A Study of References of Sāmagāna in Chāndogya Upaniṣad

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Abstract: Chāndogya Upaniṣad is one of the major upaniṣads under the aegis of Sāma Veda, considered to be the mother of Indian music. The study attempts to trace the various references of Sāmagāna present in Chāndogya Upaniṣad as Sāmagāna is the basis of Indian classical music. Analytical study of Sāmagāna is imperative to trace its influence on present day music. This will in turn, help in better understanding of various aspects of music prevalent today such as tāḷa, graha bheda, gamaka, nervaal, etc., which are all crucial concepts of Carnatic music.

Keywords: Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Sāmagāna, Śāman, Śāma Veda, Udgītha

INTRODUCTION

The origin of music is quite difficult to trace. Of course, music as an inherent aspect of nature has existed for as long as this cosmos has existed. The gurgling of water, the rustle of leaves, the howling of the wind, the cooing of birds, the cries of animals, the roar of the oceans and seas, lightning, thunder, etc., have all existed before man appeared on the planet and will continue to endure as long as the universe exists. In fact, sound or nāda is said to be the basis of creation.¹ But it is man’s interpretation of this music and his own resulting musical expression that requires documentation. Inspired by the cooing of birds, the buzzing of bees, the sound of the wind, water, rain, etc., man started singing to express his feelings of joy, loyalty, victory, etc. Most importantly, he sang to appease the gods to whom he attributed floods, storm, diseases, famine, death, etc. Hence, music as a ritual evolved.²³ Indian music is a part of this country’s rich cultural heritage which dates back to at least two thousand years before Christ. The Vedās, which are at least four thousand years old, provide an insight into all aspects of human life of that era. They contain the work of many rṣis passed on orally from generation to generation because the Vedic people understood the enormous significance of sound and its impact on the human physiology.

The link between Indian music and Śāma Veda is established through statements made by various authorities across the ages. A few are:

- “Brahma developed music with the help of the Śāma Veda”, says Bharata in his Nāṭya Śāstra.
- “Vedānāṁ Śāmavedosmī”, says Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad Gītā.⁴
- “From the Bindu emerged Nāḍa, from Nāḍa emerged Māṭrkās, from Māṭrkās emerged Varṇa, from Varṇa emerged Vākya, from Vākya emerged Mahāvākya, from Mahāvākya emerged Veda and from Veda emerged Gandharva Veda”, says Matanga muni in his work Brhaddeśi. He also states unequivocally that the sapta svarās were born from the Śāma Veda.⁵

There are also numerous compositions in which the link between music and Sāmagāna has been demonstrated such as:

- Sāmajavaragamana composed in rōga Hindoḷa by Saint Tyāgarāja is another example where he describes Kṛṣṇa as being well versed in music which is the nectar that emanated from the Śāma Veda.

Hence, a theoretical connection between Indian music and Śāma Veda is well established.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives are to find and study the references of music available in Chāndogya Upaniṣad and to trace the evolution of present day music from Sāmagāna.

1.2 Review of Literature

Tracing the origin of Indian Classical Music is no mean task. Starting with a single tone chant, the journey of Indian music towards a fully established seven note scale has been long and arduous, and the Vedās contain many clues as to the progress of this journey.⁶ Various scholars have dealt with the concepts of music...
in Sāma Veda and Sāmagāna over the ages. Nārādā’s Nāradīya Śikṣā is a major śikṣā granthā which explains various aspects of Sāmagāna such as the svarās used, rules to be followed while singing a gāṇa with relevant finger movements, noted form of Sāmagāna and many others in detail[7]. Various music treatises too have touched upon the music of Sāma Veda; most notably Bharatā’s Nāṭya Sāstra, Matangā’s Bhaddāsēti, Śrīgadēvā’s Sangīta Ratnākara among others.[8] In recent times, an analytical study of Sāmagāna has been taken up by many scholars. A study of the structure of the Sāma Veda shows how the grouping of mantrās has been done and the various deities that are being praised through those mantrās. There is also a set procedure to be followed to obtain a Sāmagāna from a yoni Rāk mantra.[9] A bit more comprehensive study of the Sāmagāna along with its analysis through audio recordings shows the actual svarās being used in the rendering, along with various graces and gamakās being employed.[10] The Sāmagānās have been classified into four types and the appropriate gāṇās were used as part of various Vedic rites and rituals. The same gāṇa could be utilized in multiple ceremonies to obtain varying results[11]. In the realm of Sāmagāna, the magico-religious efficacy of music was considered to be more important than its aesthetics, as music was considered to be a power substance capable of making things happen. [12] One of the most enigmatic elements of Sāmagāna is the stobhākṣara. Many scholars have reduced this mystical element to meaningless syllables of exclamation. However, the existence of an esoteric dimension to these syllables cannot be denied and this needs to be investigated in detail.[13]

