

# DHAKSHINA PRACHEENA SAMPRADHAYA

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**Abstract :** Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya as the name suggests is a form of Namasankeerthanam (Bhajan) having a South Indian origin. Similar to the Trinities of Carnatic Classical Music, Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya also has Trinities namely Bhagawan Nama Sri Bhodhendra Saraswathi Swamigal (17<sup>th</sup> century), Thiruvialur Sri Sridhara Ayyaval (17<sup>th</sup> century) and Marudhanallur Sri Sadguru Swamigal(18<sup>th</sup> century). These trinities have a significant role in framing the Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya. This article is an analysis of the origin of Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya and its format.

**IndexTerms - Namasankeerthanam, Trinities, Ashtapathis, Format.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Hinduism believes in the existence of four Yugas or an Era with a cycle of four ages, namely Krita Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. According to Srimad Bhagavatham, Moksha (emancipation) may be attained through meditation in Krita Yuga, by performing Yajna in Treta Yuga, by the worship of lord Krishna's lotus feet in Dwapara Yuga and just by chanting Krishna's name in Kali Yuga. It is Kali Yuga at present and Srimad Bhagavatham says "Kalau Sankeerthya Keshavam", which means Bhagawan Namasankeerthanam is the only way to attain Moksha in Kali Yuga.

## II. 1. Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya

Namasankeerthanam or Bhajan is an ancient form of music, which has evolved into Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya, through the periods of the 3 gurus or Trinities as mentioned above. It comprises Keertanas, Namavalis, Ashtapathis, Tharangams and several other aspects compiled together by the endeavour of Marudhanallur Sri Sadguru Swamigal. People rendering Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya Namasankeerthanam are called 'Bhagawathas'.

The format as recommended by Marudhanallur Sri Sadguru Swamigal is:

- Pundareekam
- Dhyana Slokas
- Thodaya Mangalam
- Guru Keerthanas
- Guru Abhangs
- Jayadeva Ashtapathis
- Sri Krishna Leela Tharangini
- Panchapathi
- Poojai
- Dhyanam
- Dhivyanama Sankeerthanam
- Dolotsavam
- Radha Kalyanam
- Anjaneya and Mangalam

This is the format followed by many Bhagawathas presently, while performing Radha Kalyanam or Seetha Kalyanam. A short interpretation of each of the above mentioned concepts is as follows.

### 1.1. Pundareekam

Pundareekam is the first part of the Sampradhaya, wherein the Bhagawathas and the singers sing Vachanas and Prathivachanas hailing Gods and Goddesses.

*Example :* Vachanam - Janaki Kantha Smaranam  
Prathivachanam - Jai Jai Rama Rama

### 1.2. Dhyana Slokas

The Slokas sung as an invocation of gods before commencing the Namasankeerthanam are called Dhyana Slokas. They begin with Guru slokas and end with a sloka on Lord Anjaneya.

### 1.3. Thodaya Mangalam

They are 5 in number with Raga Nattai in the beginning and Raga Panthavarali at the end. The 5 songs in order :

Song	Raga	Thala
Jaya Janaki Ramana	Nattai	Kanda Chapu
Sharanu Sharanu	Arabhi	Misra Chapu
Murahara Nakadhara	Madhyamavathi	Adhi
Dhevesha Gana	Saveri	Rupakam
Madhava Bhavathuthe	Panthavarali	Adhi

These songs have been composed by Bhadrachala Sri Ramadasar, Sri Annamacharya and Sri Vijayagopala Swamigal.

### 1.4. Guru Keerthanas

The keerthanas sung in praise of the 3 gurus or trinities, composed by various composers, come under this section. There are 7 Keerthanas on Guru Bhagawan Nama Sri Bhodhendra Saraswathi Swamigal, 9 keerthanas on Sri Sridhara Ayyaval and 6 on Marudhanallur Sri Sadguru Swamigal. These are sung after rendering the corresponding Guru Slokas. Namavalis on the Gurus are sung at the end. These Keerthanas are set to Ghana Ragas like Kalyani, Kambodhi, Thodi and Janya Ragas like Sahana, Bhairavi and Behag.

### 1.5. Guru Abhangs

Abhangs are devotional songs composed in the Marathi Language by great composers. Sant Thukaram is one such poet, who has composed a number of Abhangs on Lord Pandurangan and Guru. Guru Abhangs are completed with Namavalis, pursued by Sant or Sadhu Abhangs .

### 1.6. Jayadeva Ashtapathis

Ashtapathis (meaning 8 steps) as a part of Gita Govinda Mahakavya is the most significant part of Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya. It was composed by Sri Jayadeva (12<sup>th</sup> century) in the Sanskrit Language. It is based on Nayaka – Nayaki Bhava, in which Radha is depicted superior to Krishna (as explained by the 19<sup>th</sup> Ashtapathi ‘Vadhasiyathi’ set to Mukhari Ragam). Gita Govinda has been divided into 12 chapters, further divided into 24 divisions called Prabandhas. The couplets in the Prabandhas, grouped into eights, are called Ashtapathis. The 12 chapters of Gita Govindam are :

1. Sāmodadāmodaram (Exuberant Krishna)
2. Akleshakeshavam (Blithesome Krishna)
3. Mugdhamadhusūdanam (Winsome Krishna)
4. Snigdhamadhusūdanam (Tender Krishna)
5. Sākāṅkṣa puṇḍarīkākṣham (Passionate Krishna)
6. Dhrṣṭa vaikuṅṭha (Audacious Krishna)
7. NāgaranārāyanaH (Dexterous Krishna)
8. VilakṣyalakṣmīpatiH (Apologetic Krishna)
9. Mugdhadamukunda (Unpretentious Krishna)
10. ChaturachaturbhujāH (Tactful Krishna)
11. Sānandadāmodaram (Joyful Krishna)
12. SuprītāpītāmbaraH (Exultant Krishna)

