

മോറാൻ 'ഇത്'ഓ

# MÖRÄN 'ETH'Ö

**Philip Vysanethu. O.I.C**

**MUSICALITY  
MAKES  
THE MALANKARA LITURGY  
MYSTICAL**



**St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI)  
Baker Hill, Kottayam – 686 001  
Kerala, India**

**2004**

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THE MALANKARA LITURGY MYSTICAL**

by

**Philip Vysanethu. O.I.C**

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## PREFACE

One who participates in the Malankara liturgy undergoes a unique experience that can be called mystical. What makes it 'really' 'mystical...? This doctoral thesis is an attempt to answer this question by exploring into the mystical nature of the Malankara Liturgy that originated from the Antiochian Liturgy. It is a study on the mystical nature of the Malankara Liturgy and the formation of a liturgical musicality based on Indian Music System in the context of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, which was submitted to the Catholic Theological Faculty of Karl-Franzens-University, Graz, Austria for the degree of Doctorate in Theology.

The studies already done on the Malankara liturgy are generally centred on the theology or poetry and the very important factor namely the 'musicality' of the liturgy is forgotten. This is a study on the 'musicality' of the liturgy, which includes both its poetry and music.

I offer this work as a praise and thanksgiving to God. My heartfelt gratitude is extended to Prof. Dr. Philipp Harnoncourt who has arranged for my scholarship and stay in Austria. May I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Erich Renhart, the director of this doctoral work, for his intellectual guidance and 'non bureaucratic' approachability. I cannot forget Prof. Dr. Dietmar W. Winkler who has helped me and encouraged me all along my studies in Austria. Along with them I thank the dean and the staff of the Faculty of Theology as well as the director and staff of the Institute for Liturgiology, Christian Arts and Hymnology of Karl-Franzens-University, Graz. My sincere thanks to Very Rev. Dr. Jacob Thekeparambil (Director of Saint Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, Kerala) who is always ready to give me his valuable suggestions and moral support. I am thankful also to Rev. Fr. Abraham Kalakudi (SEERI) for his valuable suggestions and correcting this work and I am grateful to the Publication Department of SEERI for publishing this thesis. May I extend my

sincere gratitude to Prof. Sebastian Brock and Prof. Louis Hage for their suggestions and support.

In Austria, Germany and Switzerland there are many who have helped me in my studies. Here I cannot but express my sincere gratitude in words to all of them, especially to the Diocese of Graz-Seckau for granting me scholarship for my studies in Austria, which was properly canalised through the direction of *Welthaus* and *Afro-Asiatisches Institut*. I am indebted to Rev. Frs. Leo Thenner and Martin Broda S.D.S for their brotherly care in the last five years in Graz. The words are insufficient to express my indebtedness and gratitude to Rev. Sisters of the Holy Cross in Menzingen (Switzerland), *Familie Zettl* (Graz), Rev. Fr. Heinz Christ (Germany) and my 'second mother' Frau Lieselotte Giel in Ludwigshafen (Germany).

On this occasion I would like to thank all the members of the 'Order of the Imitation of Christ' for their support and encouragement, especially Very Rev. Fr. Jerome Peedikaparampil. O.I.C, the former Superior General and my first master in my period of formation, who has promoted me for higher studies in Austria. I extend my gratitude to Very Rev. Dr. George Thomas. O.I.C, the Superior General of the 'Order of the Imitation of Christ' and Very Rev. Dr. Chacko Aerath. O.I.C, the Provincial Superior of Bethany Navajyothy Province, without whose support and encouragement I could not have finished this thesis.

Thanking everyone who has helped me in this venture I dedicate this work to the Malankara Church and to all those who are in search of God as Nada Brahma.

Philip Vysanethu. O.I.C.



## EDITORIAL

Music delights everyone. This twenty-second number of **MÖRĀN 'ETH'Ō** deals with this delightful theme.

Rev. Dr. Philip Vysanethu is a member of the Congregation of the Imitation of Christ (O.I.C.). He is an accomplished musician. After years of training in classical Carnatic music of India, he went to Austria and secured a doctorate after presenting the result of his research in comparative study of the Indian music system and Syriac music.

This study is the very first of its kind. Syriac liturgical hymns have been studied earlier mostly for their theological content. Here the focus is on the musicality of Syriac Christian literature. St. Ambrose calls music “one of the wings of the Liturgy”. As Syriac liturgy is mostly musical, music is a little more than one wing of the liturgy. It is through poetry and music that the Syriac liturgy invariably imparts a mystical experience to every earnest participant.

The entire text of the thesis presented by Dr. Philip Vysanethu O.I.C. forms the content of this number of **MÖRĀN 'ETH'Ō**. For those who are total strangers to the age-old Hindu spirituality of India, this thesis may prove an introduction. Our earnest hope and desire is that this pioneer study will serve as an impetus for further research in this field.





## INTRODUCTION

*“The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”<sup>1</sup>*

When I meditate on these beautiful verses from the Psalm, music as the ‘speechless speech’ comes to my mind. For praising God words are unimportant because the ‘whole being’ praises God. Words cannot comprehend the ‘whole being’. The ‘whole being’ becomes the ‘speechless speech’ and through this speechless speech it praises its ‘cause of being’. That is the music of the ‘being’, true worship. The whole cosmos praises God without words, but through its own ‘music’. It is the ‘worship’ of the cosmos. In the Indian concept God is *Nada Brahma*. It is the *Anahata nada* that is beyond our senses. It is the ground of being. What we sing or hear is the *ahata nada* that is the manifestation of this *Anahata nada*. The proper practice of the *ahata nada* can lead one to the *Anahata nada*. In other words music can lead one to God. Therefore music is divine. Since music is divine it becomes our speechless speech to praise and worship God.

Music is an inseparable part of the Malankara liturgy, which leads the worshipper to a mystical experience. Its theology and its prayers are mystical and they are saturated in the mystical music of the orient. ‘Is there a Malankara Liturgy without music?’ In my pastoral experience of seventeen years I have asked this question to many Malankarites and even non-Malankarites. The answer was always, ‘No’. The Malankarites do not ‘say’ the prayer but ‘sing’ the prayer; they do not say the Holy Qurbano but ‘sing’ it. The theology of the Malankara Church is in its liturgy. The liturgical hymns of the Malankara Church are the interpretation of theology and faith. In singing the hymns the worshipper celebrates the

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<sup>1</sup> Psalms 19, 1-4

mystery of faith. In this celebration the worshipper enters into a mystical sphere where the worshipper experiences the *samipyā* (nearness) of God. For this experience of *samipyā* musicality plays the vital role. This can be explained through an example of the famous classical cradlesong in Malayalam, '*Omana thinkal kidavonnalla komala thamara poovo...*',<sup>2</sup> translated as 'Son of the darling moon? Or the beautiful lotus flower...?' It is the first line of the cradlesong composed by Irayimman Thampi. It is tuned in the *raga Nilambari*. When the mother sings this cradlesong the baby will sleep. The baby is not able to understand the beautiful meaning of the song, but hearing the song it falls asleep. Here what makes the song really a cradlesong for the baby is not the words but the musicality (in *raga*) that makes it sleep. Through the humming of the song and the gentle touch of the mother the baby experiences the *samipyā* of the mother, the *samipyā* in which the baby has no fear; it plunges into deep sleep. Here the function of the *raga* is that it becomes the 'speechless speech' that speaks to the baby. Exactly that is the function of music in worship: to take the worshipper to the serenity of *samipyā* of God.

