

Saint Tyagaraja, an Eternal Symbol of Bhakti

The prolific composer has left an indelible mark in the minds of all spiritual aspirants



Sadaasiva mayamagu naadom kareswara' sang Sadguru Tyagaraja in one of his *kritis* (musical compositions), which means the supreme divinity is 'always auspicious and perpetually propitious.'

The saint composed hundreds of such immortal *kritis*, described by Tyagaraja's American biographer Prof William Jackson as 'Goddesses of enchanting beauty'. The flow of his music, like the flow of the eternal Ganga or the beautiful Cauveri on the banks of which he lived and shed his mortal coil, is majestic and serene.

Tyagaraja's ancestors migrated from Kakarla village in Andhra

region to Tanjavur district around 1600 A.D. Being Kakarla Rama-brahmam's third son, born in Tiruvarur, he was named after Tyagarajaswami, the presiding deity of the place. The family shifted to Tiruvaiyaru where Tyagaraja's *bhakti* and *sadhana*, right from his childhood at the local Siva temple of Panchanadisvara, drew the attention of the people.

Following the advice of his guru, Tyagaraja began to recite Rama *Shadakshari* mantra, and when he completed doing it 96 crore times in his 38th year, he had *darsan* of Sri Rama

accompanied by Lakshmana, walking behind Viswamitra. With Narada's blessings there was an outpouring of *kritis* in praise of Sri Rama, Siva and other gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, encapsulating the essence of our Vedas and epics.

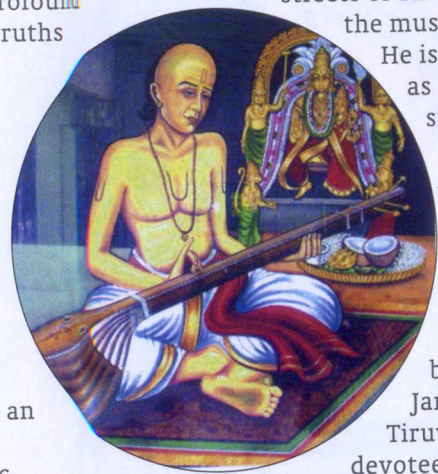
Dr Radhakrishnan, the past President of India, had described his poetry as profound philosophical truths of everlasting relevance. His music blended *bhakti* and philosophy, *raga* and *bhava*. If melody is the soul of music, Tyagaraja is the soul of melody, wrote an authority on Carnatic music.

Tyagaraja drew inspiration from Purandaradasa and Bhadrachala Ramadas, the great saint-composers who had preceded him.

Tyagaraja belongs to a particular region or linguistic group but to the whole of

humanity. The great saint with a *kriti* on his lips begged for alms in the streets of Tiruvaiyaru for his livelihood. In fact he was begging people to know the meaning of life and worship God to attain salvation. No wonder he is better known as *Tyagabrahmam*.

Almost every traditional home in India, like the hallowed streets of Tiruvaiyaru, echoes the music of Tyagaraja. He is rightly hailed as 'our greatest single contribution to the cause of world harmony.'



His 170th *aradhana* will be held on January 6, 2018 at Tiruvaiyaru where devotees and musicians will congregate in large numbers to pay homage to Sadguru Tyagaraja. 🙏

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