

Great Men of Sourashtra Community Series1

சுமர்புணம்



Sri.N.M.N.Chandrasekar

Life and Contribution of

Venkataramana Bhagavatar



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Preface

This book - Great Men of Sourashtra Community is an attempt to bring out the glory of the illustrious leaders or pathfinders or path founders or path pavers of the community in the walk of Spiritual, Cultural, Educational, Political and Social Reformation activities. The society may some time forget the objectives of the torchbearers of these fields as we are now . To record in the ideals and achievements have to be brought to light to proper guidance to the posterity.

In this series the first and foremost one I want to record is Sri Venkataramana Bhagavathar. I have made an attempt to portray his life and contribution to music.

Marshall Hodgson in his book “The Venture of Islam has rightly made a remark on the Cultural and Spiritual initiative which becomes a major driving force to the minorities at every crossroads”.

Sri Thiagaraja (1767-1847), whose life work marks the watershed in South Indian Music was certainly a man driven by spiritual and cultural ideals. So was his disciple.

Venkataramana Bhagavathar (1781-1874) who learned, recorded and propagated the songs of Sri

Thiagaraja besides composing many of his own and teaching music to a lot of important disciples, of whom a special mention may be made to Mysore Sadasiva Rao. Tmt. Bangalore Nagarathianam Ammal - the disciple of Mysore Sadasiva Rao, was instrumental in the construction of the present Samadhi of Sadguru Sri Thiagaraja at Thiruvaiyaru. Sri Venkataramana Bhagavathar always stood first to pay due homage and respect to Sri Thiagaraja and this practice being followed till now.

Dr. V. Raghavan, formerly the Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Madras University, in one of his articles has described Venkataramana Bhagavathar as **Boswell to Sri Thiagaraja**. They two worked together at the crossroads of a traditional time, and the work in which they were involved changed the face of Karnatic music.

The life of Sri Venkataramana Bhagavathar displays the intensity of spiritual passion which marks individuals of cultural initiative. He worked in Telugu, Sanskrit and Sourashtrum with Tamil music and created Bhakti Sangeeta which links regions and cultures.

The migrant and immigrant may sometimes play this Linguistic spiritual cultural role. The displaced person may sometimes create a spiritual HOMELAND almost greater than the earthly one his ancestors or he left behind.

These great souls, enlightened by spiritual ideals, through their mastery of creativity and their gift of Karnatic Music, have inspired of a lot of people and have brought the regions together over the generation.

The descendants of Venkataramana Bhagavathar never left the path of their ancestors. His son Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar also studied under Thiagaraja and rendered his service to Sri Thiagaraja till his moksha. He recorded important informations about him. The third son of Krishnsswamy Bhagavathar Sri K.K.Ramaswamy Bhagavathar wrote a biography viz. "Sri Thiagopinishad" on Sri Thiagaraja and Sri Venkataramana in Tamil and published in 1935. Thus for his family the spiritual and cultural ideal was a driving force.

Venkataramana Bhagavathar is to this day a symbol of guru bhakti. Musicians believe that of all disciples of Sri Thiagaraja, he has especially shone because he received the blessings of his guru in full radiant.



Life History of Venkataramana Bhagavatar

Birth of Venkataramana

A Sourashtra Brahmin, belonging to Dadici Gotra, Subbaier by name lived in Ariyaloor in Thirucirapalli District. He was a Bhagavatottama and Prohit by profession. He was well versed in Sanskrit and Telugu languages besides Astrology. His wife was Kaveri Ammal. They had a son by name Nannusamy . He was educated well. In connection with his son`s marriage, Kuppaier came to Ayyampet near Tanjore . After the marriage of his son Kuppaier had several opportunities to visit Tanjore frequently and to listen to the music of great vidvans .Naturally he developed a lurking desire in him that he should also be blessed with a son who would become well versed in music. He voiced forth his inner desire to Radha Rukmani Samede Lord Rajagopala whom he worshipped ardently. On a pilgrimage to various places,

Kuppaier came to Thirupati with his wife and friends. Kuppaier did not fail to put forth his standing prayer that he should be blessed with a son who could become highly proficient in music. He took a vow here to name his son after the presiding deity of the Seven Hills.

Then he moved to Banaras. He had the darsan of Lord Viswanatha.