1.3 Scope and Significance of the Study

The scope of this study includes a detailed study of Sāmagāna which is required to better analyze the musical aspects present in the text of Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad.

The significance of the present work lies in the fact that though it is a well accepted fact that Indian music traces its roots to the Sāma Veda, significant work has not been done in analyzing the Sāmagānās themselves. There are several aspects of Sāmagāna that are not well understood even to this day. An in-depth research into Sāmagāna is required to be able to better appreciate various aspects of present-day music.

This study is limited to the musical references present in the text of Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad. Philosophical and spiritual aspects of the text have not been considered for research.

This study makes use of the Qualitative Approach. Data collection has been done with the aid of books, journals, recordings, interviews, websites and articles.

- Primary Sources: Interviews, photos
- Secondary Sources: Books, journals, websites, articles, recordings

II. SĀMAGĀNA

Sāma Veda Samhita is divided into two parts: Rāk yoni mantrās and Ganās. Gāṇa or Sāmagāna which consists of verses that are actually sung. Each yoni mantra may yield one or more Sāmagānās. There are Sāmagānās that consist of just stobhākṣaraś (syllables like hau, hai, hillu-hillu, etc.) and do not have any source Rāk mantra. In the text of Sāmagāna, the notes are denoted by numbers 1 to 7. According to the prevalent tradition, the seventh note is always sung higher than the first and must sound like the neighing of a horse which can be clearly heard by all.

The notes of the earlier Sāma Saptaka were called Yāmās and Nārada, in his work Nāradīya Śikṣā, gives the correlation between the older Yāma names of the descending Sāman scale and the present day names of the saptā svara which are in an ascending scale.[14]
These seven svarās, when compared with the svarās used today, seem to be closest to rāga Kharaharaprītya, the 22nd janaka rāga. A Sāman is sung as per the numbers appearing on the syllables. A Sāman may consist of 5, 6 or all 7 notes and are referred to asAuḍava, Audāva and Sāmpūrṇa Sāman or gīta respectively. This is similar to the Auḍava, Audāva and Sāmpūrṇa rāgās that are in vogue today.

The number that appears on the first syllable of a gāna denotes the fundamental or tonic note of that gāna. Any number from 1 to 5 may become the ādhāra or the Śadja. Notes 6 and 7 are generally not used as the tonic note. This is a very important rule as it helps in fixing the pitch of a singer. The same technique of shifting the tonic note is used even to this day and is referred to as graha bheda. The modal shift of tonic is of extreme significance to Karnāṭak music. It is the process by which the Ādhāra Śadja is shifted to another note in the rāga. It is by using this method that Venkатаමakhi arrived at the scheme of 72 melakarta rāgās which was one of the major milestones in the development of Karnāṭak music. Great musicians like G.N. Balasubrahmaniam, Dr. Balamuralikrishna, and others adopted graha bheda as a part of their manodharma sangīta as well; a trend which is being continued by few musicians even today.

III. REFERENCES OF SĀMAGĀNA IN CHĀNDOGYA UPAṆIŚAD

The UpaṆiṣads are philosophical and spiritual treatises which form the core of the Vedānta segment of the Vedās. The etymology of the word UpaṆiṣad comes from Upa, Ni and Śat which mean ‘to sit near’ somebody- preferably a Guru to receive knowledge regarding the Supreme Brahmaṇa.

