notes

Raga: Poorvakalyani – Tala: Aadhi

May You create pitch perfect notes

May You fill the veena of life with the nectar of music,

O Jagadeeswara

May You create pitch perfect notes!

Chanting Sankara Samba Sadasiva Aum Hara Sambu

My life shall attain salvation

May You create pitch perfect notes!

Like the chorus of birds singing in the morning

Like the deep roar of the surging ocean

Like the breeze caressing the flowers

Like the buzzing of the bees feeding on the honey

May You create pitch perfect notes!

Like the cacophonous clouds disgorging rain

Like the noisy gushing of the mountain spring

Like the rattling march of the celestial worlds

I shall also dance with tinkling anklets!

May You create pitch perfect notes!

4. Like a spring

Raga: Asaveri – Tala: Chapu

Like the spring and the morning sparrow
I sing about Thy grace

I do not beat the drum of victory on the street

I do not seek fame in all directions

Depicting Your artistic triumphs in the wind, in the
sunshine and the sea;

You pour Your nectar of music in my heart and nurture
the joy of life;

Praised or slandered by the world, I cannot desist from
singing Your praises;

All I do is worship You, unaware as I am of other display.

My flowers of love repose on Your feet

Siva – my supreme preceptor

I surrender at Your feet.

5. I had a wish

Raga: Harikedara kaulam – Tala: Tripudai

O bee I had a wish – to sing along
with you in praise of the Lord
I had a wish...

Quaffing quantities of honey from scented flowers
Buzzing around, buzzing around,
For the well-being of all,
I had a wish...

O glowing gem in the sky, beloved wise one,
O beauty of the spring flower,
music of the golden nightingale,
O Vedic one creating music like the silently
flowing mountain spring,
Thou are the mystic plying three trades!
I had a wish...

6. In the silent night

Raga: Neelambari – Tala: Desadhi

Was it You singing in the silent night?

Thou who rises as the embodiment of righteousness,
Supreme Lord

Was it You singing in the night?

When the arrogant, beastly mind subsides into sleep,
When ignorant attachment vanishes and peace prevails,
Like the veena and the lute, the *Vedas* and the Mantras,
Like a fountain of sugarcane juice, in my heart
Was it You singing in the silent night?

7. O Perfect Bliss

Raga: Piyagu – Tala: Rupaka

O Perfect Bliss – Aum

Divine Brahman Nama

The light of grace shining all over the world

For ever You reign from the throne in my heart

O Perfect Bliss!

Beyond differences of caste, religion and colour

Thou are the luminous soul without beginning or end

Without physical qualities, beyond name and form

Thou with attributes who enunciates the mantra

Aum Tat Sat

O Perfect bliss

Divine Brahman Nama!

8. Who says He does not exist?

Raga: Biyakadai – Tala: Sabu

Who says He does not exist?

– Go, see my Father in Thillai!

With a benign smile that will dissolve a stone

He stands as a compassionate beacon of light

Who says He does not exist?

Enlightened warriors devoid of sorrow and attachment

Wise men immersed in pure Sivam

Those at peace with their thirst quenched

He is the God they worship in the heart

Who says He does not exist?

Omniscient One who can transform stone into fruit

Dearly beloved the embodiment of beauty

Omnipresent God, Lord of Chidambaram

Who dances in the hearts of devotees

Who says He does not exist?

9. Think of it as Chidambaram

Raga: Bangaala – Tala: Aadhi

Think of it as Chidambaram O mind,
Think of it as Chidambaram!

The intoxicated wandering mind shall quieten
Nectar shall fill the heart's flower
Think of it as Chidambaram!

Destroyer of innumerable desires, the lover of Sivakami,
The Lord who shows Himself to pure-minded devotees
Dancer in the divine court of Thillai
Master of the nine emotions of dance
Think of it as Chidambaram!

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