He went to the shrine of Veda Vyasa and echoed His standing prayer. That night Veda Vyasa appeared before him in his dream and told that his desire would be fulfilled if he were to visit the Vigneshwara Temple nearby and get his grace. Rejoicing at this, Kuppaier went the next morning to the Vigneshwara Temple and prayed to Him to fulfil his long cherished desire. Vigneshwara appeared before Kuppaier in his dream that night and appraised him that in view of his old age he would not have the boon directly, but however his son would be blessed with a son who would shine in the world as a great Musician of repute and luster. Kuppaier after finishing the rest of his pilgrimage returned to Ayyampet within a few days.

Nannuswamy, the son of Kuppaier got 5th son, born in *Sourashtra Vijayabdhm 469 (Kali era 4881), Sarvari year, Maagha Bahula Dasami, 10th Day of MASI month all corresponding to Sunday the 18th February, 1781 MOOLANakshatra, udayaadi Nazhigai 121/4*. He was born in Vrushabha Laghna and was named Venkataramana as per the vow taken by Kuppaier at Thirupathy. Venkaramana became well versed in all the lore in Sanskrit and Telugu. There was nothing wanting in him.

BLESSED WITH A GURU

Thiruvaiyaru is only Seven miles from Ayyampet. Since his younger days Venkataramana Bhagavathar had well heard about the name and fame of Sri Thiagarajaswamy, the immortal bard of Thiruvaiyaru that there developed a burning desire in Venkataramana Bhagavathar that he should sit at the face of the Master and learn music under him. This made the Bhagavathar undertake regular visits to Thiruvaiyaru. During the day time he looked after his father`s commercial business and in the evening he went to Thiruvaiyaru when the great Thiagarajaswamy was amidst the congregation of his disciples whom he taught. Venkataramana Bhagavathar used to stand in a corner either noticed or unnoticed by Thiagaraja whom he took as his Guru since the beginning. Thiagaraja could watch this phenomenon intelligently. Venkataramana never sat in front of Thiagaraja even at the bidding of his Guru. If at all Venkataramana felt like sitting, he used to snail away to the pial outside and sit there. This shows the amount of courtesy and devotion that he had for Thiagaraja.

After Two Years

One day being summer, Thiagaraja casually expressed to his disciples that it would be comfortable in

summer to have a Pandal in the courtyard at the rear of the house where the daily evening congregations could be had. Venkataramana also heard this. When Thiagaraja was away from Thiruvarur on a routine visit, Venkataramana had finished the job as desired by his Guru and he refused to take any payment for the work from his Gurupatni. On return from Thiruvaroor, Thiagaraja found to his surprise that his casual desire had been fulfilled by Venkataramana and came to know from his wife about all the details connected with it. Thiagaraja called Venkataramana and initiated him into Rama Taraka Mantropadesa.

Thulasidalamulache

Venkataramana and other disciples of Thiagaraja used to collect the Puja materials, fruits and flowers for Thiagaraja`s daily worship. On one occasion, Venkataramana had brought a very good collection indeed and placed them at the Swamy Sannadhi. It is said and has been recorded too that when Thiagaraja did puja and puishparcana singing his “*Thulasidalamulache santoshmukapujinte*” in *Mayamalava gaula* it so miraculously happened that every flower he took for his Arcana was that mentioned in the charanas of above Kriti, same flower came in hand in order, such was the wonderful coincidence. Thiagaraja was very much struck with this happening. He could visualize the mysterious significance

behind this incident. He was urged forth-with to invite Venkataramana to and asked him whether he was interested to learn music regularly. After all Venkataramana was waiting only for this occasion and said 'yes '. Thus after some years of study Venkataramana became the pupil of Thiagarajaswamy in all real sense.

Venkataramana had a well built body and he had a good figure, tall and stout in structure. His colleagues called him “Ganapathy”. One day a gardener from a place two miles away from Thiruviyaru came to Thiagaraja and told him that he had well grown white pumpkins which he desired to offer to Thiagaraja as Bhagavata Santharpana and that could be arranged to be brought. None else found suitable other than Venkataramana who readily offered to do the job. What he did was he brought the entire collection some EIGHT pumpkins tied to a rope and had them hung on his two shoulders. Venkataramana did the work in a fit of untold devotion towards his master. He was unable to bear the strain of the load and fell fatigued on the pail. Thiagaraja was very much taken aback, came to the spot and sprinkled Tulasi Thirtham on him and revived him. Such was the tie of the teacher pupil relationship. When he was asked why he brought all the eight pieces a stretch trip and not by lesser quantity, Venkataramana replied submissively that the gardener after all a vendor and he could change his mind at any time and he might dispose them off for a better bargain. Thus it may cause not only a

hindrance to the Bhakavat Kainkarya but also the gardener would be subjected to Bhagavat Bhagavatha Apacchara. So to avoid such contingencies he did like this. The Other examples could prove better the sense of discipleship towards his master and abundant love and grace that the latter bestowed on the former.