The Chāndogya UpaṆiṣad is one of the biggest and oldest UpaṆiṣads. It forms a part of the Brāhmaṇa of the Talavakāra section of the Śāma Veda. Of the ten chapters present in the Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa, the UpaṆiṣad contains eight. The eight chapters are further divided in to several kāṇḍas or parts with verses grouped under a common theme or subject matter. The exact date of composition is virtually impossible to decipher. However, the consensus seems to be that the UpaṆiṣad was composed somewhere between the 7th and 6th century BCE. As the name suggests, ‘chandas’ is the basis of this UpaṆiṣad. Although chandas means metre, it also means ‘to cover’. Hence, though the subject matter of the UpaṆiṣad is of spiritual awakening and progress, it is covered with hymns, upāsanās, etc. Upāsāνās are a form of meditation which according to Gambrhrānanda “provide a path of inner transformation, in the midst of outward conformity.” Since the chanting of the Vedās was a part of a student’s day to day activity, to prevent it from degenerating into a mere mechanical process, upāsanās were introduced into the routine so as to encourage a little reflection.

3.1 Definition and Description of Śāma

According to Chāndogya UpaṆiṣad, that which is excellent is Śāma and that which is not, is not Śāma. Śāma is everything that is good and perfect. The text establishes a synonymity between Śāma and sādhu. He who meditates on Śāma as sādhu quickly acquires all the good qualities.

3.2 Correlation between Ṛk and Śāma

The correlation between Ṛk verses and Śāma chants has been described very beautifully in the Chāndogya UpaṆiṣad as follows:

- If earth is Ṛk, then fire is Śāma.
- If space is Ṛk, then air is Śāma.
- If heaven is Ṛk, then Sun is Śāma.
- If the stars are Ṛk, then the moon is Śāma.
- If the white light of the Sun is Ṛk, then that blue colour which is deep black is Śāma.
- If speech is Ṛk, then the vital force or prāṇa is the Śāma.
- If the eye is Ṛk, then the person seen in the eye is Śāma.
- If the ear is Ṛk, then the mind is Śāma.

These correlations highlight the high position given to Śāma Veda. These correlations can also be viewed as the dhātu-mātu samanvaya - the intimate connection between the lyrical and melodic aspects of a song. Dhātu-mātu samanvaya of a composition must be spot on for maximum effect. They are also meditation techniques aimed at helping one attain the Supreme Reality.

3.3 Udgīthā

1 Each Veda is broadly divied into two segments: Karma-Kāṇḍa and Jñāna-Kāṇḍa. Karma-Kāṇḍa consists of mantraḥ, rituals, rites and sacrifices that need to be performed as part of the day to day activities. Jñāna-Kāṇḍa, on the other hand is for those who have risen above the need for activity and are single mindedly in pursuit of the Ultimate Truth. UpaṆiṣads belong to this segment.

2 Amidst innumerable stars dotting the night sky, the prominent moon is the Śāman; in the infinite space in this cosmos, the precious air required by human beings to survive is the Śāman and so on.
Udgītha, which is a part of Sāmagāna is considered to be its most important constituent. Just as the charāṇa segment of the present day compositions contains the crux of the matter dealt with in the kṛtī, so too is Udgītha considered to be the core element of a Śāman. Hence, detailed meditation techniques have been listed in the text of Chāndogya Upaniṣad to utilize this element for Self-Realisation. It has been stated that the Udgītha should be meditated upon as the Sun, as it is the Sun which sings and nourishes all life on earth, and also as Vyāna which is the confluence of Prāṇa and Apana. This Vyāna is considered to be vāk i.e., speech itself. Hence, Udgītha is to be meditated upon as Vyāna3. The very word Udgītha is made up of three syllables viz, ut, gī and tha which are to be looked upon as Prāṇa, Speech and Food respectively. Ut, gī and tha are also correlated with heaven, space and earth respectively. It has also been stated that Sāma Veda is ut, Vajur Veda is gī and Ṛg Veda is tha. One who meditates on the Udgītha knowing the syllables in these ways becomes the possessor of the ‘milk of speech’. He is also blessed with plenty of food and digestive power.

