

Dr. Shuddhananda
Bharati

Saint Thyagaraja

The divine singer

Maharshi Thayumanar

His life and teachings



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Editor's Notes

Saint Thyagaraja is the triumph of Indian art and music. India is celebrating the bicentenary of the seer-poet. This book commemorates his bicentenary. We have delight in publishing this book by a modern seer-poet to honour the occasion. Seer-poets live in tune with the Divine and their art is an efflorescence of the inner beauty. Thyagaraja is the eternal voice of India's soul. His songs are our spiritual heritage. Their influence on the hearts and minds of the people at large is widening. He is a reincarnation of Valmiki and an apostle of Bhakti Yoga.

Kavi Yogi Maharishi Shuddhananda Bharati is a votary of Thyagaraja since his boyhood and imbibed his spirit. His songs, which are popular in the land, draw their inspiration from Thyagaraja. One of his ancestors was very close to the saint and could sing many kirtans of Thyagaraja. On hearing them daily our Kavi Yogi too was fired with psychic devotion for song-offering.

Kavi Yogi has sung more than 5000 kirtans. His outstanding genius as a modern poet and composer has been acknowledged by the Madras State Sangita Nataka Sangham which granted him Rs. 1000 to publish his *Kirtananjali* and awarded him the title of Sahitya Karta (Sahitya Akademi awards). His life, his poems, his writings and his very breath are consecrations to God. He is the author of 1000 works in several languages.

We are much obliged to Sri C. Mothaliyandan Chetty in Madras/Chennai for taking so much interest in publishing this valuable book, the first edition in India. Kala Ranjani,

initiated by the Kavi Yogi, has great pleasure in releasing this book under the presidency of Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam (ex-premier of Madras).

In part two, the soul-thrilling hymns of *Maharshi Thayumanar* are sung in every Tamil home. They are sublime *Upanishads*. They inspired the author of this book, Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati, in his boyhood. The Yogi dedicates this humble flower of love to the Jnani Thayumanar. We hope that a study of this book will kindle the Divine spark latent in every heart.

It is a real pleasure for me to present *Saint Thyagaraja* and *Maharshi Thayumanar* to you. We have much to learn from this wonderful text! Thank you to Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati for having transmitted *Saint Thyagaraja* and *Maharshi Thayumanar* to us. With the blessing of *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*.

Christian Piaget

Foreword

The spirit of Thyagaraja

During my long sojourn, I had the joy of seeing the Rama adored by the seer-poet Thyagaraja in his own ancient home. I also attended the first Thyagaraja festival in his Samadhi. My evening meditation was spent there in solemn solitude. I contemplated upon the high-souled genius. My meditation took the form of this song. Let the Divine love which fired the heart of the master-singer, spark out in our hearts and thrill our souls with its entrancing sweetness!

One serene day, I sat alone
Under that peaceful vault;
Its mystic silence had a tone,
Its air, a touch occult.

Is graveyard Thy solemn retreat
O voice of Divine Love?
Speak O music soul, I entreat
From below or above.

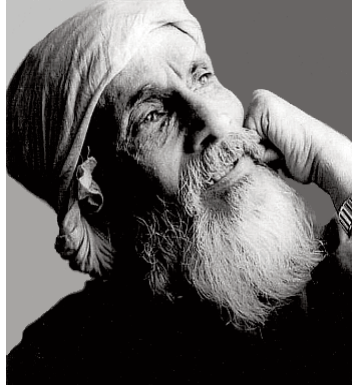
Thy name and fame are soaring high
Spirit breathing in song;
Thy grand festival is well nigh,
O come before the throng!

A king gives his grand palace,
The rich offer Thee gold;
The applause of the populace
Thunder at Thy threshold.

Spirit

Thyaga's spirit rose like a flame
From the song of the flood;
And said: "I live in Rama's name
And not in bone or blood.
I know the pricks of all pleasures
Of a king and his court;
Song offerings are my treasures,
Ram is my rich comfort.
Crowns and kingdoms roll down to dust
And fame is brushed away;
Today's sweets tomorrow disgust;
And tallest bodies decay.
Tempter, leave me in solid peace
With Rama and my song;
No mansion has that high solace;
To none else I belong.
No golden portal need greet me
No praise nor loud applause;
Say Ram, sing Ram, sink in and see
The light of Ram in peace."
The spirit vanished in silence;
The flood was singing Aum;
My heart felt a Divine presence;
And tongue was singing Ram!