This doctoral thesis is on the theme 'Musicality makes the Malankara Liturgy Mystical.' It is a study on the mystical nature of the Malankara Liturgy and the formation of a liturgical musicality based on Indian Music in the context of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. Stating that 'the musicality makes the Malankara liturgy mystical', I am not denying the other factors that contribute to the Mystical nature of the Malankara liturgy. Before I begin the thesis I would like to clarify the following notions:

## **I. Mystery, mysticism & mystical experience.**

The words 'mystery' and 'mysticism' are interrelated. Mahesh M. Mehta writes that both terms are related and pertain to secret rites. Mystery is that which is hidden. It cannot be taken always as

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<sup>2</sup> The Great Irayimman Thampi composed this cradlesong. It became the cradlesong of King Swathithirunal when he was a child. His mother sang this song to rock him to sleep.



something religious. Mysticism is to be viewed through a theological sense. It is a permanent inner experience of the unfathomable mystery of God.<sup>3</sup> Mystical experience can be aesthetic experience and religious experience. Aesthetic experience is sometimes religious experience too. For example: mystical writings, divine music etc. The meditative singing of a mystical hymn of Mar Ephrem or reciting of the mystical poem of Rabindranadh Tagore can take one to a mystical experience. The mystical experience is not necessarily permanent. It can be a serene, tranquil or joyful experience that is beyond expression.<sup>4</sup> Though this experience often lasts for a moment it has always a positive influence on the one who has undergone this experience. In this context I would say that the Malankara liturgy is mystical.

## II. 'Music', 'musical capability' and 'musicality' (*Wesen*).

The term, 'music' can be taken for any music piece or composition. Musical ability is one's ability to enjoy and produce

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<sup>3</sup> Walter H. Principe, *Mysticism, Its Meaning and Varieties, in Mystics and Scholars*, ed. by Harold G. Coward and Terence Penelhum, SR Supplements/3; Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1977. P. 2-3, 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Reference: Mahesh M. Mehta, *Foundations and types of Indian Mysticism*, Indian Philosophical Annual, Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: Avvai Achukkoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 103:

In some rare inspired moments when the mind free from doubts and anxieties is in a placid, tranquil mood, the religious feeling establishing a live contact with the cherished reality breaks forth and powerfully impinges on one's ordinary consciousness giving rise to a sudden inundation of joy, a spontaneous incandescence, an ineffable peace and freedom. It is ecstasy, exstasis, a transport into the supernal realm out of the quotidian existence. The exuberant rapture sends a thrill through one's entire organism. It exudes a feeling of elation and elevation, expansion and freedom, analogous to our familiar feelings of intense love and compassion. The duration and frequency of such experiences vary from time to time and from person to person.

music or one's talent in music. The term, 'musicality' in this thesis must be understood properly. It means the real intrinsic nature of music (*Wesen*). For example: the melody character or the mystical nature of oriental music. In this case it is related with the music system too. In the Malankara liturgy, since music and poetry are intermingled, the musicality of the Malankara liturgy is music and poetry together.

### **III. 'Uninterrupted musicality' and 'non-stop singing'.**

The term 'uninterrupted musicality' that is very often used in the thesis is to be differentiated from the term 'non-stop singing' that has nothing to do with this thesis. The uninterrupted musicality is to be understood by the unbroken flow of the musicality in a liturgical service. It is the *raga* setting of the whole liturgy. This uninterrupted flow of *raga* keeps the worshipper steady on the mystical experience in the liturgy. Non-stop singing is understood by singing hymns or melodies one after another. It can help the uninterrupted flow of the *raga*, provided they are sung in the same *raga* or in the same *sruti*. This is pertained more to a classical concert or music service, rather the 'uninterrupted musicality' is related with the liturgical services of the Malankara Church.

### **IV. Scope of this study:**

The study on the evolution of the musicality of the Malankara Church points to the fact that the liturgical hymns were the 'interpretation of the signs of the time' of the composers. The composers have interpreted the faith and revelation in their context. This study is an attempt to pave a path to interpret the musicality of the Malankara Church in the context of inter-religious dialogue that is the need of the time and in an ecumenical context. It is also an attempt to come to a self-realisation that the mystical theology of the Malankara Church and its musicality are intimately related with the mystical thinking of India. This realisation can strengthen the relation of the Christians with the non-Christians of India. The Easter message of John Paul II is very relevant to this time. He says:

Let there be an end to the chain of hatred and terrorism, which threatens the orderly development of the human family. May God grant that we be free from the peril of a tragic clash between cultures and religions. May faith and love of God make the followers of every religion courageous builders of understanding and forgiveness, patient weavers of a fruitful inter-religious dialogue, capable of inaugurating a new era of justice and peace.<sup>5</sup>

## V. Why this theme? Why in Europe?

Since I belong to the Malankara Catholic Church it would be reasonable to do a study related to the Malankara Catholic Church. Special interest in the field of music is another reason to select this theme. Nobody has ever made a study on both the poetry and the music of the liturgical hymns; if at all, most of them are westerners! The limitation of the existing studies on the liturgical hymns is that they stress only on the poetry; the nature of the music (the musicality proper) is forgotten. Above all the lack of sufficient knowledge in oriental music limits these studies.

To do this study in a foreign country, especially in Europe, has an advantage, that is, in a foreign land one realizes the richness of the native land and one can expand one's experience and knowledge. It is a chance to appreciate and evaluate differences in cultures. Lastly it remains a challenge!

## VI. Methodology.

The Church is a worshiping community and every liturgy is the celebration of the 'flesh-becoming Logos'. Since this flesh-becoming process occurred in the history that includes cultures, the liturgy also uses this culture to celebrate it. In order to explain that I

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<sup>5</sup> John Paul II, Easter Message. Obligated to '*Visal Malankara Voice*', (March-April 2003); 51 Aundh Road (Bhau Patil), Pune - 411 020, India. P. 6



would like to emphasise the importance of music and arts in the liturgy, among which music itself is mystical. In a real liturgical celebration the worshipper undergoes a mystical experience. Here I must show the basic notions of mystical experience and mysticism both in the east and west so that one can trace these elements in the liturgy, especially in the hymns. The Malankara liturgy belongs to the orient and its basic principles of music is same as of Indian music that is the oldest system of music, which had an influence on other music system. A comparative study of Indian music system and Malankara musicality will clarify many doubts on this matter. The last chapter deals with the theme that the musicality of the Malankara Church must be able to interpret the signs of the time. The analysis of liturgical texts both in its theology and mysticism will be given due prominence. A glossary will clarify the Indian terminologies.