3.3 Om as Udgītha

The text of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad begins with an exposition of Om which is said to be the same as Udgītha. Since the singing of Udgītha always begins with Om, it is considered to be identical with Udgītha. It has been said that meditating on Om which is the symbol of Supreme Reality is the fastest way to approach it. Om as Udgītha is the subtlest essence of the cosmos. The hierarchy is given as follows: earth is the essence of all the objects, water is the essence of earth, herbs are the essence of water, human body is the essence of the herbs, speech is the essence of the human body. Rk is the essence of human speech. Śāma is the essence of Rk mantrās and Udgītha is the essence of Śāma mantrās. Hence, it is the subtlest essence in the universe and takes the highest place in the entire cosmos. The Upaniṣad also states that speech itself is Rk, prāṇa the Śāman and the syllable Om is itself the Udgītha. By stating that Om itself is Udgītha, there remains no doubt regarding Om, as Om is also the first syllable of the Udgītha. The couple constituted by Rk and Śāma hence become associated with Om, meditating on which makes the meditator capable of fulfilling all desires. Om is also a symbol of prosperity. Hence, all Vedic rites and rituals begin with the chant of Om. Then comes the chanting of the hymns by Adhvaryu, praising of the Gods by Hotā and singing of the Śāman by Udgītha. The Upaniṣad however cautions that though he who knows this Om and he who does not have the knowledge of Om both perform rites, it is the man of knowledge whose rites and sacrifices become powerful and fruitful. This is true even today in all fields, including music. Only those who have worked hard to gain mastery of the art go on to become stalwarts of the field. Mediocre efforts and half baked knowledge do not produce lasting results.

3.4 Reference of a Musical Instrument

The one and only reference of a musical instrument is that of the vīṇa in the first chapter, section 7, verse 6. It has been stated that those who play the vīṇa, sing of the Supreme Brahman and that such persons are graced with wealth- both material and spiritual. Although there seem to be multiple references to Śāman chanting being accompanied by various musical instruments, staunch Šāmavedīś however categorically state that the singing of Sāmagāna was never accompanied by any instrument and this practice is being followed to this day4. In her article Varadarajan also states that a Šāma-singer would never sing a Šāman to the accompaniment of any instrument as it was considered sacrilegious to mix sacred music with secular music.[18]

3.5 Stobhākṛṣaṇa

The concept of Stobhākṛṣaṇā is probably one of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted concepts in the study of Śāma Veda. Stobhākṛṣaṇā consists of sound such as hāu, hillu-hillu, hāi, ohowa, ohoi, etc. which may seem very non-sensical on the surface, but are believed to have a very deep esoteric significance attached to them. In fact, Faddegon, along with many other scholars goes to the extent of calling Sāmagāna Dadaism and Shamanism and states, “The gānās are practically strings of “dadas”: hāi-s and hāu-s.”[14] Stobhās are also wrongly understood to be mere sounds of exclamations or interjections due to syllables like hurrah. If this were the case, then treatises such as Aksaratantra, Stobhapada, Stobhānasamhāra, etc. which deal extensively with Stobhākṛṣaṇā would be rendered obsolete. The very fact that these treatises exist indicate that there are dimensions to Stobhās that are unexplored to this day. Stobhās are also considered to be a necessary method of manipulating the Rk verse in order to fit a particular melody to a verse. However, the researcher does not subscribe to the idea that Śāma Veda evolved from Ṛg Veda; that they are in fact contemporaries is now an accepted fact. So, none of the above explanations do justice to the concept of Stobhākṛṣaṇā.

3 A human body consists of five vital breaths which are crucial in the overall functioning of the body. They are prāṇa, udāna, vyāna, samāna and apāna.
4 Obtained from personal interview of Dr. R. L. Kashyap on 8.12.2016, who is a Vedic scholar of great repute and is also the Director of Śrī Aurobindo Kapāli Śāstri Institute of Vedic Culture. He has contributed tremendously to the dissemination of Vedic knowledge.

