CHAPTER - V

MUSIC, RASAS AND THE SCHEME OF PURUSHARTHAS
In this concluding chapter, I wish to make some remarks in reiteration of some of the points I have made in the last chapter about the connection of music as a form of art and morality and spirituality. These remarks are made against the background of the Theory of Rasas, and the scheme of purusharthas in Indian Philosophy. Thus, I consider them, as a matter of fact, to be a confirmation of my views expressed in the previous chapter, rather than as mere reiteration.

But before this, I wish to say something about music and its purely causal powers. In spite of the fact that the causal evocative powers of music are so obvious, not much attention has been paid to them by the theoreticians of music. The problem of course belongs properly to the area of psychology of music rather than philosophy of music. I have neither the competence, nor, fortunately the need, to embark upon the task of a detailed discussion of this problem. I mention this at all here, because of its possible relevance to what I have to say in a more substantial way a little later on.

Of all the forms of art, music alone seems to have almost an instinctive power of affecting us in a distinctive way
both psychologically and even physically. There is frequently, an immediate, that is, unmediated, causal connection between the hearing of a piece of music and what follows in the listener's mind and body. Think of a child's response to a piece of music by thumping his feet on the ground or an adult's propensity to start marching on hearing martial music. It is because of this immediate instinctive nature of music's effect on us that, often it is not possible to subject it to any kind of intellectual articulation or grasping. We are in a certain sense, "pure sufferers" of music rather than enjoyers of it. It is because of this that music has been looked at with much suspicion by some, otherwise respectable, intellectual and spiritual traditions. Think here for instance, of Islam's attitude to music or of Tolstoy's strange reservations about music as a form of art. In "suffering",* a piece of music, there is also an abandonment of the self, but this abandonment of the self is very different from the "unselfing", that I have talked about in the previous chapter.

*I use the word "suffering" here to indicate this sort of helplessness and self abandonment that music often induces.
My reason for raising this point is the possible connection with the view that music is not, or at least ought not to be, treated as an autonomous form of art. There are two senses of the idea of autonomy in this context: (i) music is unconnected with anything extra musical; (ii) music does not need the help of anything else in its expressive function. I have in the major part of this work, argued against the first kind of autonomy, hence all the discussion about music and its essential relationship to our emotional life. I have, however, upheld music's autonomy in the second sense of that term. Music is complete in itself in the sense that in its expressive function it does not need the help of anything that is essentially non-musical (See Chapters I & II).

However, if one reflects on the purely causal powers of music and the almost instinctual nature of these powers, it may not at all be surprising to think that music has been given by some a status lower than the other forms of art. Art requires a kind of responsiveness on the part of the audience which demands a self consciousness which is frequently absent in the otherwise attentive listener to a piece of music. In Indian aesthetic this responsiveness that is demanded has been called sa-hrydava.
Sa-hṛṣṇāya requires one's becoming attuned in a self-conscious intentional way to the emotional situation presented. (ḥṛṣṇā samvada): and then being absorbed, (very different from abandoning oneself) in its presentation (tamanvī bhāvāna). It is this self controlled absorption that results in rasanubhāvāna.

An overemphasis on the causal powers of music may therefore lead one into thinking that music by itself is not a form of art at all; it achieves this status only in association with things other than music such as poetry, dance, drama, and so on. It is possible to sympathize with such a view when one thinks of, say, Western pop music or even or jazz. One has only to think of the hysteria that such music is intended to induce in the audience and which frequently it does induce. Again one talks of the so-called vitality of jazz music, but this vitality perhaps is much more a matter of its effect rather than of an intrinsic quality of the music itself. Perhaps it is considerations of this kind that lead even the great Indian aesthetician, Bharata, into thinking that music's role as art is peripheral rather than central. Music helps drama in its central role of the presentation of rāgas rather than present them in its own.
In maintaining that music as a form of art is complete in itself I have of course rejected this view of music. Music is not something which is a mere instrument of causal manipulation, although it can be sought to be used as such an instrument. To listen to a piece of music is similar to being addressed by a speaker in the sense that in addressing a potential hearer, the speaker does not merely seek to cause the hearer to attend to him, but rather invites the hearer's attention to him.