“Gnanamosaga Rada”

It is handed down through the Walajapet descendants themselves that at one stage Thiagaraja felt that he could not find progress which he expected in Vekataramana. He guessed that he had not perhaps obtained prior sanction from Lord Sri Ramachandra before he started teaching the disciple. It was this feeling urged him to invoke the blessings of Rama in favour of Venkataramana saying ***“Gnanamosaga Rada garuda gamana vada, Nitamamuce madi nirmamaiyunnate ”*** in Shadvidha margini raga. Further he learnt well and subjected to the complete grace of his Guru. Once Venkataramana got an invitation from Raja of Karvetinagar and made to settle down at walajapet at the end of his life span.

Bhagavathar

Venkataramana had good chance to sing in front of his Guru every day in the begining of daily puja and before the completion of Mangala Arathi. One day it so happened

learnt music and Jyothisadi Sastras under him. He was an expert in handling Kinnara Violin. Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar provided accompaniment to his instrument in the congregation and won the approbation of his Guru. There was even an occasion when Thiagaraja was mightily pleased with the blending of Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar's voice and that of the congregation with his Kinnara Violin accompaniment. Not only Thiagaraja could feel it for himself but thought aloud which left a deep impression on Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar to whom Thiagaraja became since then "*Amanushya Divya Vighraha and Nirgrahanugraha Bhagavata Swaropa.*" Walajapet school is in possession of a wide repertoire of Thiagaraja's output. Walajapet collections have become justly very famous.

Nannu Palimpa Nadachi Vacchitivo

There has been handed down a traditional episode associated with the famous Krithi "*Nannu Palimap Nadachi Vacchitivo*" of Thiagarajaa in Mohana. Venkataramana Bhagavathar was a good artist well versed in all types of painting. He got up an excellent portrait of oil painting of Sitaramanjaneya Pattabhisheka. He took it all the way from Walajapet to Thiruvaiyaru by walk and offered it as Pendali Kanuka to his Guru's daughter on the eve of the latter's wedding. Deeply struck with the incident, Thiagaraja burst forth into the song Nannu Palimpa

Nadachi Vacchitivo, in Mohana incorporating the allegorical touch. Thiagaraja's daughter was Sitalakhmi and on the day of Sitalakhmi's wedding offering the present of Sita Rama Pattabhisheka portrait proved highly significant.

Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar had three sons; Ramachandra Bhagavathar, Ramkrishna Bhagavathar and Ramasamy Bhagavathar. All the sons became scholars of Sanskrit, Telugu and Jyotishadi Sastras. Ramasamy Bhagavathar wrote "Sri Tiagopanishad" - Part I, giving a brief life sketch of Sri Thiagaraja and Venkataramana Bhagavathar and family, and it was published in 1935.

Venkataramana Bhagavathar had another son also named as Ramasamy Bhagavathar. This Ramasamy Bhagavathar composed kritis and Padyas and slokas in praise of Sri Thiagaraja. However, the family profession had all along been cloth sales. Ramasamy Bhagavathar had two wives but only one son Rangadhama Bhagavathar who translated Astapadi (Gita Govindam) of Jayadeva from Sanskrit to his mother tongue Sourashtrum.

Telugu Nauka Charitram

Out of his deep devotion on Lord Krishna, Sri Thiagaraja composed Nauka Charitram - an opera in Telugu. This minor poem was composed in pure

that Venkataramana could not reach Thiruvaiyaru in time and so the guru decided to complete the puja singing MangalaArathi himself.

At this juncture, a young man appeared before Kamalamba, - the wife of Sri Thiagaraja and asked her to pass the information that Venkataramana BHAGAVATHAR was fast reaching and so not to finish the Puja. She also went to her husband to inform this followed by that young man. After conveying the message she turned to show the man to Sri Thiagaraja. But then the young man had disappeared. Sri Thiagaraja thought that Sri Krishna Himself had come and addressed Venkataramana as BHAGAVATHAR. When Venkataramana came there, Sri Thiagaraja welcomed him, `` O! Bhagavathar! Come, come." Venkataramana thought that his guru was addressing him ridiculously pointing out his late arrival. He felt guilty. Thiagaraja said to Venkataramana that he was blessed with the grace of Lord Krishna Whom he worshipped everyday and narrated the incident. They finished then the daily rituals. From that day on wards Venkataramana was addressed by every body as BHAGAVATHAR. To ascertain this true incident we may look into the custom of the school of Sri Thiagaraja, begining and completing the Bhajans with Sourashtra Raga in memory of Venkataramana Bhagavatha who was a Sourashtrian by birth.