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The procedure regarding the chanting or singing of Stobhākśarās has been laid down very clearly and has to be followed rigidly. They are to be chanted at a particular pitch and frequency for a specific duration of time and sometimes, repeated multiple times. Just like a mantra, the power of Stobhākśarās possibly lies in the set sequence of sounds and the frequency in which they are recited. Sāmavedīs staunchly believe that it is this power of the Stobhākśarās which translates into various desired results. This is where an in-depth study of Chāndogya Upaniṣad is crucial as it acts as a dictionary of sorts wherein thirteen Stobhākśarās have been equated with various deities and aspects of nature. However, no explanation has been given in the Chāndogya text as to how these correlations have been made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stobhākśara</th>
<th>Correlated Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hāu</td>
<td>This world that we inhabit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hāi</td>
<td>Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aha</td>
<td>Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iha</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ī</td>
<td>Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ā</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Invocation or Welcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auhoi</td>
<td>Viśvedēvās</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Him</td>
<td>Prajāpati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svara</td>
<td>Praṣaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāk</td>
<td>Virāt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yā</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hum</td>
<td>That which is indeterminate and inexpressible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Correlation Between StobhāKśarāS And Their Presiding Deities

It has been said in the Upaniṣad that this mystic meditation results in the meditator possessing the milk of speech, plenty of food and good digestive power. From a purely musical perspective, Dr. Roy states in his article that Dhrupad Ā lā p has been found to have evolved from the Sāman, specifically the Stobhākśarās. Even in Karnāṭak music today, there exists a tradition of using syllables like tadarī, tadarīna, tana, etc. during rāga ālāpane which could be traced back to Stobhākśarās. There is also the use of words like ānam, tānam, ananta, etc. during the tānam exposition which could also have evolved from the Stobhākśarās.

3.6 Seven Modes of Sāman Singing
The text of Chāndogya Upaniṣad lists seven modes or types of Sāman intonation along with the presiding deity for each type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Sāman singing</th>
<th>Presiding deity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sāman with a high sounding tune</td>
<td>Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indescribable Sāman</td>
<td>Prajāpati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāman which is clear</td>
<td>Soma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāman which is low and soft</td>
<td>Vāyu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāman which sounds like a heron</td>
<td>Brhaspati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāman which is soft and needs effort</td>
<td>Indra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāman which sounds like a rifted gong</td>
<td>Varuṇa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Seven modes of singing (Gambhirānanda 2015:138)

This shows that every Sāman was unique, not just in terms of the svarās employed but also with respect to how the Sāman was sung- softly, clearly, with a high sounding tune, etc. Not all Sāmans could be sung in the same way. Each mode of Sāman singing led to specific results through the grace of the presiding deity. The same applies to the treatment of rāgās as well. Each rāga has its own unique features. For example, rāga Naṭṭakānti cannot be approached with the same robustness as that required by rāga Śāṅkarābharaṇa. The soft, almost feminine touch required by certain phrases of rāga Kalyāṇi would be grossly misplaced if employed while elaborating rāga Todi. The inherent lāya of each rāga is different as well. While rāgās like Mohana, Hamsadhvani, etc. sound very appealing at higher tempos, ghana rāgās like Bhairavi, Todi, etc. require exposition at a comparatively leisurely pace.
It has also been said in the Upaniṣad that the Śāman sounding like a rifted gong should be avoided. This shows that the Śāmavedins had a sound knowledge of the concept of śruti, vādi and vivādi notes. Furthermore, it is possible that this correlation between a Śāman and its desired intonation led to Nārādī’s correlation between the seven svarās and cries of different animals and birds found in Nārādiya Śikṣa. Additionally, the assigning of devatās to svarās and rāgās, as seen in the treatise Sangīta Kalpaḍṛṃsam seems to have been inspired by this above mentioned modes of singing.

3.7 Instructions Regarding Śāman Singing

In order to make the singing of Śāman during a sacrifice more powerful and effective, a procedure has been laid down which should be followed without exception. Before commencing the singing of the Śāman, the singer should first meditate on his desires, what he hopes to achieve through the sacrifice, then the Śāman which is being employed, the Rk mantra on which the Śāman is based, the rṣi who was the seer of that mantra, the deity who is being praised through the mantra, the metre in which the mantra is composed, the group of hymns to which this mantra belongs, the direction which the singer is facing and the presiding deities and finally thinking of himself and his desires, he should sing without making any mistake. Careful attention should be paid to the utterance of each syllable, vowel, consonant and aspirate. The singing should be clear with an open mouth and must not be mumbled. The aspirates should be pronounced without being swallowed. This process ensures that the sacrifice becomes fruitful and the desires of the singer are fulfilled.