## CHAPTER 1

# CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ESSENTIALLY A LITURGICAL LIFE, A PARTICIPATION IN THE 'FLESH- BECOMING' LOGOS

The Christian life is a congregational life that exists in the worship of Jesus Christ who is the centre of Christian life. This congregation is a worshipping community. The congregation comes together to worship God. Israel, the chosen people of God, was a worshipping community - a community that was moving around the mighty Yahweh. It was an uninterrupted presence of Yahweh, an uninterrupted covenant between God and the people of God. Whenever this presence was broken Israel was no more a people of Yahweh. This we can see in the book of Exodus: "... and the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them..."<sup>1</sup> Here one may notice that God says, 'now let me alone....' This shows that Israel was a worshipping community with whom Yahweh was always '*moving around*.' From this anthropomorphic expression one can infer that there was an *uninterrupted presence of Yahweh* in the worshipping community.

When one goes back to the first Christian community one can observe that it was also essentially a worshipping community: "...and day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 32: 7-10, Revised Standard Version, Catholic edition for India, Printed in India at Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi 110 020.

hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people.”<sup>2</sup> The Yahweh who led his people through the desert to the Promised Land leads the *New Israel* by the power of the Holy Spirit. Both in the Israel and the *New Israel* what made them come together is the liturgy, the worship. From the liturgy sprang out the spiritual life of the early Christians. Thus the liturgy became the centre of their life and Jesus Christ is the centre of their liturgical life. There was no dichotomy in their lives. For them who have become the members of the Church, through baptism their lives become a real worship of God.<sup>3</sup> Their life was the outcome of the worship, a continuation of their liturgical life. Their sufferings, joys, anxieties, hope, whatever they have, were brought in the worshipping community and were shared together in the breaking of the bread. There they felt the real presence of the Risen Lord. The worship is not limited in a particular gathering (e.g. *one hour* of eucharistic celebration) but it is a life long union with the Risen Lord. The continual presence of the Risen Lord was the essence of the first Christian community.

The Church is a worshipping community called by the spirit in baptism and bound together in the Eucharistic celebration. In the worship the Church is united with Christ.<sup>4</sup> The Church is characterised by the house of God. St Paul says: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”<sup>5</sup> The temple of God is there where God is worshipped. All the faithful in the Church become one temple where God is being adored. The Church as a worshipping community is again emphasised in the call to a ‘royal priesthood’. Every faithful is called to share in the ‘royal priesthood’ of Christ and therefore every Christian is a ‘king’ and a ‘priest.’ In his first letter Apostle

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<sup>2</sup> Acts of the Apostles 2: 43-47. (RSV)

<sup>3</sup> *Lexikon religiöser Grundbegriffe*, Verlag Styria Graz, Wien, Köln. P 624. (personal translation from German)

<sup>4</sup> 2 Cor. 11, 2; Eph 5, 22-23, RSV, Catholic Edition for India. (Reference)

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 3, 16; RSV.



Peter has written: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people...”<sup>6</sup> Here one may notice that the function of a priest is to do sacrifice and worship to God. Thus the concept of the royal priesthood of all the faithful in the Church shows that the Church is essentially a worshipping community.

## 1.1 Liturgy is a participation in the *flesh* - becoming LOGOS

“In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God....”<sup>7</sup> This WORD was intangible to human beings until it was manifested in the flesh. Yahweh had led Israel through the desert for forty years but He was unapproachable to human beings. That is why we read in the Old Testament that if anybody happens to see God he will die. Yahweh is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. However Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.<sup>8</sup> God as the ‘Logos’ became flesh so that man can *touch* him and *taste* him. He is no more far away in the horizon but He is with us (Immanuel). The transcendental WORD has taken the form of the human being.

“In the incarnation, God has taken over the culture and the nature of man. He has not denied any culture or tradition but has fulfilled it. Accepting the human nature, God dignified the human nature, the flesh.... The revelation of God to man (in the flesh - becoming Word) is revealed to man in the human history and in the culture, cult, arts etc.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 1 Pet. 2, 9. RSV

<sup>7</sup> John 1, 1. RSV, Catholic Edition for India.

<sup>8</sup> Reference: Ex. 3, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Mathew Vysanethu, *The Mystical nature of the Malankara Liturgy enriched by Indian Music*, M.Th Thesis, Karl –Franzes-Universität, Graz, 2001 (Unpublished material) P. 9

Jesus Christ is the real medium through which the essence of God is revealed to the world. In other words God participates in the history of man.

“Human life is essentially a communication, fulfilled with and through the other, in ‘giving’ and ‘receiving.’ This communication is done through symbols. The loving and the loved one are the real symbol of this giving and taking. His/ her existence depends on this giving and taking.”<sup>10</sup> The *flesh - became* God is the real symbol of this taking and giving. Through the incarnation God has taken the form of man in human history and He has brought down the glory of heaven to man.

God as immortal participates in the mortal form of man so that the mortal can become immortal. This is the great mystery of incarnation. This mystery is celebrated in the liturgy. If God became flesh in history, the same God is again and again revealing himself to man because God is incomprehensible and beyond space and time. Liturgy is where this *flesh – becoming* God becomes revealed to the worshippers. If God has taken a medium, i.e. human history in his flesh becoming process, the same media, namely the culture, arts, traditions etc, are used by the worshipping community in order to meet the *flesh – became* God. In every liturgical celebration God *becomes flesh*. Man receives from God His grace and he communicates himself/herself with God in worship and thanksgiving. In the liturgy the worshipper is united with the *flesh – became* word, Christ and through him and with him and in him he/she is elevated to the divine sphere. Thus the liturgy becomes a participation in the *flesh - becoming* God.

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<sup>10</sup> Reference: Gottesdienst der Kirche, Teil 4...

## 1.2 Liturgy brings down heaven on earth and elevates the earth to heaven

The ultimate *desire* (end) of every human being is to attain the state of *eternal bliss*. This state is known in different terminologies. To some it may be *Moksha*; to the others it may be *Heaven*. In the Christian concept the state of eternal bliss is in heaven. The prayer “Our father in heaven.... *Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven...*” shows the inner thirst of every human being to experience the heavenly bliss. This heaven is beyond the empirical nature of the human being. Only when one is liberated from this empirical nature one can achieve and enjoy this stage. Naturally it is after death. Nevertheless, the worshipper, though he/she is in his/her empirical nature has been provided with the supernatural faculty with which he/she can experience *heaven on earth*. It is the *foretaste* of the Kingdom of God. This *foretaste* can be explained in the words of St. Paul: “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.”<sup>11</sup> The *flesh became* God manifests himself among the worshipping community, in the liturgy, through the *sacraments* or *mysteries*. The real participation in a liturgy takes one to the realm of a heavenly\* atmosphere. It is not magic but the experience of a reality in another form. What happens in magic is only an illusion, i.e. we think that something happens there. But in the liturgical celebration the

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<sup>11</sup> 1Cor. 13:12; RSV, Catholic Edition for India.