Marriage Life

Venkataramana Bhagavathar was a Yogabhyasi. He did not choose to marry till his 40th year. In his 41st year he married Muthulakshmi Ammal with the blessings of his Guru at Ayyampet. Having got into the wedlock he had to shift to Walajapet at the age of 53 and led his life as a cloth merchant. Further, incidentally, he received an invitation from Raja of Karveti Nagar which was also responsible for his settling in Walajapet . But at the same time, he proved himself pious and devoted to music conducting pujas and bhajans regularly in the local Bhajana Mandir bequeathed to him by the benevolent public.

Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar

In the Kali Sakha 4925 (1824 A.D.) Dharana Year 19th day of Chaitra month Vaisakha Suddha Arudhra Natkshatra Mithuna laghna Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar was born as the Seemantha Putra to our Venkataramana Bhagavathar. Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar was duly invested with sacred thread in time and he became well versed in Sanskrit and Telugu and all other Sastras. In his 16th year he came to Ayyampet and in the immediate presence of Sri Thiagaraja surrounded by the congregation of his disciples and other Vidwans, Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar married Rukmini Ammal . During the first three years after his marriage, Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar was with Sri Thiagaraja and

imagination. Venkataramana Bhagavathar also enjoyed by this opera very much. So he translated it into Sanskrit and inscribed in palm leaves. The Telugu opera became very famous due to its melody and the new imagination. On observing name and fame of this opera some jealousy scholars of Tanjore reported to the King of Tanjore. They claimed that the story had no source either from Bhagavatha Purana or from any legends and so, it had to be prohibited since the readers got only sexual feeling when they read or hear.

The King sent for Thiagaraja to call on him with Nauka Charitram. The King received the opera and studied it thoroughly. He felt happy and asked him about the availability of its source in Sanskrit. Thiagaraja returned home to collect the source. He was much worried about the source material since he composed it with as an emotional out forth. Venkataramana requested him the reason for his worries. Thiagaraja explained the situation that happened about the Nauka Charitram. Bhagavathar promised to bring the original in Sanskrit and went to Ayyampet. Venkataramana Bhagavathar brought the translated Nauka Charitram into Sanskrit and gave to his Guru. Thiagaraja was happy on seeing the Sanskrit Text. (Later the Manuscript written by Venkataraman Bhagavathar was burnt by himself and some years after Venkata Suri wrote Nauka Charritram in Sanskrit.) He showed it to the King

and the jealousy scholars felt ashamed themselves. Venkataramana rendered a lot of such services to his Guru and earned the love and affection of his preceptor.

The deciples of Venkataramana Bhagavathar

- Mysore Sadasiva Rao
- Sattur Fiddle Kuppusamy Iyer
- Chitur Kanjira Radhakrishna Iyer
- His brother Atmaramier (Jalra)
- Raya Vellore Pallavi Ellayyar
- Lokanarayana Iyer
- Kavi Venkata Suri (Auther of Sangeeta Ramayana in Sourashtra language and Nauka Charitram in Sanskrit.
- Arunachala Asari of Kanchipuram

Disciples of Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar

- Bangalore Munusamappa
- Thiruvattiyur Ramasamy Iyer

MUKTI

Venkataramana Bhagavathar passed away on the Suddha Saptami of Margasira month of BHAVA year corresponding to TUESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 1874.

CONTRIBUTION

Palm leaf Manuscripts in Thiagaraja`s Handwriting

In the year 1980, in the month of December, I acquired a palm leaf bundle which contained 93 leaves from Sri.T.G.Ayyan of Walajapet. Later, with the help of Dr. T. Kothandaramaiah , (The Head of Telugu Department, Madurai Kamaraj University) the palm leaves were scrutinised.

It is claimed that not a single manuscript written in the saint - poet`s hand writing had ever been traced. This manuscript is written in Telugu characters and the collection is nothing but a transliteration in Telugu of Sanskrit “Athyatma Ramayana” which is a part of 'Brahmanda Purana' written by Vyasa. The palm leaves of Walajapet, are said to have been inherited from the belongings of Thiagaraja by Venkataramana Bhagavathar through Krishna Samy Bhagavathar - the son of Venkataramana Bhagavathar who lived with his Guru Sri Thiagaraja till the death of his Guru.