However, when we think of music in connection with the rasas it does seem as though some at least of the rasas are not amenable to purely musical expression or presentation. Thus, take for instance, vibhatsa and abhhuta. These do seem to require the help of non-musical contexts (e.g. drama or dance) for their successful presentation. But equally there are other rasas, chief among them śūngāra and karuna which are capable of purely musical presentation. The fact that there may be rasas which are beyond the ken of purely musical presentation, does not however detract music either from its essential completeness or from its status as a form of art. This point becomes clear from a reflection on the nature of the relationship between the rasa and their essential unity.
Let me approach this point through a discussion of the relationship of the so-called virtues to one another. A reflection on the virtues naturally leads us to think about the relationship to one another which yields the idea of an order of virtues. It is difficult to state this in anything like a systematic way but the order is there nonetheless, and it is by virtue of this order that our moral life acquires a coherence. For example, if we reflect upon the virtue of courage and ask why we think of it to be a virtue, what kind of courage is the highest, what distinguishes courage from rashness, ferocity, self assertion and so on, we are bound in our explanation to use names of other virtues. The best kind of courage is steadfast, calm, and temperate, intelligent and loving. This may not in fact be the right description, but is the right sort of description. If we carry on our reflection in this direction I think it is inevitable that we will come up with a single unifying principle of all the virtues, a principle which unites them into an order which must inform the truly moral life. I think the one virtue which alone can perform this unifying role is love. Thus, think of courage without love or temperance without love, or intelligence without love. All these can easily
become the instruments of the immoral or the evil. It is love that binds them together as the necessary fabric of the moral life.

It seems to me that exactly the same point can be made about the eight rasas that Bharata talks about. It is not in isolation, but in unity or coherence that the rasas inform the aesthetic object or the work of art, (at least what can be considered a great work or even a proper work of art). And in the order of rasas, the rasa that performs the supremely unifying and vitalizing role is the śṛṅgāra rasa, which interestingly is frequently translated as love; that is, śṛṅgāra is not just the highest of all the rasas, it is also something which must inform the others so that they become appropriate objects of aesthetic presentation at all. Thus take the eight rasas of Bharata: śṛṅgāra, hasya, karuna, raudra, vīra, bhavanaka, vibhatsa, adbhuta. While hasya, for instance, can by itself, be the subject matter of a purported work of art, if that was the only rasa presented in the work, the work, while it might be "enjoyable", will necessarily lack the completeness and unity of the kind that would normally be demanded of a "proper" or significant work of art. This is even more clearly the case with rasas
like raudra, bhavanaka and vibhatsa. While karuna, vira and adbhuta (the marvellous) can certainly be the dominant rasa of a work, they achieve their full potentiality of aesthetic worth only when tempered by śṛṅgāra. Karuna, devoid of love, may at best be pity; vira merely ferocity, and adbhuta merely astonishment. It is the completing power of śṛṅgāra, that turns each of them into a suitable subject of aesthetic treatment.

