CHAPTER : I

“MEANING OF MUSIC”

1.1 Meaning of Music
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1.1 “Meaning of Music”

As the human beings live in the society of mutual understanding of ideas and actions, so they must possess some medium that can express and exchange their feelings. Like language, music has been a source of expression from the very ancient times. It is the pride of our country and culture, based on the scientific principles.

What is a musical instrument? While one can attempt to give an answer however vague to the question, the query implies others: What is music? What is the origin of music? What are the ancient forms etc.

Music, the English word, is a derivative from French word ‘muse’.¹

In Latin, it is ‘Music’. In Sanskrit it is called ‘gana, giti, or sangeet. The later treatises on music have explained or rather defined sangeet as the combination of vocal music, drumming and dance. (Geet, Nritya, Vadhya).

“Geetam Vadhyam tatha Nrityam
Triyam Sangeetamuchyate.”²

“Geetam Vaditre Nrityam
Triyam Sangeet muchyate”³

Indian music or Sangeet comprises of three arts i.e. Gayan, Vadan, Nritya. It is a technical term used for vocal and instrumental music along with the art of dance.
1.2 ‘Origin of Music’

The history of Indian music is the oldest one as is evident from historical facts about India.

“If we read the writings and historical accounts left by Pliny, Strabo, Magasthanese, Herodotus (who lived in the Vth century B.C.) Prophyry and a host of other ancient authors of different countries, we shall see, how highly the civilization of India was regarded by them.”

In fact between the years 1500 and 500 B.C., the Hindus were so advanced in religion, metaphysics, philosophy, science, art, music and medicine that no other nation could stand as their rival or compete with them in any of these branches of knowledge.

To find out of the history of anything. One has to collect informations, historical facts and go deep into the roots. It is the duty of the historian not to let that past be forgotten. He or She should trace these gifts back to their sources, give them their due place in the time scheme and show how they influenced or prepared the succeeding ages and what portion of present day Indian life and thought is the distinctive contribution of each race or creed that has lived in their land.

To know about the origin of music, I went through a vast study of literature on Indian music. In no art, science, or other departments of human activity has the doctrine of evolution been so enthusiastically welcomed, so eagerly adopted and so whole heartedly endorsed, as in music.
“Vocal efforts may have originated in imitation of the cries of the animals which were mimicked, but of the origin of the musical instruments it is difficult to speak with certainty.”

The first sound produced by human throat was musical. The vibrations of vocal chords created sound. The main property of music is sound or ‘Naad’. The naad is un-changeable.

“Speech and music have descended from a common origin in a primitive language which was neither speaking nor singing but something both.”

Music like other sciences is a science where laws are fixed and invariable. Just like 2 + 2 is four in the west as well as in the East, the fundamental laws of music are also permanent and for all men of all ages. Even now, Naad is considered to be the basis of music.

Bharat has described the “Atodhya Vidhi’ in which he has explained the human body as the “Shariri Veena”, because vocal chords function as strings. So our throat is the most beautiful and sweet instrument.” It is written in our vedas that when the Universe came into existence, Brahma created music and gifted it to Lord Mahadeva, who then gave it to Devi Saraswati as a gift who became the Goddess of music and people worshipped her as ‘Veena, Pustak Dharini’.

The excavations in Mohenjodaro and Harappa have brought to light the condition of music in ancient and pre-historic period, which shows the height of music at that time. Many of the valuable things
like seals, sacred tank, dolls of the deities, musical instruments like crude type flutes lute and veenas have been found. These veenas were stringed instruments having structure for seven notes.

Vedas are the biggest fundamentals of all wisdom. They are the basic granths of Aryans written in Sanskrit which are the storehouses of the knowledge. They prove to be the ocean of knowledge in every aspect of social and cultural life of the people of that time. We come to know from Vedas that 'Narad' the son of Brahma invented 'Veena' a stringed instrument which became very much popular in those days.