\* *Die Beschreibung des himmlischen Gottesdienstes in der Apk. wird man als ein Spiegelbild Zeitgenossen: Mysterienfeier-Basileios der große; Johannes Chrysostomos, Kyrillos(Johannes); Mit dem 3/4 JH. Prägt sich der schon in Hebr. und Apk. anklingende Gedanke der teilhabe am himmlischen Gottesdienst der Engel in der Liturgie starker aus. Seit dem 4Jh entwickelt sich die Liturgie zur Dramat. (Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, sechster Band: Verlag Herder Freiburg, 1961, P 1086.)*



worshipper experiences the healing touch of God.<sup>12</sup> In magic the ability and the capturing tricks of the magician is very important. The effect of magic is very temporary. In the liturgical celebration the personal experience that goes deep into the inner depth of the worshipper is important. The effect of such an experience is permanent.

How does the bringing down process actualise in the liturgy?

The liturgy is the official worship of the people of God gathered together in the Holy Spirit and led by the Holy Spirit. It is a congregational adoration of the people of God. Every creature praises its creator. In liturgy the people of God praise Him, thank Him for His gifts and repent on their failure in their relation with Him. In our day-to-day life when we praise a person, when we thank a person and sometimes when we are sorry for our misbehaviour, our relation with the particular person becomes deepened. The ultimate end of every human being is his/her union with the Ultimate Being. In one's empirical nature one cannot come into direct union with God because God is intangible. However, human beings are enriched by the potentiality to come to a 'mystical union' with the Ultimate Being through cult, meditation, arts, paintings etc. The liturgy as the celebration of the faithful takes up all these forms in order that man can experience the transcendence in a mystical manner, that is, the transcendence becomes immanent. It is being portrayed in the theology of St. Paul: "*already but not yet*". In liturgy the faithful comes to a union with the risen Lord who is mysteriously /sacramentally present in the liturgy. Heaven is where man is always in union with God. "Heaven is neither a place nor a time-determined presence but it is a personal reality. In Christian life it is a congregational relationship between the

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<sup>12</sup>Reference: Lexikon religiöser Grundbegriffe, Verlag Styria Graz, Wien; Köln, 1987. P 623

worshippers and Christ.”<sup>13</sup> In the liturgical worship the worshippers experience a mystical union with the Risen Lord, which can be called the ‘foretaste’ of heaven. The Second Vatican council in the decree on liturgy states that in the earthly liturgy the believers foretaste the heavenly liturgy where the believer will be in the eternal communion with God.<sup>14</sup> The whole setting of the liturgical celebration is constituted in such a way that it imparts the *heavenly atmosphere* to the worshippers. This heavenly setting of the liturgy is expressed through symbols, language, music, prayer, incense, vestments etc. Among these the most important one is music on which the whole thesis will be focused. It is very particularly visible in the Oriental liturgies especially in the Malankara liturgy. As one cannot include all the aspects of the liturgical setting of the liturgy in a thesis this thesis will deal with the very important factor i.e. the ‘musicality,’ which makes all the liturgies heavenly. In the next subchapter will deal with the relation between liturgy and music in general, which will help one to go deep into the uninterrupted nature of musicality in the Malankara liturgy.

### 1.3 Liturgy and music

Down through the centuries Liturgy and music are deeply related. As already mentioned, among the constituent factors of a

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<sup>13</sup> Lexikon religiöser Grundbegriffe,: Verlag Styria Graz, Wien, Köln, 1987. P 487 (Personal translation)

<sup>14</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on liturgy, Nr.8; Verlag, Herder, Freiburg, Basel, Wien:

*[In terrena Liturgia caelestem illam praegustando participamus, quae in sancta civitate Ierusalem, ad quam peregrini tendimus, celebratur, ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens, sanctorum minister et tabernaculi veri; cum omni militia caelestis exercitus hymnum gloriae Domino canimus; memoriam Sanctorum venerantes partem aliquam et societatem cum iis speramus; Salvatorem expectamus Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, donec ipse apparebit vita nostra, et nos apparebimus cum ipso in Gloria.]*

liturgy, music plays the vital role because music itself is a language that goes beyond even cultures and races and it elevates the heart of the human being to a sublime level. In the Old Testament tradition one may observe that many of the psalms have a liturgical setting. In Christian tradition the whole psalms are taken into a liturgical context. Jesus himself has proclaimed adoration in the spirit as the new aspect of his teaching. With the expansion of Christianity a complex attitude towards music and singing developed. In the New Testament we see many fragments that refer to the fact that music and singing were used in worship. In the Gospels of St. Mark and of St. Matthew we read: "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."<sup>15</sup> St. Paul also exhorts the Ephesians: "Address one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your heart."<sup>16</sup> St. Paul refers particularly to the music that comes from the heart. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."<sup>17</sup> Here one may observe that St. Paul emphasises on *a music that comes from the heart of thankfulness to God*. It is implicit that he warns of a music that is used for the purpose of aesthetic pleasures only.

### 1.3.1 Liturgy, the vessel of mystery poured out through artistic media

The liturgy is the vessel of mystery that is poured out through arts and Symbols. A liturgy must be able to take the participants to a mystical experience. A liturgy that is poor in symbols and art is unable to lead the worshippers to a mystical experience. The richness of a liturgy is constituted in its mysterious nature and this mysterious nature makes the liturgy mystic. What is mysterious is

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<sup>15</sup> Mk 14:26; Mat. 26: 30; R.S.V; Catholic edition for India.

<sup>16</sup> Eph 5:19; R.S.V; Catholic edition for India.

<sup>17</sup> Col. 3:16; R.S.V; Catholic edition for India.



beautiful. In order to show the importance of the mysterious nature one may take an example of the monument, Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal is a very mysterious memorial/monument of the love of Emperor Shajahan towards his wife Mumthasmahal. Its structure, the architecture, the art etc. herald the mystery of love. One who takes pain to sit in front of the Taj Mahal and meditate on it, can become a 'mystic of love.' Another example to be shown is that of the love of a mother towards her child. The love of a mother to her child is a mystery. When the mother kisses her child, it experiences the *mystery of love* in the act of 'kissing'. The love of the mother that is a mystery is revealed to the child in the 'symbol of kissing.' An act of kissing is more tangible to the child than the repeating of its mother a thousand times: 'I love you my child.' It is a speechless speech that cannot be limited by time and space of the world of 'blabbing'. When we try to 'desymbolize' the mystery, it loses its nature and beauty. This is the reason why many of the liturgical celebrations turn out 'dry' without touching the heart of the participants. On the other hand a mystery can be revealed through symbols and art without losing its beauty and mysterious character. The Christian liturgy is the celebration of the mystery of faith. It is the celebration of the salvation economy of God. The mystery of the salvation economy is being revealed through symbols and arts. Art itself is a theology through which the mystery is being manifested and the way is opened for a mystical experience. Art and symbols are inevitable to reveal the mystery and to enter into a mystical experience. This mystical experience is also produced by the 'uninterrupted movement,' (an uninterrupted union) in the liturgy. In 'heaven' there is an uninterrupted union between the Creator and the creature. The liturgy brings down heaven among the worshiping congregation where the union between the worshipper and Worshipped is incessant. This experience of the intangible can be called a mystical experience. A mystic is one who can converse with the Ultimate Being. Every human being has this potentiality of mysticism. A mystic is the one who has developed this potentiality.

