



DR SHOBHA RAJU

# AVATAR, ANNAMAYYA

## ...song was His weapon

You all must have heard the radio jingle, “Leejiye Microfined Aspro”, sung by Mrs. Vani Jayaram. Just forget the music and say it in the format of dialogue...” Leejiye Microfined Aspro”. How does it feel? Just dry...lifeless. Right? So “Music gives charm and gaiety to everything”.

St Annamacharya knew this truth very well. He realized music to be the most powerful and easy medium to connect to The Infinite in prayer or to convey a message to masses.

Annamayya (as He is fondly called), the first and foremost composer of South India, composed 32000 Sankeertanas (Devotional Songs) in folk lores, chaste Telugu, Sanskrit & “Manipravalam” (combination of two and more languages) and laid a path to many Vaggeyakaras (The ones who write the songs and set them to music too) like St. Purandaradasa, St Ra-

madasa, St Kshetrayya, St Tyagaraja and so on. He composed songs of literary richness as well as lilting folk lores with equal excellence.

In one of His folk lores, He says, “Brahmamokkate” (Consciousness is one). This is the essence of Vedas. In this folk lore he says that indwelling spirit is one and the same in all the beings. It’s absolutely meaningless to feel the differences of caste and creed. This folk lore is called “Tandana Padam”. The Pallavi (Beginning verses of the song which come after every stanza) of this song goes as follows :

*“Tandanaanaa Aahi -Tandanaanaa pure*

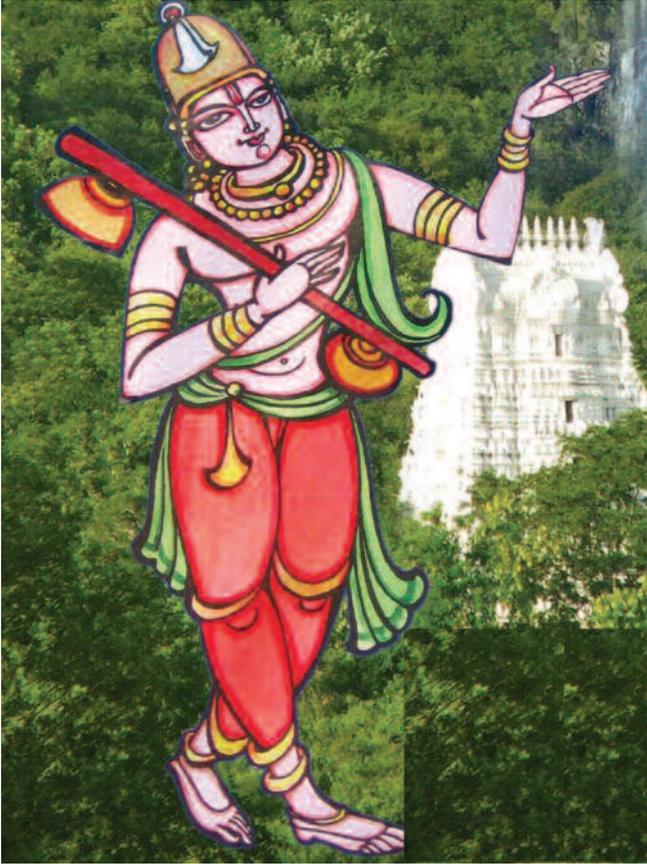
*Tandanaanaa Bhalaa Tandanaanaa”*

All these sounds just resemble the beats of folk percussion instruments, particularly “Dappu”. His intelligence is evident in gathering

these attractive sounds to form a frame and fit highest philosophical truths in it to convey the same to the most common man in an appealing manner.

His compositions are poetry-rich with Vedic truths. Hence I call them “Sankeertana Vedam” (Vedas in the form of devotional songs).

He worshipped Lord Venkateswara as the Icon for The Infinite Consciousness. He expressed all the human emotions to Lord Venkateswara in His songs. I understand Him to have realized that it is very hard to get rid off negative passions such as anger, jealousy, pride, lust and so on. Hence He expressed them to God. Thus they became beautiful pieces of poetry which otherwise could have sounded earthly and negatively, had they been addressed to the fellow humans. This unique path was later trekked by so many. In this path, the negative emotions



which are otherwise felt to be hurdles, become tools to connect to God.

He emphasizes the need to clean the inner self first. All the rituals must lead one to inner purification, without which it is impossible to connect to the Cosmic Energy, whom we call God, He says.

“Jaali Paata”, is a variation in folk lores. The theme of “Jaali Paata” :

“Jaalo Jaali” is a technical term like “Paraa Hushaar”. The security guards at a royal palace shout “Paraa Hushaar” alerting other group of security. Here, “Jaalo Jaali” is used in the place of “Paraa Hushaar”. The practice was ...if one group of security shouted “Jaalo Jaali”, another group of security have to respond to them by shout-

ing “Jaalo Jaali”. That means that everything is in order. If another group doesn't respond saying “Jaalo Jaali”, that is an indication that situation is not in order. Taking cue from this indication, the first group gets alert and takes control of the situation. This way they maintained the security.

**How did the saint apply this security theme to spirituality? :**

This body is a royal palace. Mind (Manas) and Intellect (Buddhi) are the two security guards. The indwelling king is Lord Venkateswara in the form of soul. There is a threat from “Arishadvargas”, group of six enemies. The six enemies are “Kama” (Lust), “Krodha” (Anger), “Lobha” (Greed), “Moha” (Infatuation), “Mada” (Pride), “Maatsarya” (Jealousy). So whenever the Intellect

says “Jaalo Jaali”, the mind has to repeat “Jaalo Jaali”. That means everything is in order. If the mind fails to repeat “Jaalo Jaali”, that means there is a scope of invasion by one or many of negative passions. In that situation, the intellect has to take control of the mind and set things right. He says, “The midnight has just passed, darkness is spread. A vulnerable time. Convenient situation for the enemies of negative passions to invade the royal palace. So shout “Jaalo Jaali” loudly and repeat faster. The saint is asking the intellect and mind to be cautious of darkness called ignorance in which the negative passions easily invade.

But in the later half of the last stanza, he says, “Now that Venkateswara is awake, stop shouting “Jaalo Jaali”. Once the Consciousness is awakened, no need for intellect to shout “Jaalo Jaali” nor for mind to repeat it.

Friends! Whenever our minds go out of intellect's control, let us sing “Jaalo Jaali”. Let's be cautious of negative emotions' invasion.

Annamacharya was born in 1408 and left the body in 1503, on Bahula Dwadashi of Phalguna Maasam. This falls on April 8 this year. Lets all pay our tribute to the Guru, who gave us 32000 effective musical lesions.

“హరియపతారమీతడు అన్నమయ్య  
అరయ మా గురుడితడు అన్నమయ్య”

Annamayya is the very incarnation of Lord Hari (Another name of Vishnu. Vishnu is The Cosmic Energy, which is all pervading)

If you could deeply think, Annamayya is our Guru!

Dappu, percussion instrument  
St Annamacharya.

(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer, writer and composer.) 