Besides Vedic sangeet Gandharav sangeet was prevalent. It enjoyed a special place in the field of Indian music. Vedic music was recognised as formalized one as it used to follow some rules & methods. Gandharav name was offered to a great musician. Methodical system had already been worked out before the age of 'Panini' who lived about 600 B.C. This methodology was adopted by Persians, Greeks, Arabians and by Europeans too.

In the Vedic period, the scale of four notes known as 'Swarantra' came into existence though the actual form of vedic music is not traceable.

"An account of the well known seven notes Ma, Ga, Re, Sa, Ni, Dha, Pa, that are still in use in our present day music with their equivalent is found for the first time in Manduki Shiksha of Atharva Veda. It is clearly mentioned there that the Samveda hymns were sung on the
notes known as:

- Shadaj — Sa
- Rishabh — Re
- Gandhar — Ga
- Madhyam — Ma
- Pancham — Pa
- Dhaiwat — Dha
- Nishad — Ni

"शदञ ऋषभ गणधर मध्यम पंचमस्तः।
धैवतश्च निषधश्च: स्वर ससेह सामसु।"

"Shadaj Rishabh Gandharan
Madhyam Panchamsttha
Dhaiwateshach Nishadashach
Swara Sapteh Samsu"

"Shadaj is produced by - Peacock
Rishabh is produced by - Cow
Gandhar is produced by - Goat
Madhyam is produced by - Heron
Pancham is produced by - Koyal
Dhaiwat is produced by - Horse
Nishad is produced by - Elephant."
In the Yajur-Veda, the notes were called:

1. **Udata** - Raised - (Komal) (High Tones)
2. **Anudata** - Not raised (Grave)
3. **Swarit** - Harmonic Swaras (circumflex)

1. **Nishad** - These are born of Udata
   - Gandhar -

2. **Rishabh** - These are born of Anudata
   - Dhaiwat -

3. **Shadaj** - These are born of Swarit
   - Madhayam - (Sa-Ma samvaad)
   - (Sa-Pa Samvaad)
   - Pancham

“According to Samveda the seven notes are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vedic Notes</th>
<th>Laukik Notes</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prathama</td>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dvitiya</td>
<td>Ga</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tritiya</td>
<td>Re</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chaturtha</td>
<td>Sa</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Atiswara</td>
<td>Ni</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mandra</td>
<td>Dha</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7. Krusta    | Pa           | G       |"
The expert singers and chanters of the Vedic age knew very well the specific laws and methods of application of the three registers: bass, medium and high i.e., mandra, madhya, and tara. The three ancient register notes or sthanswaras, raised, not raised and balancing circumflex i.e. udata, unudata and swarit came to be used as three kinds of pitches of speaking as well as of singing voices. Rhythm and tempo were used in accordance with different types of feet of the Vedic metres, gayatri, Jagati, anustupa etc. The time measure or tala was observed in hymnal songs and in different types of samgaan in two different ways with beat and without beat. Clapping of hands used to be the method for time measuring and the other was hand wavering or different limbs of the body.

So after a deep study one comes to know that the origin of music or sangeet is traced back to the vedic period or Vedas.

1.3 “Ancient Forms of Music”

In the ancient times, music was divided into two categories:-

1. Margi Sangeet
2. Deshi Sangeet

Margi Sangeet is believed to be originated by Brahma, who taught this art to Bharat muni. Margi Sangeet was sung by gandhavas only and was known as Achal sangeet. Its main aim was God realization, whereas deshi sangeet aimed at recreation of people. It was the changed
style of margi sangeet. Deshi sangeet had no hard and fast rules, so it flourished the most.

In gayan as well as in vadan, deshi sangeet got a great place because it was sung or played according to the tastes of the people. The sitar is such an instrument which has kept the old as well as modern traditions alive. One can play light as well as classical music on it so it is a perfect instrument which comprises deshi sangeet i.e. light tunes, thumris and classical ragas as well.