The aim of every liturgy is, one can say, to lead one to the level of mysticism. The Christian liturgy uses art as a means to serve this purpose of *bringing down 'heaven to earth.'*

Among the means of this bringing down process, music plays the vital role. Music, the first degree of art is so divine that it has the power to lead one to mysticism. Music is a veritable elixir, i.e. it has a healing power that can lead the hearer to a state of mental peace and serenity. It provides that joy and satisfaction which material possessions can never give. It is an art that can easily take up any human being into the spiritual realm. It is a scientifically proved fact that even animals and plants can be influenced by music.<sup>18</sup> To enjoy music one does not require any preparation. Immersing oneself in music, one can experience the mystery of music. In order to enjoy a classical dance (especially Indian classical dance) one has to know the meaning of the symbols beforehand. To appreciate a painting one needs a preparation. But the divinity and the dignity of music is that it speaks itself to the object directly. It remains a mystery. This mysterious as well as simple and tangible character of music provides the worshipper the necessary *energy* to undergo a mystical experience in any liturgical celebration. In singing, the verbal speech and the music as the tonal speech being connected together, is an aspect of medium to refer to the divine history of many religions to express the expressible with the inexpressible.

In order to understand better the relation between music and liturgy it would be helpful to look into the dominance of music in cult and rituals.

### **1.3.2 Dominance of music in cults and rituals**

From the ancient time on music is used in cults and rituals. Since the rituals reveal what cannot be explained through words, a

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<sup>18</sup> Reference: Joachim-Ernst Berendt, *Nada Brahma die Welt ist Klang*, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. P.99-105



speechless speech is required in the rituals through which the *unexplainable* can be explained. Raimundo Panikkar says: “Ritual is the means by which one expresses, reaches, conveys, intends (and) effects something which otherwise would remain void.”<sup>19</sup> In other words one can say that rituals are beyond the horizon of the faculty of reason. Music as the speechless speech which expresses the self and which is not limited by the faculty of reasoning is used in rituals and cults.

In Greece, flute playing at the sacrifices was aimed at the weakening of disturbances from strange noises. “Plutarch states that the music heard at the burnt offering to Saturn in Carthage had the same purpose. The sound of the flute and of the tambourine was supposed to cover the screams of the children sacrificed to Saturn so that they would not be heard. Therefore it was most important that music played during a sacrifice was not interrupted.”<sup>20</sup> The real reason for the use of music during sacrifices is sought in the belief of the ancients in the magical power of music, i.e. to drive away *demons*. This may be considered a superstition. However, one thing is sure that music has such a power to drive away many ‘demons’ that disturb our minds especially in prayer or in liturgical celebration. In the rituals of the Greek the sacrifice is accompanied by the invocatory cries of women. “Music had the same character of *epiclesis*. It was supposed to call down the good gods.”<sup>21</sup> Singing is used in Egypt as a means of inducing ecstatic prophecy. The influence in sacrifice and cult is very old and not specifically Greek. “The Greek called a prophet ‘*kresmodos*’ and the Hebrew word ‘*Naba*’ signifies not only ‘to prophesy’ but also ‘to make music.’”<sup>22</sup> Among the Old Testament prophets, music had this same purpose.

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<sup>19</sup> Edward Foley, *Music in Rituals*; The pastoral press, 225 Sheridan, St. NW. Washington DC, 20011. P. 18.

<sup>20</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Music and worship in Pagan & Christian Antiquity*; National association of pastoral musicians, Washington, 1983. P. 15

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. P. 17

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. P. 39

In 2 Kings 3, 15 we read, "Bring me a harpist! And when the harpist played, the hand of the Lord came upon him." This is to signify that music was used to remove the disturbance from outside, which might impinge upon the prophet. The state of being in a spiritual ecstatic experience caused by the inner silent concentration can be prolonged by music that is based on the melody principle.. This was similar to the Pythagorean doctrine that music has the power to establish an inner harmony or balance in man.<sup>23</sup>

In the cult and rituals of Hindus, chanting of *mantra* is one of the main rubrics. It is to be noted that whenever the *mantra* is chanted the *raga* and the *laya* are to be strictly observed. The validity of a *mantra* or a sacrifice depends on the right performance of them. For example the *Gayatri mantra* sung at the dawn of the day is to be chanted in the *raga Bhupalam* that is a morning *raga*. If it is sung in a *raga* other than *Bhupalam* it will be in a wrong context and for the Hindus the chant will not be valid. The uninterrupted flow of music is the most important thing to be rightly observed so that the devotee can come up to a mystical experience (ecstasy). In Kerala that is one of the southern states of India, the *Shabarimala* pilgrims usually have forty days of fasting and penance as the preparation of worshipping at the shrine of *Ayyappa* who is the deity of the temple. In the eve of the pilgrimage the devotees sit together and perform music ministry that sometimes goes on till morning without any interruption. In this long service all the *kirtans* (hymns) are sung or chanted in the same *Sruti*. This uninterrupted flow of music increases the psychic energy in the devotees by which some of them can even walk through fire without burning themselves. The *Rshis* (Great mystics and ascetics) before they entered into *tapas* (deep meditation that results in the union with the ultimate Being) repeated the *mantra* 'Om' or 'Ram'

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<sup>23</sup>Reference: Philip Mathew Vysanethu; *The Musicality makes the Malankara Liturgy Mystic*; Karl-Franzes-Universität Graz. 2001. (Unpublished M. Th Thesis) P. 20



without any interruption and they immersed in deep mystical experience.

From the above-mentioned experiences and factors one thing is clear that music has been used in cults and rituals as a medium to come into union with the Ultimate Being or to increase the psychic energy in the devotees.

### 1.3.3 Music, a medium to *speak to God and to the fellow being*

The power of music consists in its two dimensions, namely, the empirical nature and the transcendental nature. Prof. Philipp Harnoncourt the famous liturgist of Austria has the opinion:

Music is the language of sense which comes from the human being. Music is the language of heaven, namely the cosmos, which is found out and imitated by human beings.<sup>24</sup>

The first element refers to any music system and the second aspect is to be taken as transcendental. This transcendental nature can be explained in its symbolic nature that is revealed in its inexhaustible character. Paul Ricoeur who is a Philosopher, states:

Symbols in general, therefore, and music in particular, are thus understood to be powerful because they have a double internationality. They seem to mean one thing, but this leads to a second meaning, and when that second

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<sup>24</sup>Philipp Harnoncourt, *Musica Sacra*; Zeitschrift des allgemeinen Cäcilien-Verbandes für die Länder deutscher Sprache, 110. Jahrgang Sonderheft. P. 12. (personal translation).