The same is applicable to all musicians to this day. A moment of inattention could lead to a deviation from the rāga or a miscalculation of the svarās. The complete pleasure of a composition can be experienced only when the sāhitya is pronounced clearly without any mumbling, swallowing or inaccurate breaking up of words. In fact, many treatises across the ages (from Nātya Śāstra to Sangīta Ratnakara) have dealt with gāyaka guṇa-dosās in detail.

3.8 Unique Śāmans Mentioned in Chāndogya Upaniṣad

The text of Chāndogya Upaniṣad mentions ten specific and one general Śāmagānas along with details regarding their exact procedure for meditation and the results accrued. These Śāmagānas are used in various rites and sacrifices depending on their specific results.

3.8.1 Gāyatra Śāman: This Śāman is based on the various organs of a human being. The human mind is Hīmkāra, the organ of speech is Prastāva, the organ of sight is Udgīthā, the organ of hearing is Pratihāra and prāṇa is Nidhana. He who meditates thus, lives a complete, healthy and vital life, obtains fame, progeny and animals. However, a man engaged in such a meditation should vow to have a great mind and never be narrow-minded. This gāna appears in the Grāmageya gāna section and is an Oudava gāna.

3.8.2 Rathantara Śāman: This Śāman is based on fire. The rubbing of two pieces of wood to produce a spark is Hīmkāra, smoke is Prastāva, flames lighting up is Udgīthā, charcoals being formed is Pratihāra and finally, the fire smouldering is Nidhana. He who meditates thus, becomes a great jānī of the Vedās, lives a complete, vital life and obtains fame and good digestive power. He should always keep his vow of not eating and spitting in the direction of a fire. This gāna appears in the Aranyageya gāna section and is a Śādava gāna.

3.8.3 Vāmadevyā Śāman: This Śāman is based on male and female copulation. A man beacons to a woman, that is Hīmkāra, he propositions to her, that is Prastāva, he lies down with the woman, that is Udgīthā, he lies upon the woman, that is Pratihāra and the coitus comes to an end, that is Nidhana. He who meditates on the Vāmadevyā Śāman knowing it to be based on the act of coitus, lives a full, long life, achieves great number of progeny as every act of copulation leads to procreation and obtains great fame and cattle. However, his vow should be to never deny any woman who approaches him. This gāna is a part of the Ūha gāna section and is an Oudava gāna.

3.8.4 Brhat Śāman: This Śāman is based on the sun. The rising sun is Hīmkāra, when it has completely risen, that is Prastāva, the sun at noon is Udgīthā, the afternoon sun is Pratihāra and the setting sun is Nidhana. He who meditates thus becomes bright, lives a full, long life and obtains progeny, fame, animals and good digestive power. However, his vow should be to never criticize the blazing sun. This gāna appears in both Aranyageya gāna and Rahasya gāna sections and is a Śādava gāna.

3.8.5 Vairūpyā Śāman: This Śāman is based on the clouds. The gathering of white clouds is Hīmkāra, formation of dark clouds is Prastāva, rain is Udgīthā, lightening and thunder are Pratihāra and cessation of rain is Nidhana. He who meditates thus, lives a full, bright life and acquires fame, a great number of healthy animals and progeny. His vow should be to never criticize rainfall. This gāna is a part of the Grīmageya gāna section and is an Oudava gāna.

3.8.6 Vairājya Śāman: This Śāman is based on the seasons. Spring is Hīmkāra, summer is Prastāva, monsoon is Udgīthā, autumn is Pratihāra and winter is Nidhana. He who meditates thus, acquires the knowledge of the Vedās, lives a full, bright life elegantly and obtains fame, progeny and animals. His vow should be to never criticize the seasons. This gāna appears in the Grīmageya gāna section and uses only four svarās.
3.8.7 Shakvari Sāman: This Sāman is based on the worlds or spheres. Earth is Hīmkāra, space is Prastāva, heaven is Udghītha, directions are Pratihāra and the sea is Nidhana. He who meditates thus, becomes a master of these worlds, lives a full, bright life and obtains fame, progeny and animals. He should however, keep his vow of never criticizing these worlds. This gāṇa appears in the section called Mahānāmni Archika and is an Ouḍava gāṇa.