Thus the fact that there may be rasas which may not be amenable to purely musical presentation, is not something that can affect the wholeness of music. For such rasas, if there are any, are not in any case proper subjects of aesthetic treatment in isolation. It is sufficient that the principle of all the rasas, viz., śṛṅgāra can be an indisputable subject of total musical treatment. It is also significant that śṛṅgāra is associated with the emotion of love in its bewildering multiplicity of dimensions. One might even venture to suggest that there is an order of śṛṅgāra itself just as there is an order of the rasas. The highest form of śṛṅgāra must involve the kind of "unselfing" that we talked about in the last chapter, the "unselfing" which is the basis of morality as well as true spirituality.
But what is the connection of all this with the purushartha? That is, granted that the rasas need to be united in śringāra, in order for them to become suitable or worthy subjects of aesthetic treatment, what has this to do with the goals of life, which is what the purusharthas are supposed to be? But before I attempt to answer this question, a word about the theory of purusharthas. "Purusharthas" literally means "the meaning of man", and the purushartha theory is, to my mind, an attempt at a philosophical understanding of the concept of man. In other words, I consider the theory as a non-empirical, conceptual delimitation of the idea of man, puruṣa. Man is such that, he would not be man at all — that is, he would be less than man, or perhaps, even more than man — if he were not engaged in the pursuit of the purusharthas: artha, kama, dharma and moksha. And this statement is not an empirical generalization about man. It is, if you like, an analysis of the concept of man, or perhaps, a synthetic a priori truth about man. (An interesting distinction is sometimes made between the first three by themselves which might be sufficient for a philosophical definition of the concept of man, and that the last is more a prescription than a constitutive element in the
in the concept of man. I do not agree with this distinction, but, unfortunately cannot go, in any detail, into my reasons for this disagreement. But some justification of my position can be found in what follows). The purusharthas, like the rasas and the virtues, seek, by their very nature, unity and completeness in a mutual, life-enhancing, "interactive" inter-relationship. The pursuit of artha alone, or kama alone or dharma, or moksha alone is self-destructive in its own way. As K. J. Shah puts it, "artha alone as a goal is greed, kama alone is lust, dharma alone is mechanical ritual, and moksha alone is escapism". And greed, lust, ritualism and escapism are necessary forces of alienation: each, in its own way, alienates man from his humanity, is destructive of the puruṣa in him. What unites them into a humanity generating whole is a mutual interdependence with dharma as the sustaining principle of this inter-dependence.

Now, what is the place of aesthetic pursuit in the scheme of purusharthas? Aesthetic pursuit is principally pursuit of kama. But, as we have already seen (Chapter IV), a work of art, both in its genesis and in its enjoyment, requires a disciplining of the self, and a progressive banishment of the ego which is also the essential demand
of morality or dharma. And a good description of moksha is the "actual abolition of the ego altogether". The movement of our consciousness towards self-lessness is also a movement in the direction of love. Self-lessness is the necessary and it will not be too much of a exaggeration to say - sufficient condition of love - love of others, of natural objects, of objects of art and of God. And the rasa connected with the experience of such love is srṅgāra.

To sum up: While aesthetic pursuit is primarily pursuit of kama — it is also a pursuit of progressive self-lessness, of progressive "unselfing", and, therefore, of love. Such pursuit is thus a paradigmatic example of the interactive unity of the purusharthas. But if what unites the purusharthas is love, what unites the rasas in an aesthetic object is srṅgāra. Thus, while aesthetic pursuit is a truly human pursuit, its product, — the aesthetic object as well as its enjoyment — when it is authentic, is the embodiment of the rasa of that which, holds human life together. And in music this rasa finds, as it were, its purest expression. In achieving such expression, music also affords us more than all the other arts intimations of immortality, of ananda and moksha, of genuine spirituality.
In conclusion, I wish to say a word, once again, in justification of the title of my thesis. As I had already pointed out in the Introduction, the title might arouse expectations which would not be fulfilled in the course of the work. For instance, I might, quite understandably, have been expected to devote a substantial part of the work, to discussing problems in the philosophy of language, problems such as, "What is it for anything to have a meaning at all?" "Is meaning always a matter of convention?" "Does intention have anything to do with meaning?" "What are the peculiarities of linguistic rules as opposed to other kinds of rules?" And, "Can these questions be asked of music?" "If so, how is one to answer them?" It is by now obvious that these questions were not asked in anything like a direct way. If some of them nonetheless find an answer, it is only incidentally that they do so. In spite of this, however, I do think that the title is appropriate. And my reason for saying this is as follows: Music shares with language the latter's central property, that is, music, like language, is a conveyer of meaning. Also, like language, it conveys meaning in a non-causal way. Music does not just causally manipulate our attention, it rather invites our communicative response to it.
I have been primarily concerned with the nature of this invitation, and with the nature and norms of propriety of the response. And it is this concern of mine that I wished to emphasize by calling this work "Language of Music".
REFERENCES

1. "Of Artha and Arthasastra", in *Way of Life*. Ed. T.N. Madan.