Hail Aum Sudarsana
Hail wheel of victory
Hail grace of sri Rama
We breathe in Thy glory!



Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati



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 sense 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 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 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





Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati



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 essence 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. His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, *Pilgrim Soul*. The three poems mentioned in the opening express perfectly his ideal. His mantra, *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*, nourishes our souls and guides our steps toward the inner joy *Ananda*. It means: The light of Grace and power of the pure supreme Almighty bless us of peace, happiness and prosperity! Let the beauty and greatness of soul of Dr. Bharati Shuddhananda bloom and scent the entire Earth of its divine message and his spiritual and unifying benefactor!

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THIAGARAJA

(1759 TO 1847)

With permission from Jagannohan Palace, Mysore.

Saint Thyagaraja



Part one

Thyagaraja the Divine singer

1. Temple of saints

India is a temple of holy saints. Their word is the bedrock of her civilization and their life the eternal lamp of her glory. They are gems of serene radiance. Thyagaraja is such a brilliant gem adorning the crown of the Indian muse.

2. The Rama kokilam

Sage Valmiki is described as the koil that sings the sweet name of Rama from the bow of poesy. Thyagaraja is the koil of Ram Nam-Ram Kokilam who warbles the glory of Rama from honey-dropping arbour of music. He is a Mira in emotion, a Kabir in devotion, a Purandara Das in music and a Nammalvar in vision. His songs are sparks of love, iridescent with the charm of psychic emotion. Thyagaraja's lyric is a cadenced ecstasy of devotional fervour. Its soul is Ram and its body is music; the words are its clothing and aspiration for the Divine is its heart.

3. The carnatic music

Music is the entrancing symphony of the soul. It touches all souls directly and transforms emotions. Music is the melodious flow of the inner flute-voice. The universe

swims in its ethereal harmony. Life is its sweet efflorescence, it flows from heart to heart, from soul to soul. By deep divine fervour, by pure devotion, by mantra japa, by concentration and meditation, the cosmic energy rushes up and opens the psychic centres, hits the laryngeal plexus and releases the pent-up power there. By that one becomes a gifted poet; by that the art of song and singing develops in seer-poets.

Thyagaraja was such a gifted seer-poet, whose psychic powers were opened by Rama Japa.

Thyagaraja is the crown of India's aesthetic glory. The car-natic music is a vast ocean of multi-tuned harmony. It is the art of the seven notes, Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni - the universal language of the spirit of which all spoken tongues are wavelets. Through ages of social and political upheavals, it preserves even today its pristine glory. It is the proud patrimony of this ancient nation. No alien force has yet subdued its freedom. It has a library of its own.

Sangeeta Makarandam of Narada, *Natya Sastra* of Bharatha Muni, *Sangeetha Ranakaarm* of Saranga Deva, *Raga Tarangini* of Lochana Kavi, *Sangeeta Parijatham* of Ahob-
bham, *Chatur Dandi Prakasika* of Venkatamahi, Narayana Thirtha's *Krishna Tarangini*, the songs of Purandara Das and Ramdas, these were some of the authorities on car-natic music which led to the progress of the art up to the eighteenth century.

4. Three inspired souls

The nineteenth century saw a sudden renaissance in art and music. Three saintly souls enriched the hope and scope of music and made it a means of attaining Divine Grace. They lived between 1750 and 1850 and that century was the golden age of carnatic music.

Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshit and Syama Sastri were the three supermen who lived to enrich the art by devotional songs. They were the inspired trio of the carnatic music. Their songs have kept alive the traditions of the ageless art. They lived in divine-consciousness and made singing a divine worship. Sri Dikshit dedicated his songs to Guha, Sastri to Kamakshi and Thyagaraja was a veritable Rama Chaitanya who lived only to love Rama and sing His glory. Song to him was a sadhana. He is the life of carnatic music, the Orpheus, Mozart and Beethoven of India. He created a new era in music. His very existence was a melodious stream of Ram Nam. Let us see how it kept on its crystal symphony along the ups and downs of destiny.

5. Tiruvarur

Tiruvarur (City of the Beautiful) is a holy pilgrim centre on the banks of the Cauvery River. It is a place of historic and religious importance.