3.8.8 Revati Sāman: This Sāman is based on animals. Goats are Hīmkāra, sheep are Prastāva, cows are Udghītha, horses are Pratihāra and man is Nidhana. He who meditates thus, lives a full, bright life and obtains fame, progeny and animals. His vow should be to never criticize the animals. This gāṇa appears in both Grāmāgeya gāṇa and Aranyageya gāṇa sections and is an Ouḍava gāṇa.

3.8.9 Yajñā-vajñīya Sāman: This Sāman is based on the parts of the human body. Hair is Hīmkāra, skin is Prastāva, flesh is Udghītha, bone is Pratihāra and the marrow is Nidhana. He who meditates thus, obtains mastery over his physiology and never becomes physically weak. He lives a full, bright life and obtains fame, animals and progeny. His vow should be to stick to a purely vegetarian diet and never consume meat. This gāṇa is a part of the Grāmāgeya gāṇa section and is an Ouḍava gāṇa.

3.8.10 Rājana Sāman: This Sāman is based on the Gods. Fire is Hīmkāra, air is Prastāva, sun is Udghītha, stars are Pratihāra and moon is Nidhana. He who meditates on Rājana Sāman knowing it to be based on the Gods receives blessings and grace from these Gods, obtains their splendour and becomes identified with them. He lives a full, bright life and obtains fame, animals and progeny. His vow should be to never criticize the Brāhmaṇās as the Brāhmaṇās are considered to be the visible Gods by the Vedās. This gāṇa appears in the Aranyageya gāṇa section and is an Ouḍava gāṇa.

3.8.11 General Sāman: This Sāman is based on everything; the entire cosmos is the basis for this Sāman. Knowledge of the Vedās is Hīmkāra, the three worlds are Prastāva, fire, air and sun are the Udghītha, stars, birds and rays are the Pratihāra and snakes, gandharvās and pītṛ (manes) are the Nidhana. He who meditates thus, indeed becomes everything. His vow should be the realization, “I am everything”. This Sāman seems to be another way of incorporating the message of tattvamasi. (Gambhīrānanda 2015:123-138) However, a unique feature of not only these sāmans, but all sāmagānās in general is that the melody can be changed for a given sāman. Depending on the ritual or sacrifice being performed, the same sāman may be sung using different melodies. This practice perhaps laid the foundation to the practice of nerval which is today, a unique and indispensable part of Indian classical music.

3.9 Mistakes and Corrections

If during a rite, there occurs a mistake in the singing of Udghītha, then the Udghītha who knows the identical nature of Udghītha and Praṇava can rectify it by gathering the results of the properly performed actions of the Hota. Also, it is imperative that the priest called Brāhma maintain his silence throughout the ritual. If his silence is broken or if the duties of other priests is interrupted, then a Vyāhṛti sacrifice should be performed. Any mistake will respect to the Rk mantras can be rectified by pouring an oblation in the Gārhapatya fire while chanting the mantra, “Bhūḥ Svāhā”. Similarly, mistakes committed with respect to Yajus and Sāma mantras can be rectified by pouring oblations in the Dakṣināgni and Aḥavanīya fires while chanting “Bhuvah Svāhā” and “Svah Svāhā” respectively. But if the Brāhma commits a mistake, then he should rectify it by pouring oblations in all the three fires while chanting the three vyāhṛtis. Similarly in the present day concerts, there is a belief that mistakes committed during the concert can be mended by singing rāga Madhyamāvati which is considered to be a very auspicious rāga. Hence, it has become a very common practice to end a concert with the Madhyamāvati rāga.

3.10 Material Benefits of Singing Sāmagāna

From the various Sāmagānās and their upāsanās detailed above, it can be concluded that the benefits of singing Sāmagāna are numerous. It caters to a variety of needs; ranging from the material (obtaining food, physical vitality, long and prosperous life, progeny, rainfall, cattle and other animals, etc.) to the spiritual (attainment of mokśa). It has also been stated in the text of Chāndogya Upaniṣad that he who takes shelter in the Sāma Veda need not fear the loss of a son. A similar claim is made by Saint Tāyāgarāja in his composition Sangīta Sāstra Jāhanam in rāga Sālagabhairavi. He says that learning music with discrimination can result in wealth, glory, fame, good conduct, the Lord’s grace, love for good men, devotion and above all, the ecstasy of being one with the Lord. Also, in his composition Rāga Sudhā Rasa in rāga Āndolika, he says that the nectar of nāda alone can give the benefits of yoga, yāga, tyāga and bhoga put together.[21]

IV CONCLUSIONS

- The study shows that there are indeed several references to Sāmagāna in the text of Chāndogya Upaniṣad.
The reference of vīṇā given in the text shows that musical instruments were prevalent during the Vedic times. Immense respect was given to those who could play the instrument.