„*Musik ist die Sprache der Empfindungen, geht also vom Menschen aus; Musik ist die Sprache des Himmels, bzw. des Kosmos, wird also vom Menschen vorgefunden und nachgeahmt.*“

meaning appears to be fixed, it leads to a third meaning, and on and on, spiralling into the inexhaustible.<sup>25</sup>

The Sanskrit verse "*Pashurveti shishurveti veti ganarasam phani*"<sup>26</sup> means that 'the cow, the child and the 'snake' alike enjoy the charm of the music.' Music itself is a language of the heart, which anybody can understand; no matter one is a scholar or an ordinary person. Aram A. Kerovpyan, a liturgist, quotes in his article: "The purpose of music is to connect the soul and the heart, to express the intellectual activity and ability united with the feelings of the heart, in such a way that our hearts become purified."<sup>27</sup> Music as a communicative medium has two dimensions: 1) communication to God and 2) communication to the fellow being. These two dimensions will be dealt with in the following sub chapters.

### 1.3.3.1 Music, a medium to speak to God

The communication with God in the physical sense is impossible because communication is done in a medium in the empirical nature and the two parties who involve in the communication must be in the empirical medium. As it is already mentioned human beings are provided with a faculty to understand the *heavenly realities* through mysteries that use symbols. Music as a symbol is used to communicate with God. The philosopher, Ernst Cassirer, is of the view that there are two symbolic worlds. He says: "... Besides the world of language, there is another human world

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<sup>25</sup>Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual*; The pastoral press, 225 Sheridan St. NW. Washington DC, 20011. P. 15

<sup>26</sup> Sambamurthy, *South Indian Music*, Bk. I, The Indian music Publishing House, Bunder Street, Madras 600 001. . P. 2

<sup>27</sup>Aram. A. Kerovpyan; *Armenian Liturgical Chant-The system and reflections on the present situation*; St. Nersess Theological Review, Vol. 1, January 1996, Printed in USA, 150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle, New York 10804 USA, P.25

that has a meaning and structure of its own. There is, as it were, another symbolic universe beyond the universe of speech, of verbal symbols. This is the universe of the art – of music and poetry, of painting, of sculpture and architecture.”<sup>28</sup> Music, poetry, painting, sculpture and architecture belong to the category of fine arts. The greatness of music lies in the fact that it is the finest of the fine arts. Any one can understand music but this understanding of music differs from one to another. A piece of music can be enjoyed differently and it can lead the audience to a sublime level, because music itself is a symbol that is inexhaustible in its possibilities of communication. Moreover, here lies the concept of music as transcendental and divine. What is transcendental can be revealed in a better sense only through another transcendental media. In other words we can say, ‘through the *nada* to the *Nada Brahma*.’

Music as a medium to speak to God and to the fellow being is to be understood well in the Indian concept of music as *Anahata Nada* and *Ahata Nada*. *Anahata Nada* is the music that emerges by itself i.e. without the effort of human being. Ultimately it is the *Nada Brahma* (God as the eternal music, *Nada*). *Ahata Nada* is the music that is produced by the conscious effort of man – all music systems come under *ahata nada*. In the Indian concept music is considered divine and it flows from God. The whole cosmos is filled with the ‘*cosmic music*’ that is nothing else than the *Anahata Nada*. In order to experience the *Anahata Nada* one must be able to immerse in the *ahata nada* that ultimately leads one to the feeling of the presence of *Anahata Nada*. One can say that the *ahata nada* is a means to reach the *Anahata Nada* (Please refer 3.2 1). The same notion is explained by Aram. A. Kerovpan in another way:

The role of music as a means of relating with what is beyond the intellectually perceptible is a generally

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<sup>28</sup>Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual*; The pastoral press, 225 Sheridan St. NW. Washington DC, 20011. P. 14



admitted reality. Music has had a ritual function in every so-called primitive culture as well as in highly sophisticated ones, and that function has remained for all religions of our times. Despite the intrinsic concepts and styles of each people, the function of religious music is still the same for all of them: to free humans to communicate with the Creator.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.3.3.2 Music, a medium to speak to the fellow being

Human beings communicate with one another through language. Without words also one can communicate to the other. For example a gentle touch of a friend in one's difficulties is a consolation from the friend. The *action of touch* exposes the solidarity of the friend to the concerned person. This action can be called a symbol. This is a symbol that explains a natural reality in the 'sense-level.' Michael Traber, the editor of a Christian communication quarterly, writes: "If communication is the perception of another person's sensibility, then music is the most direct means of communication we possess."<sup>30</sup> This is very predominant in the melody character of music, particularly in the *raga* system of Indian Music (detailed study in 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter). Carl Seashore, in his work on 'the psychology of music' speaks on musical message:

The musical message is that aesthetic experience - be it feeling, ideation, impulse craving, wish or inspiration - which the composer in the first instance and the interpreter at the next level desire to convey to the audience through the form given by the musical message. In the same manner, the message may be regarded as that

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<sup>29</sup>Aram. A. Kerovpyan; *Armenian Liturgical Chant – The System and Reflections on the Present Situation*; St. Nersess Theological review, Vol. I. Nr. I, Feb. 1996, Stratton Road, New Rochelle, NY 10804 USA. P. 26

<sup>30</sup>Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual*; The pastoral press, 225 Sheridan St. NW. Washington DC, 20011. P. 7.



experience or interpretation which the listener arrives at from hearing and rendition, from scanning the score, or from reminiscent memory in vivid and constructive imagination.<sup>31</sup>

Music is the self-expression of one's heart. Therefore, music as communication is also a *heart to heart - dialogue*. A dialogue between *head to head* is often boring and it can result in the wrong understanding of notions. Instead, a *heart to heart* communication takes one to a level of enthusiasm and understanding. In the words of Prof. Philipp Harnoncourt: "As the communication through music is done neither by the *faculty of reason* nor by the *will*. It does not come under the reasoning or the will or it cannot be limited as if in a dialogue that may sometimes be ended up in non-enthusiasm. Therefore music is one of the best means of 'influencing / manipulating' the human beings."<sup>32</sup> The heart is the seat of emotions. Human beings are emotional beings. Emotion is the flowing out of one's heart. Since music is a communication of the heart it is the expression of one's heart and it arouses the same mood in others. This can be explained in the words of Foley: "Thus music can excite because it conveys an 'exciting' message, or music can soothe because the message is correspondingly 'soothing.'<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid. P. 7.

<sup>32</sup>Philipp Harnoncourt; *Musica Sacra*; Zeitschrift des allgemeinen Cäcilien-Verbandes für die Länder deutscher Sprache, 110. Jahrgang Sonderheft. P. 13. (personal translation)

„Weil die musikalische Kommunikation weder über den Verstand noch über den Willen funktioniert, kann sie in der Regel weder rational noch willkürlich hergestellt oder abgeschaltet werden, wie man etwa die Teilnahme an einem Gespräch durch Abschalten der Aufmerksamkeit beenden kann. Musik ist darum eines der wirksamsten Mittel zur Beeinflussung und Manipulation von Menschen.“

<sup>33</sup>Edward Foley; *Music in Rituals*; The pastoral press, 225 Sheridan St. NW. Washington DC, 20011. P. 8.