### 1.7. Sri Krishna Leela Tharangini:

Followed by Ashtapathis, is the Sri Krishna Leela Tharangini, an opera composed by Sri Narayana Theerthar (1650 AD – 1745 AD) in Sanskrit. It details the life story of Lord Krishna from childhood. His birth, childhood pranks (bala leela) with his friends and Gopis, his Thiru Kalyanam (wedding) with Rukmini are some of the aspects featured in Tharangams. Leela Sukar's ‘Sri Krishna Karnamrutham’, Sri Jayadeva's ‘Gita Govinda Mahakavyam’ and Sri Narayana Theerthar's ‘Sri Krishna Leela Tharangini’ are considered to be the ‘Triads of Krishna Bhakthi’. Tharangini consists of 12 Tharangams and encapsulates 153

songs, 302 slokams and 31 choornikaas. One of these Tharangams are sung after Ashtapathis followed by an appropriate namavali.

### 1.8. Panchapathi

Panchapathi encompasses 5 songs honouring 5 great composers Bhadrachala Sri Ramadasar, Sri Purandaradasar, Sri Sadhasiva Brahmendral, Sri Gopalakrishna Bharathiyar (Siva Keerthanas) and Saint Thyagaraja. These are sung on rendering apt slokas on the gods sung along with the namavalis. Songs of Saint Kabir, Meerabai and Saint Tulsidas are rendered after Panchapathi.

### 1.9. Poojai

It is the Poojobachara Keerthanas that come after Panchapathis and include:

- 1) Pooja Ahvanam (Ayahi Madhava, Baro Murare)
- 2) Swami alankaram (Jaya Jaya Devathi Deva Vibho)
- 3) Harathi
- 4) Neivedhyam
- 5) Thamboolam
- 6) Mangala Harathi
- 7) Shobhanam (Shobhane shobhaname)
- 8) Karpooa Harathi (Jaya Jaya Harathi)
- 9) Mangalam (Kanjadhalakshiki)
- 10) Namaskaram
- 11) Kattiya Vachanangal
- 12) Manthra Pushpam (Rajathi Rajaya)

### 1.10. Dhyanam

It is this part of Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya, where songs on all the Gods are rendered in the following order:

- 1) Guru
- 2) Ganesha
- 3) Saraswathi
- 4) Murugan
- 5) Shivan
- 6) Parvathi or Ambal
- 7) Narasimhar
- 8) Rama
- 9) Krishna
- 10) Srinivasa or Perumal or Renganathar
- 11) Lakshmi
- 12) Pandurangan and
- 13) Anjaneya

### 1.11. Dhivyanama Sankeerthanam

A lamp (Dheepa) lit on all the 5 faces is placed in the middle with the Bhagawathas singing and dancing around the lamp (Pradhakshinam) is Dhivyanama Sankeerthanam or Dheepa Pradhakshinam. It symbolizes the Gopis singing and rejoicing around Lord Krishna. It begins with Swami Avahanam Keerthanas followed by Sloka on Lord Ganesha. Dhivyanama Keerthanas comprises the compositions of Bhadrachala Sri Ramadasar, Sri Purandaradasar, Sri Ranga Vittalar, Sri Kanakadasar, Sri Vijayagopala Swamigal, Sri Narayana Theerthar (Tharangams) and Saint Thyagaja (Utsava Sampradaya Keerthanas). Then Gopika Geetham is rendered by the Bhagawathas sitting around the lit lamp, along with Rasa Kreedai, Kolattam, Kummi and Sidhhar songs. Dhivyanama Sankeerthanam concludes with Dheepa Samaropanam.

### 1.11. Dolotsavam

Dola means a Swing or a Cradle and Dolotsavam or Sayanotsavam is the utsavam, where Radha and Krishna (in this context) are put to sleep by singing the Dolotsava Keerthanas, most of which is composed by Saint Thyagaraja. It also encapsulates Nalangu, Poo Pandhu, Unjal, Laali along with the 21<sup>st</sup> Ashtapathi (Manjuthara set to Ghanta Ragam) and Prakara Rakshanas. Then Thirpalli Ezhuchi songs are rendered to wake Radha and Krishna up.

### 1.12 Radha Kalyanam

Radha Kalyanam is considered to be a Fiesta and hence referred to as Radha Kalyana Mahotsavam. It commences with Guru Dhyanas and Abhangs. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Ashtapathi ('Radha Vadhana' in Ragam Madhyamavathi) is the Kalyana Ashtapathi and is sung during the Thiru Kalyana Mahotsavam (Holy Wedding of Radha and Krishna), followed by Churnikas, Pravarams and Mangalashatakam. All these procedures culminate in the Thiru Mangalyadharanam (wearing the Mangal Sutra), pursued by Anandham, Kalyana Nalangu, Lali and Mangalam.

### 1.13. Anjaneya and Mangalam

This is the conclusive part of Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya where Keerthanas on Lord Anjaneya is sung with Pundareekams and Namavalis followed by Mangalam.

### III. Conclusion

Marudhanallur Sri Sadguru Swamigal travelled around the entire country and gathered compositions of various composers from different parts of India. This is evident from the inclusion of compositions of Sri Jayadeva, Saint Kabir, Meerabai and Saint Tulsidas in the Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya. Therefore the Dhakshina Pracheena Sampradhaya Paddhathi may be considered as one of the ancient and a complete Paddhathi. Though evolved from South India, it belongs to the entire country by the virtue of the variety of songs it encompasses.

### REFERENCES

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