In side of the manuscript on one of the leaves, it is stated that Saint Thiagaraja wrote the whole piece in his own hand. It is a unique find! Greater is the delight that a broken leaf contained a few lines (also written in Sri.Thiagaraja`s

own hand) from 'Sita Rama Vijayam', one of the three Telugu operas known to have been composed by the Sri Thiagaraja himself but untraced as yet. This manuscript at present is with Sri T.G.Ayyan who lives at Chennai.

One of the thirty prominent disciples of Thiagaraja, the name of Venkataramana Bhagavathar and his gifted son Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar will ever be especially remembered by the posterity. They have rendered signal service to the cause of Carnatic Music by preserving and popularizing the sterling compositions of Saint Thiagaraja. Both the father and the son were deeply devoted to the Saint Thiagaraja and earned his grace.

Venkataramana Bhagavathar was a great scholar in Sanskrit, Telugu and Sourashtrum. He was alive to the divinity within his master. His reverential regard for his guru was the consequence of the realization of the spiritual and musical greatness of his master. He carefully noted down his guru`s compositions and operas. It is from the Walajapet collections - preserved at Sourashtra Sabha Museum that the music world came to know of the three operas of the saint. i.e. Prahlata Bhakti Vijayam, Nauka Charitram and Sitarama Vijayam. While the texts of the first two operas have been published, the text of Sitarama Vijayam is yet to be published and traced fully. This opera

pertains to the story of the Uttara Ramayanam. The texts of the Nauka Charitram and Prahlata Bhakti Vijayam had been published. While the other disciples of Thiagaraja were more interested in learning his kritis, the Walajapet disciples took care to learn not only his kritis but also his operas and inscribe them in Manuscripts.

It is possible that famous manuscript copy of Potana Bhagavatam, now treasured in the Sourashtra Sabha in Madurai was written by Venkataramana Bhagavathar and presented to Thiagaraja on the occasion of the Sashtiabta purti of Thiagaraja in the year 1825. The paper on which the Bhagavatam is written bears the water mark impression as 1823, 1824 and 1825. In the water mark impression, we see the spade trade mark and also the name of the firm, Wise & co., the fact that this copy of the Bhagavatam was used by Thiagaraja. The fact that Thiagaraja used this copy for his daily parayanas, gives an added sanctity to the manuscript.

Both Venkataramana Bhagavathar and Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar have left us detailed biographies of the great composer. The date of birth and the horoscope have been preserved for us by them.

The Mangala Astakam '*Srimad Kakarla Vamsabdi*' and the *Dhyana slokas* composed by Venkataramana

Bhagavathar in praise of Thiagaraja are fitting tributes to the greatness of his master. Venkataramana Bhagavathar has also composed hundreds of kritis out of which 71 were published, with the mudra “**Ramachandrapura**”, the original name of Ayyampet.

The pallavi and anupallavi of '*Thulasi dalamulache*' may be taken as a suggestion of the continued Tulasi Kainkarya of the Bhagavathar to his guru which enabled the latter to perform Tulasi Archana to the Lord continuously.

When the construction of Bhajana Mandir in Walajapet was completed and Rama idol was installed there, Mysore Sadasiva Rao immortalized the occasion in a beautiful kirthana in Kamboji Raga, beginning with the words “***Sri Sita Lakshmana Sameta Sri Kodandaramaswamy Nanu Rakshimpavemi***”. The Rear wrapper shows the pictures of this Mandir. On the left and right side of the Shrine the long walls have allot of Tanjore style paintings of Great Vagyakares of India which were arranged to draw by a disciple Sri.O.L.Varathaier of Madurai.

Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar has composed some Kritis and Swarajatis. He assisted Mr. A.M.Chinnaswamy Mudaliar in the publication “ Oriental Music European Notation” by giving authentic versions of the compositions of Thiagaraja. A proof sheet of the above book containing

the corrections carried out by Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar can be seen in the Walajapet collections housed in the Sourashtra Sabha Museum, Madurai.

It was the custom for Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar to sing every forenoon ten kritis, the songs sung on one day never repeated the following days. Thus in a year he sang 3600 kritis and kept himself in lively touch with the compositions of the saint.

Venkataramana Bhagavathar was a musician and composer and also a great preceptor. The well - known composer of post Thiagaraja period, Mysore Sadasiva Rao and Thiruvetriyur Ramasawamy Iyer were among his several pupils. So the School of Venkataramana Bhagavathar could preserve and transmit a mass of his guru`s compositions.