This nature of music as a *heart to heart* communication is to be taken seriously with regard to its mystic character.

Music unites human beings. This unifying potentiality is revealed especially in the liturgical music. Prof. Philipp Harnoncourt states that with the help of music one can synchronise the feelings and the movements. The examples he shows are marching music, dance music, meditation music etc. The melody and the rhythms influence the human mind.<sup>34</sup>

This unifying character is very important in communication. Communication is a dialogue with the other and at the same time the dialogue has a focal point. Otherwise the dialogue will not reach its goal. Music as a unifying agent helps the worshippers to concentrate to the focal point that is God. These aspects will be shown elaborately in 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter where the theme on Music and Mysticism are dealt with. The music as a medium to speak to God and to the fellow being is explained in a *triple direction movement* in the liturgy. God loves man, man loves his fellow being, and from this loving community praises and thanksgiving emerge.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Philipp Harnoncourt; *Musica Sacra*; Zeitschrift des allgemeinen Cäcilien-Verbandes für die Länder deutscher Sprache, 110. Jahrgang Sonderheft. P. 13

*„Der musikalischen Kommunikation unter Menschen kommt eine nachhaltige und in der Regel unentrinnbare Wirksamkeit zu. Mit Hilfe von Musik und Gesang können Menschen in Gefühl und Bewegung gleichgestimmt und synchronisiert werden. Beispiele dafür sind Marschmusik, Arbeitsmusik, Tanzmusik, Kampfmusik, Trauermusik, Meditationsmusik, Schlummerlieder usw. Die elementaren Wirkungsfaktoren sind Spannung und Lösung. Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten dafür im musikalischen Geschehen gibt es in Melos(Melodie), Harmonie, Rhythmus und Dynamik(Lautstärke). Vielfältige Verbindungen, einander verstärkend oder auch gegenläufig, sind möglich und gebräuchlich. Eine auf den Gegensatz von Spannung und Entspannung verzichtende Musik empfinden wir als monoton, jedenfalls in unsere Kultur.“*

<sup>35</sup>Reference: Ibid. P. 14.

The unification process that is caused by the musicality in the liturgy, especially in the Malankara liturgy is to be analysed systematically in the following chapters. Music and mysticism are deeply related in the Orient. Music elevates one to a sublime level of mystical experience because it itself is mystic. Because of this the music is an inseparable entity of all the Oriental liturgies especially Malankara liturgy. Since the Malankara liturgy belongs to the family of Orient and because it originated in India, it will be helpful to have a bird's eye view on the concept of mysticism in the Orient/India and to observe the parallel thoughts in Western mysticism.

#### 1.4 Summary

In the first chapter we were dealing with the title 'Christian life is essentially a liturgical life.' Christian life is a congregational life that exists in the worship of Jesus Christ who is the centre of Christian life. The classical way of explaining the Church as the 'New Israel' explains the Church as a worshipping community centred on the Risen Jesus, whereas in the Old Testament Yahweh was the centre of Israel as a worshiping community. Without worship there is no Christian life. The official worship of the Church as a 'worshipping community' is called the liturgy. Liturgy is participation in the '*flesh – becoming*' Logos. Every liturgical celebration is the celebration of this '*flesh – becoming*' Logos. In this celebration there are two dimensions – the liturgy *brings down heaven on earth* and *elevates earth to heaven*. The elevation of the earth to heaven can be simplified in the terminology - a mystical experience. The ultimate end of every believer is 'the eternal unity' with God that is possible in its real sense after death. However, in the liturgy that uses arts and symbols as media, the believer is privileged to experience this union in a mystical way already in his/her empirical nature. Therefore one can say that liturgy is a worship or celebration in which the believer comes into union with the '*flesh-becoming*' Logos. In the 'flesh-becoming' process God



has participated in the history of man that includes the cultures and arts. The liturgy as the celebration of the whole salvation economy makes use of the same cultures and arts as media of worship. Even though in the incarnation God has revealed Himself to man the whole salvation economy remains a mystery. This makes the liturgy also a mystery. A mystery can be revealed only through symbols. In this mystery the believer reaches to a mystical experience but through media. Among these media music plays the vital role because music itself has a mystic character. Since this study is on the mystical character of liturgy and music, the second chapter will be on the basic understanding of mysticism.





## CHAPTER 2

# MYSTICISM IN THE EAST AND IN THE WEST

### (A BIRD'S EYE VIEW)

Human beings are distinguished from other beings by two faculties: the faculty of thinking and the faculty of feeling/experience. He/she is provided with the capability to acknowledge the sensuous realities and also the suprasensuous realities. Acknowledging the suprasensuous realities comes under the ordinary thinking and the other depends on his/her approach to the aesthetic and religious feelings that have a great impact on his/her 'being.' Down through the ages many people have had various religious experiences that are explained through different terminologies and expressions. Most of these experiences are named mystical experience. The mystical experience comes under the faculty of acknowledging the suprasensuous realities.

The word Mysticism originated from the Greek word '*mustikos*'. It comes from the verb '*muo*' that means closing the eyes. It can be explained further as *closing the eyes and the mouth in order to experience the mystery and avoid blabbing*. Mahesh M. Mehta states in his article on '*Foundations and Types of Indian Mysticism*,' "The word mysticism is one of the most misty terms in usage because of its association with 'mystery'... Mysticism proper (*mystik*) was originally applied in a theological sense to something hidden (closed to the eyes), esoteric, or secret, and thence to the personal inner experience of the unfathomable mystery of God."<sup>1</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup> Mahesh M. Mehta, *Foundations and types of Indian Mysticism*, Indian Philosophical Annual, Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: Avvai Achukkoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 98, 99

is also the root word for 'mystery.' In the Platonic and the Gnostic tradition it is an experience of the self-realisation in knowledge (*Jnana*). This requires training in meditation concentrating on the Ultimate Being. It is at times explained as the relation (union) with God resulting in the denial of 'myself' and 'the world.'<sup>2</sup> According to the Indian tradition also it is the union of the *atman* (soul) with the *Paramathman* (Ultimate Being). In the Christian Theology it can be comprehended in one sentence that is the fellowship with Jesus Christ, which is deep rooted in the mystery of Baptism.

## 2.1 Mysticism in Indian Spirituality

There are different thoughts in the field of Indian mysticism. This thesis focuses only on the main division that is *Bhakti marga/Bhakti yoga* and *Jnana marga/Jnana yoga*.<sup>3</sup> The main proponent of *Bhakti marga* is Ramanuja and in the *Jnana marga* comes Sri Sankaracharya.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Reference: Indian Philosophical Annual, Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013, P. 43:

This particular mystical form of man's relationship with God, Friedrich Heiler characterises as the radical denial of the *world* and the *I*, "Wherein the human personality dissolves itself, submerges, sinks down into the infinite unity, the Godhead" (*Die Bedeutung der Mystik für die Weltreligionen*, P. 6). And Rudolf Otto simply states: "The characteristic of all mysticism is the... identification with the transcendent" (*Das Heilige*, p. 23, footnote).

