



THE NON- TAMIL COMPOSITIONS OF SRI PAPANASAM SIVAN

The Trinity occupy a pride of place in Karnatic Music. Their contribution is so immense, that every composer is classified as either belonging to the "pre-Trinity era" or the "post-Trinity era". Amongst the post Trinity composers, Papanasam Sivan reigns as one of the most prolific composers of the 20th century. Fondly, he is called "Tamil Tyagayya". We have about 500-odd compositions of Papanasam Sivan out of 2500 composed by him. Of these, about 50 are in Sanskrit and some in "mani-pravaalam" (combination of languages) and the rest, entirely in Tamil.

Papanasam Sivan was born Polagam Ramaiah. He in 1890 at Polagam near Tanjavoor. He and his brother passed a lot of their time in Papanasam (between Kumbakonam and Tanjavoor), hence the "Papanasam" stuck to his name. Also, it was a tradition to address men of respect (men of God, as Rangaraamaanuja Aiyyangaar says) as Sivan, Sivanvaal, etc. in those days - and hence this gets suffixed to persons' names. Also, he came in a long line of composers and performers whose names ended in Shivan. Hence the name Paapanaasam Shivan. It is said that there was lot of influence of mahavaidyanaatha iyer's style on his compositions.

Papanasam Sivan developed a passion for composing songs after he shifted from Kerala to Tamil Nadu. His father died when Sivan was very young. He used to live with his ailing mother in Thiruvananthapuram. As a young boy, he even worked as a cook in Ootupara. He would work through the day and spend the night listening to harikatha. Thus began his love for bhajans and religious discourses.

EARLY DAYS AND THE INFLUENCES: In 1910, Sivan travelled to Papanasam to stay with his brother. It is here that he began to listen to Carnatic concerts, becoming so passionate about music that he took to writing kritis. The legendary vocalist Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer, whose concerts Sivan would listen to the most, also inspired him to compose songs. Vaidyanatha Iyer was known for his Thodi renditions, and Sivan composed more than 20 kritis in the raga. Soon the two developed a deep bonding, with Sivan looking up to Iyer as his guru.

Sivan would never miss Iyer's concerts and he once walked more than seven miles from Kumbakonam to Ammankudi to attend one. Iyer made Sivan sit next to him on stage and rendered his song 'Sikkalmeviya' in Kambodi raga.

Papanasam Sivan seemed to have been very influenced by Tyagaraja. . Like Tyagaraja, most of the compositions are in "madhyama kaala" pace. The kritis are brisk and energetic- a technique which Tyagaraja perfected to ensure that the listener's attention doesn't waver.

SIMILARITY WITH TYAGARAJA'S COMPOSITIONS: Like Tyagaraja, most of the kritis are personal in nature. It's as if his personal outpourings in a variety of moods, took the shape of these songs. The colloquial, conversational style of language also stands out in his compositions, much like Tyagaraja. One could easily emote listening to Sivan's compositions, the similar way in which Yuvaraja's compositions touch us. Some krithis of Sivan are a direct dialogue to the Almighty.

Sivan's compositions differed from those of Tyagaraja on one point. In Tyagaraja's compositions, we often see a repetition in tune- the tune which he uses in the anu-pallavi is borrowed in the charanam. We don't see this in Sivan's compositions. Here, he seems to have followed Dikshitar, where every stanza has an entirely original tune. Sivan used the mudra "raamadaasan". But we find the mudra used sparingly- unlike Tyagaraja.

Although many of them were predominantly composed in Tamil, he has also composed large compositions in Sanskrit. "*Srinivasa tava charanau*" in Karaharapriya, "*Sri Valli Devasenapathe*" in Natabhairavi are popular compositions in Sanskrit. He has also composed a Telugu composition, "*Nannu*

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brova nikemi" in Valaji ragam. He has also composed Thillanas in Sanskrit in Behag and Shanmukhapriya. List of some Sanskrit compositions of Papanasam Sivan are:

1. Pahi Meenalochani- Bilahari
2. Ramam Bhajata-Sri
3. Narayana Nalinayata - Sama
4. Sharadhe Veena Vadana - Devagandhari
5. Sri Madhava Vasudheva- Behag
6. Sri Shanmukham -Bhairavi
7. Shridhara Venkatesam -Bhairavi
8. Yamuna Theere- Hameerkalyani
9. Madhava Maya Mamava - Hamsanandhi
10. Jaya Jaya Bhuvanapathe -Bhimplas
11. Tava Charanam Mama- Thodi
12. Sri ramabadra - Saramati
13. Dasarathathmajam - Purvikalyani

Papanasam Sivan has composed Varnams, krithis, operas and all types of compositions, typically rendered on concert platform. He has composed 2 operas viz., Sri Rama Charitha Geetha and Kaaraikkal Ammayiar. Sri Rama Charitha Geetham is a raga- malika of 24 ragas. Sivan's compositions are truly a treasure and one can only seek more, the more one listens to them.