Sāmagāṇa is the first instance of notated music in the history of Indian Music.

The one common theme between the Sāmagāṇā and the present day Karnatak music is that all compositions are in reverence of Gods. Even in Hindustāni music, Dhrupads which are amongst their oldest compositions, share this theme.

The concept of rāga and svara devatās seems to have been borrowed from Sāmagāṇa.

The practice of hosting discussions between scholars has existed from the Vedic times. Today, discussions over many musical topics occur during seminars, lecture-demonstrations, music and dance festivals, etc.

The celebrated Guru-Śiśya parampare is an inheritance from the Vedic times. In music, this sacred bond between a Guru and disciple has been immortalised in compositions like Guruleka Eṭuvanṭi and Purandara Dāsā’s Guruvina Gulāmanāguga Tānaka.

Stobhākṣārās are not just meaningless sounds of exclamations, but are sounds of deep power, meaning and significance. Use of sounds like tādana, tadarīna, tana, ānām, tānam, etc, employed in music today could have originated from stobhākṣārās.

Instructions regarding the proper method of singing Sāmagāṇa and the importance of voice culture are relevant even to this day.

Depending on the ritual being performed, certain Sāmagāṇās were sung only at specific times. The time theory of rāgās was probably the logical conclusion of this thought process which Hindustāni musicians adhere to staunchly even to this day.

Just like the ouḍava, śādava and sampūrṇa rāgās that exist today, there are Sāmagāṇās that employ five, six and seven svarās.

Different recensions of Sāma Veda have led to difference in chanting styles of Sāmagāṇa. This is similar to the different bānīs and gharānās that exist today.

The practitioners of Sāmagāṇa sang songs which were amiable and pleasing to the Gods who were their main audience. Today too, it is the prerogative of an artiste to please the audience through his music and make any changes and corrections if any, to hold their interest.

It has been mentioned that while singing Sāmagāṇa, monotony should be avoided at all cost. This is true for musicians of the present day as well. Proper planning of a concert is of paramount importance.

Continuity in singing Sāmagāṇa is also very important. This should be kept in mind while singing uguḥbogās and viruttams.

While the desired result of singing a Sāmagāṇa depended on the particular gāṇa and the ritual being performed, the desired result of today’s music is the creation of rasa amongst the audience. Rasikā’s complete rasāmbhava is the desired outcome.

Nārādā’s correlation between the seven svarās and the cries of birds and animals is similar to the seven modes of singing mentioned in the Upaniṣad.

It has been imperatively stated in the Upaniṣad that a thorough knowledge of Sāman is required while singing the gāṇa. This is applicable even today. Musicians should have a thorough knowledge of not just the rāga and tālā aspects of music, but also the sāhiya and dhātu-mātu samanvaya.

In Sāmagāṇa, there is a set procedure to be followed while singing. As it was sacred music, there was no scope for deviation. Today’s music is largely for the purpose of entertainment. Although there is a set pattern for a concert, it is only in terms of a framework, and it may or may not be followed.

Today, there is a constant tug of war between the purity of tradition and a sense of aesthetics. But in Sāmagāṇa, although there is a touch of aesthetics, importance was given to the magico-religious power and significance of music.

Today, sacred music has almost become an extinct art form with only a handful of families keeping the tradition alive. The science behind Sāmagāṇa is based on the powerful impact of sound not just on the human physiology, but on the nature and cosmos as well. Reviving this tradition will not only help in augmenting our cultural heritage, but may also offer solutions to various problems that the world is challenged with today.

From the aforementioned points, it can be clearly concluded that the evolution of present day Indian music can be traced to the Sāmagāṇa of Śāma Veda.

REFERENCES

A Study Of References Of Sāmagāna In Chāndogya Upaniṣad

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