1.4 Classification of Music

Music or sangeet can be classified into two categories, namely vocal music and instrumental music. Vocal music is known as ‘Gayan’ or singing. It includes all types of songs ranging from light folk tunes,
light, devotional, patriotic songs, geets, ghazals, Thumri, Tappa, dadra, seasonal songs to classical dhrupads, classical devotional bhajans, and classical ragas of all seasons, moods and times i.e. morning, after noon and night ragas.

In classical instrumental music, one can play classical ragas of all times and moods. The light instrumental music includes various tunes, thumri and kehrawa beat tunes, regional folk Dhun and Tappa etc. The instrument can be used in orchestra as Pt. Ravi Shankar ji played tukras on sitar in his orchestra in 1960 which he presented in the city of New York, U.S.A. and got appreciation like a cloud burst.

Light music or ‘Khayal’ has two parts, sthai and antra. The compositions can be played with fast beats or slow beats which are called ‘Drut gats and ‘Vilambit’ gats. Light music is the result of classical music because when the artist practises the classical music, he finds some light notes in it which are soothing to the heart and console the human mind. The light compositions are related with our daily routine. Whereas classical music is bound to the rules. Light music can be played with the sweetness of melody keeping in view the rhythmic conditions. Classical light music includes all the nine ‘rasas’ which depict the different emotions of human mind.
CHART NO.2 NINE RASAS IN INDIAN MUSIC

Namely:

1. Shringar ras — feeling of love
2. Hasya ras — feeling of happiness
3. Karuna ras — feeling of sadness
4. Veer ras — feeling of heroism
5. Raudra ras — feeling of terror
6. Bhayankar ras — feeling of awfulness
7. Vibhastas ras — feeling of panic
8. Adbhut ras — feeling of strangeness
9. Shant ras — feeling of quietness

Classical music has some limitations. Only classical ragas can be sung or played and in accordance with the set rules, but the light music can be of any kind. As I have explained in the chart showing the classification of music.

In light music, one can imagine the emotions and can depict them by playing small alankars or can use Khatka, murki, gamak, meend which increase the beauty of the raga or any other composition. Classical ragas can be played or sung with as much efficiency as to express the emotional as well as the purity of the raga.

1.5 ‘Importance of Music’

The significance of music can be concluded from the famous and
premptory dictum available in Hindu scriptures. There is no knowledge beyond the knowledge of music.

God himself is personified as ‘Nad-Brahma’ and music as divine. It is a gift of the Almighty and an outstanding par excellence, the highest among the ‘14 vidyas’ and ‘64 Kalas’ enumerated in our holy scriptures. ‘Vidya’ means knowing about the various spheres of knowledge and thus leading to the target of God realisation. ‘Kala’ refers to all other branches of knowledge which help the human beings to lead a happy and satisfied life.

Indian music depicts emotions of life, creates harmony and poise in everyday life. It is purely a melodic art devoid of any harmonised accompaniment other than drone. The art of music of India exists only under cultivated patronage and in its own intimate environment. It is the chamber music of an aristocratic society, where the patron retains the musicians for his own entertainment and for the pleasure of his friends or it is the temple music where the musician is the servant of God.

Music is called the fifth Veda as it is considered to be of divine origin and thus is worshipped and regarded sacred. Music has been regarded almost universally as the purest form of art because it combines and assimilates in the Art-Beauty, Delight and love altogether. Music is the “Sarvottam Sooksham Kala” or best among all the fine-arts. All arts aspire to the condition of music. It is the most direct expression of beauty. It serves as the constant companion of human beings from birth.
to death, since there is no ceremony or occasion in society when music is not present to sublimate those precious moments of existence. It is an essential spiritual art and is the language of the soul. Music is the best medium of communication. It is the spontaneous expression, holy communion with the divine. The language of music is melody, harmony, rhythm, which brings to our lives the highest gift of culture.

Music is said to be the speech of angels. The man who has no music in himself nor is moved with concord of sweet sounds is fit for treasons, stretegems and spoils.

References:

10. Debasheesh - Quiz on Indian music and dance, p.43.