Great saints like Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar have dedicated thrilling songs to Lord Thyagaraja, whose temple is the centre of its glory. The eternal Omkar of the Cauvery mingles there with the soulful songs of devotees. All

the three epoch-making singers referred to in the last chapter were born here. Famous poets, artists, saints and sages flourished in this town. One of them was Girija Brahman - the great Trilinga Telugu Brahmin of the Mulakanadu sect, a learned scholar well versed in Sanskrit and a pious devotee of Lord Thyagaraja. He was a singer too and Shahji Rao, the then king of Tanjore, honoured his art and lore with rich presents. He lived a simple, contented life of devotion and worship. He had five sons, the last son was Rama Brahman.

6. Rama Brahman

Rama Brahman was a saint in the making. He was a fervent devotee of Thyagaraja and Rama. He was a scholar in Telugu and Sanskrit and a sweet singer. He never cared to build any material fortune with his art. He dedicated himself to God and took pleasure in singing His glory. He lived upon what chance brought to him and never cared for the morrow. He read and expounded Shivapuram and Srimat Bhagavatam and held devotional concerts. His wife, Shanta Devi, was a remarkable woman of high character, a sweet-voiced singer and a worshipper of Rama and Thyagaraja.

7. The boy Thyagaraja

These pious couples had three sons.

1. Panchanadam alias Japyesan, 2. Ramanathan and 3. Thyagarajan. The first two were worldly minded. Thya-

garaja was a born saint and singer, true to his father. He was born on the fifth of May, 1759 (some say 1767). His disciple, Sri Venkataramana Bhagavad gives us his horoscope: Birth of Thyagaraja, 4868 Kali Sarvajit Year-Month Vaisak-Day Saptami-Star Pusam-Time 12 a.m-Lagnam Karkatam.

Rama Brahman took special interest in educating his last son and building his character. Thyagaraja heard from his father the stories of Rama and Krishna and Shiva and learnt the songs of Ramdas and Purandara Das from his mother. He had a good memory and a genius to sing a song perfectly well after hearing it once. His father marked him for a Pandit, but his intelligent mother foresaw the coming seer-poet in the sweet-voiced boy. The boy was immersed in Rama Bakti. Nothing attracted him like prayer and devotion. He regularly joined his father in his devotional concerts. Rama Brahman used to visit the Grand Saptastanam festival at Tiruvaiyar and conduct a Bhajan party too. Thyagaraja accompanied him there once and liked the place very much. He was also attracted by the Sanskrit College, where there was a better scope of living. So Rama Brahman removed his family to Thiruvaiyar and settled there permanently.

8. Education

Tiruvaiyar is a beautiful town enriched by five rivers, the Cauvery, Kolladam, Kudamurutti, Vennar and Vettar. It is a centre of Vedic and Tamil culture. Renowned saints like Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar dedicated hymns to its

deity - Panchanada Shivam. Famous musicians like Maha Vaidhyanathar and Patnam Subramanyar lived there.

Rama Brahman settled with his family in a small thatched house in the middle of Tirumanjanam Street. His pious life attracted the king of Tanjore, who entreated him to receive a house. Rama Brahman was obliged to receive it, but he made it over at once to another poor Brahmin and was satisfied with his poor cottage.

The king might have made him his Court Pandit and given him rich fields for his living, but Rama Brahman was the last man to hang upon a king's favour. His life was an utter surrender to Rama. He went round a few streets singing His name and was satisfied with what came into his bowl voluntarily. He took just enough for himself and spent the rest celebrating holy festivals in the name of Rama. His life was a lucid stream of Ramnam.

Thyagaraja took after his father. He imbibed his father's devotion, emulated his simple pious life and served him faithfully. He accumulated a nice store of holy songs and verses and sang them rapturously along with his father. The earnest father taught him Telugu and Sanskrit and admitted him in the local Sanskrit College.

This residential Sanskrit College was founded by that superman, Sri Govindappa Dikshit, Minister of Achuthappa Naik, king of Tanjore. It was once the Nalanda of the south. The Vedic-lore was taught there with a special care. The education was free and students were fed and lodged comfortably.

Thyagaraja studied there for four years Kavya, Alankara and Nataka, but only one book attracted him - the immortal *Ramayana* of Valmiki. His father was Rama Brahmam, his book was *Ramayana*, his mantra was Rama, his God was Rama and his life was a stream of Rama-consciousness. He sang often the songs of Ramdas and aspired to become a devotee of Rama like the saint of Bhadrachala. Not even scholarship attracted him. Then?

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