Rythm and Music in Nārāyanīya

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Introduction

A Lofty Rhythm is involved in each movement of all the living objects in the Universe from its micro to macro stage. This reality has been discovered by the Indian scholars from the very ancient period. The six doctrines which are considered to be helpful to know the essence of the Vedas were symbolically expressed as the six parts of Vedapuruṣa. Among them the meter - which stands for rhythm- yields a position of the leg of Vedapuruṣa- cchandah pādau tu vedasya. Here the power of rhythmic expression which attracts human mind and which enunciates the principle of creativity of nature has been depicted. This theory has clearly expressed by musicians through the saying – श्रुतिर्माता लयः पिता।

Rhythm in Sanskrit

Indian literature, especially Sanskrit literature accepted the importance of the rhythmic expression through meters used in poetry. Sanskrit poetry has been blended by the metrical usages in every part. Eminent rhetoricians have also delivered discourses on the importance of metrical expression in poetry. The importance of metre sometimes exceeds the limits and some beliefs subsist among the poets that poetry without metre is not considered as the same. So this exemplifies the prominence for metre given by Sanskrit poets. Sanskrit literature bears an abundance of meters from the Vedic age. Rgvedic sages accepted a variety of cchandas in the creation of the

hymns. Coming to the classical Sanskrit, there exist a number of metres which are powerful to express the main sentiment. The first poet Vālmiki and his followers like Kālidasa and others were experts in the usage of this metrical style.

Melpattur Nārāyaṇa Bhatta, an enlightened scholar, was specialized in each and every disciplines prevailing at that time. His Nārāyaṇīya has acquired a remarkable place in the history of panegyric poetry. Nārāyaṇīya keeps diversity in its plot, style, rhetoric beauty and metrical usages. In this paper the meters accepted in Nārāyaṇīya has been discussed by giving importance to its musical nature.

Rhythm and Music in the Nārāyaṇīya

Nārāyanīya of Melpattur Nārāyaṇa Bhatta has been embellished by the manifold usages of meters in every daśakas. There are some differences in the lyrics of poetry and songs. The conditions attributed in composing poetry and songs are different. But there is a common factor in both these- which may be said as rhythm. Mostly the works on śloka style are not suitable for songs which are equally depended upon music and rhythm.

Śloka style is concerned only for rhythmic expression

In Nārāyanīya the author depicts his ideas and imaginations through diversity of meters. The famous rhetorician Ānandavardhana had established that all the embellishments in poetry are always been treated as subordinates to the main sentiment or rasa. Here the author of Nārāyanīya is always attentive in keeping this theory. Especially he uses the meters to establish the main sentiment. For example, the drutaviḷambita metre in Rugmiṇīsvayamvara experiences the main sentiment throughout the two daśakas. It is very suitable for

expressing the śṛngāra rasa. There is also a possibility of musical expression which is unexpectedly reached to it.

तव ह्रतास्मि पुरैव गुणैरहं हरति मां किल चेदिनृपोधुना।
अयि कृपालय पालय मामिति प्रजगदे जगदेकपतै तया।।

(Nārāyanīya 78-7)

Here the power of drutaviḷambita in the expression of śṛngāra has been depicted by the author in its every part. These two daśakas of Rugmiṇīsvayamvara manifest a harmonious experience through the words and structure of the poetry.

A real poet must be always attentive to depict the main sentiment. All the other factors like metaphorical embellishment, metre etc. are combined to nourish the rasa. This may be cited in every daśaka of Nārāyanīya . The meters like rathoddhatā, totakam, kusumamañjari etc are much more rhythmic in expression. These meters are used by the author at exact places.

While portraying Kṛṣṇa's ulūkhalabandhanam, the poet has suggested the rathoddhatā metre. It gives a marvelous beauty to the occasion. Here the mischievous acts of Lord Kṛṣṇa are explained or illustrated by the author in a splendorous manner. In the following verse the naughty boy Kṛṣṇa and the anger to his great mother Yaśoda are giving us an indescribable apprehension of divine attachment:

समिपीतरसभङ्गसङ्गतक्रोधभारपरिभूतचेतसा।
मन्थदण्डमुपगृह्य पाटितं हन्त देव दधिभाजनं त्वया।।

(Nārāyanīya 47-3)

Here the author's imaginative power and the metre chosen are the most suitable. Here the rathoddhatā gains a wonderful rhythmic explosion. The highly rhythmic metre totakam has used

in Kāliyamardana. The beauty of this occasion comprising of the movements of Kṛṣṇa on Kāliya has been explicitly depicted by the author through this particular metre.

अथ वारिणि घोरतरं फणिनं प्रतिवारयितुं कृतधीर्भगवान्।
द्रुतमारिथ तीरगनीपतरुं विषमारुतशोषितपर्णचयम्।।

(Nārāyanīya 55-1)

The words used by the author reveal the metrical and sentimental magnitude. Here the reader's mind goes through the pictures of Kṛṣṇa's dancing poses. The next one kusumamañjari is used in rāsakrīda. Kṛṣṇa, the great lover of all creatures in the world, is dancing with the most blessed persons - the gopikas of Vṛndāvan. This is a major occasion that they feel Kṛṣṇa dancing with each of them.

अन्तरा सकलसुन्दरीयुगलमिन्दिरारमण! संचरन्
मञ्जुलं तदनु रासकेलिमयि कञ्जनाभ समुपादधा :।।

(Nārāyanīya 69-2)

For portraying this moment the author has selected the most favorable metre and the word compilation made by him is much more attractive even to an ignorant reader of the work. The reader's mind will wander through the moments of meeting of Kṛṣṇa and the gopis. Through the imaginative power of the author, kusumamañjari metre expresses the dancing movements of Lord Kṛṣṇa and gopis.

An account of certain meters which possess highly rhythmic and musical nature are only indicated in this article. There are some other meters which are not so rhythmic but explore the marvelous beauty of music. With the sensible touch of the great author of

Nārāyanīya, the reader may feel that they are also expressive of symphonic melodious moments. For example, in portraying the war with the Vatsāsura and Bakāsura there are some touching situations. Here the metre used by the author is hariṇī. It is much more attractive to manifest both the tremendous and marvelous situations. The verses taralamadhukrdvrnde and lalitamuralīnādam are depicting the bhakti of gopikas to Kṛṣṇa and other verses explain the murder of the asuras. But these two situations are dealt very smoothly by the author without breaking the rhythm.

Conclusion

These are only some examples which will help to realize the structure of Nārāyanīya . Surely there are a number of meters which are expressive, attractive and at the same time not so popular. Here the author's style of writing – straight conversation with Lord Kṛṣṇa- is also helpful to exaggerate the beauty of the poem. In Carnatic music there are numerous musicians and composers who are famous learned personalities. But the great Tyāgarāja was always different among them because of his style of composing songs. He was also too much attached with Lord Rāma and he used to speak directly to his master through songs. These two great authors and their writings will give freshness to the mind of readers through their undeterred bhakti. Melpattur was overpowered only by the great bhaktakavi Pūntānam. The simplicity of the Pūntānam is not possessed by him. Even though, the eminent scholar Melpattur was a great author with the insurmountable power of creativity, who knew all the feasibilities of Sanskrit language.

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