Kritis of Venkataramana Bhagavathar

Venkataramana Bhagavathar had composed about 150 pieces. The bulk of them are kritis but there are some (Tana and Pada) Varnas and Swarajatis and a Thillana. Some of these are in Telugu and some in Sanskrit. His Sanskrit shows his knowledge of that language, command of good vocabulary and a simple and elegant diction. In an Ananda Bhairavi song on Thiagaraja “ *Guru varu*

Mahimala ”, Bhagavathar says that his Guru appeared in his dream and asked him to compose a song on Krishna. Krishna (Lord Rajagopala) is also the presiding deity at Ayyampet. Other deities on whom he sang Kirtanas are Rama, Madurai Meenakshi, Kanchi Varadaraja and Sage Narada. But the leading theme and the predominant note of his kritis is on Thiagaraja and his Guru Bhakti.

In a Sanskrit song, “*Rama Ravikula Sudhabdhi Soma Dasaratha*“, a Swarajati in Kedaragaula raga on Sri Rama, Bhagavathar describes Rama as being in the form of his guru (*Mudaspada Mama Guru roopa*).

In a long Sanskrit kirtana in Sankarabharana on his Guru, “*Guru Charanam Bhajare*”, he gives the biographical details of Thiagaraja, his family Kakarla, his father Rambhrahmam, his devotion to the Japa of Rama nama, his having received the blessings of the sage Narada, his residing at Thiruvaiyaroo, his pleasant appearance, his wearing always the Tulasi Mala, his knowledge of Gnana Sastras, his composing a hundred thousand (satasahasra) kirtanas and his being surrounded by a large gathering of devotees.

Similarly in another Sanskrit kirtana in Purvikalyani, he calls upon his tongue to keep on singing

the the glory of his Guru(*Vada Rasane Sriguru Prabhavam*) and mentions the Kakarla family of the Guru, his being of the fruit of the Punya done by his father Rambrahmam, Narada himself having been born as Thiagaraja and the Guru being always filled with the ambrosia of Rama Nama and Nada.

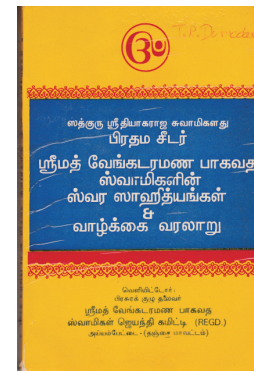
Some of the pieces are combined with Telugu and Sanskrit medium as in the case of those of his Guru. The epithets and ideas in some songs go along with his Guru`s kritis. The same ideology of Bhakti, Rama Nama and Vedantic thoughts are seen in parallel with his Guru. “*Tattuvamu Taliyaka Mukti Ledanu Matha*” in Kamboji is an example of his Vedantic Kirtana in which he speaks of “the one supreme Being which is the inner witness of all living beings”.

There is one more Vedantic Kirtana “*Anandamaya Manave*” in the rare Raga Jyotiswarupini”, where he sings to the supreme spiritual bliss and the equanimity of the mind in joy or sorrow (*bheda bhuddhini bahu vadamu seyake, modakhedamu lantu samabhava muncute*) of Jnana Kaivalya and swanubhava. The background and milieu of the Bhaktimarga, Bhajana Sampradaya and Nama Siddhanta form the theme of two songs “*Sri Ramabrahmamu*” in Begada and “*Rama Bhakti*” in the same Raga, where Bodhendra Yati who promulgated the

path of Namasiddhanta and his blessed followers who recited the Rama Taraka Mantra are remembered.

“*Aparadhiyagu nadu nepamu lentaka prevu krupaniku ratukata*” in Bilahari is an example of the composer following his Guru`s style of enunciating an idea in Pallavi augmenting it in the Anupallavi and reinforcing it with a series of illustrations in the Charanas.

Besides the major and well-known Ragas, Venkataramana Bhagavathar has also handled rare new ragas in his kirutis. The rare ragas like **Saraswati**, **Kamalanarayani**, **Jyotiswarupini**, **Namanarayani** and **Suvarnangi** are brought to light and appreciated by one and all. In the mind of the music lovers, his yeoman service to music remains evergreen. In total 70 Kirutis were edited in 1991, with the notation verified by



Sri.V.N.Nagaraja Bhagavathar and by me. Now we have 20 new kirutis to be published in ensuing edition which were collected from the manuscript of Anantu Gopal Bhagavathar.

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