<sup>3</sup> Apart from *Bhakti yoga* and *Jnana Yoga* there is *Karma Yoga* also, which is the main teaching of *Bhagavat Gita* - '*Nishkama Karma*'= Doing one's duty without desiring its fruit.

<sup>4</sup> In the strict sense Sankara and Ramanuja come under philosophical mysticism. Surdas, Thulasidas, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Saradamataji, Mirabhai are considered as true mystics.

### 2.1.1 *Bhakti Marga/Bhakti yoga*

*Bhakti* can be called devotion or love. The mystics have a deep intense devotion to God. It is an unconditional and undivided love for God, which results in the union of the *Bhakta* (devotee) with God. In this union the *bhakta* experiences a deep blissfulness that is not determined by the senses. Jiva Gosvami states: “Its mark is, that it is not determined by other objects and that it is not an expression of a desire for earthly or heavenly happiness or for liberation, that it is an end in itself and not a means to some other end.”<sup>5</sup> “While a genuine *Bhakta* (devotee) would try to conceal his/her love for God, there are organic manifestations which are hard to repress like the shedding of tears, etc. from which others can infer the authenticity of such an experience.”<sup>6</sup> There is a gamut of thinking and practices in the *Bhakti marga*. According to Ramanuja, Vallabha, Chaitanya and *Mahayana* (in Buddhism) mysticism can be explained as the inward beatific vision and the ecstatic communion with God (Ref: *sayujya* and *sarupya*). It is also an outward movement that is experiencing God in everything as the underlying principle and God as omnipresent reality. What is intended to state here is nothing but a nutshell of them that is necessary for this thesis because the theme of mysticism has an unlimited horizon.

The concept of *prarthana* (prayer) is very important in the field of mysticism. Swami Narendranand gives five definitions to *prarthana*:

- It is the childlike expression of the wishes of our hearts in regard to selves and to others before *Paramapita Paramatman*.

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<sup>5</sup> Indian Philosophical Annual, Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 34

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. P. 34



- It is the elevation of our heart and mind to *Paramatman*.
- It is our answer to *Paramatman's* longing for us.
- It is a conversation with *Paramatman*
- It is the spiritual experience of the relation of the suppliant with *Paramatman*.<sup>7</sup>

In the concept of prayer (*prarthana*) *japa* is to be taken into special consideration. The meaning of *japa* is reciting or repeating the names of God. Repeating the names of God firstly by the lips and then by the heart, one can enter into deep contemplation. *Japa* is considered to be the best method among the spiritual practices. Repetition of the sacred word 'Om' is a generally accepted practice. During the temple festivals in India it is very common to have *Sahasra Nama japa* - uttering thousand names of *Ishwar* (The Supreme God). In Kerala (one of the southern states of India) it is a devotional practice among the Hindus, that in the evening, the family members come together and practise a *Ram-japa* that is nothing else but uttering the name of god *Ram* in repetition. One of the famous Indian philosophers and the first president of India, Dr. Radhakrishna said: "The deeper the prayer, the more is the individual lost in the apprehension of the Supreme. The hardness of the ego melts; the tentativeness of the creed is revealed; and the intense focussing of all souls in one utter Being is grasped."<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion one can say that according to the *Bhakti marg*a/*Bhakti yoga* tradition mysticism is an ***unbroken unity of the Atman (soul) with the Paramatman (Ultimate Being)***.

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<sup>7</sup> Swami Narendranand; *Hindu Spirituality*; Jyoti Ashram, Sultanpur, UP; P.18

<sup>8</sup> Radhakrishnan, S; *Religion and Society*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1959; P. 53



### 2.1.2 *Jnana Marga/Jnana Yoga*

The *Jnana Marga* comes in the process of realisation of *atman* and *Brahman* as not different (*aham brahma asmi* – I am Brahman). Sankara, Patanjali, Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu are the mystic philosophers who come in the stream of *Jnana Marga*. It is an intellectual and contemplative approach to the Ultimate Reality. This realisation as '*aham brahma asmi*' itself is the *Moksha/Mukti* (liberation). It is a meditative realisation. "*Moksha* does not have its root in a special ability or capability of man. It is the knowing of the *atman* that transcends all individual traits and yet has to be regarded as not different from the empirical and individual personality. The *atman* is the transcendental dimension, as it were, experienced beyond, in and through the empirical as its basis."<sup>9</sup> It is the liberation from *avidya* (ignorance) i.e. the liberation consists in the existential acceptance of the truth that we are not separated from God in our nature. "*Moksha* is rather the realization of *what really is*. By *Moksha* a wrong attitude towards reality (including a wrong perception) is negated so that the One Reality can be experienced; the veil of dualistic unknowing disappears, so that what always is can be seen."<sup>10</sup> *Moksha* is not a place but a state. It is in the knowing of what really *IS*. In this state the *jivatman* (soul) experiences the supreme Bliss of *Paramatman* (Ultimate Being). If one attains *Brahman* he will not be reborn and this state of *Moksha* is the changeless state of the soul to which it yearned for. All its wishes and desires are fulfilled and its spiritual faculties, namely the intellect and will, have reached their satisfaction.

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<sup>9</sup> Indian Philosophical Annual; Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P.137.

<sup>10</sup>Sankara's commentary on *Brhadaranya Upanishad*, III, iii, 1; IV, iv, 20; II, iv, 12

The following are the four types of *Moksha*. They are *Sarupya*, *Salokya*, *Samipyra* and *Sayujya*.

1. *Sarupya*: It is the state in which the *jivatman* becomes similar to *Paramatman*. Here the *jivatman* puts on the form of *Paramatman*. It is like putting a piece of iron on the fire. After some time the iron becomes like the fire. Therefore, in *sarupya* the *jivatman* assumes the figure of *Paramatman*. Here also one may notice that the iron becomes in form like the fire as long as the iron remains on the fire, whereas the substance remains the same. When it is taken back from the fire it has no longer the quality of the fire and even if the iron on the fire seemed exactly like the fire, in essence it is not the fire. Therefore here also the 'uninterrupted union' is very important.

2. *Salokya*: The *Brahmana* says *mukti* is *salokya* with the *Brahman*. It is the dwelling in the *Brahma Loka* (the world of *Brahman*). *Chandogya Upanishad* teaches that when the soul of the liberated person unites with the Supreme Reality that is light itself and the inhabitants of immense nothingness, it remains with 'It' and in 'It.'

3. *Samipyra*: According to *Aitareya Brahmanas*, *Moksha* is the nearness with the Supreme, Omnipotent Reality. It is an eternal presence of *Brahman*. The word '*samipyra*' is meant by 'nearness'.

4. *Sayujya*: Another word the *Brahmanas* make use of for *mukti* (to be dealt in the *Jnana marga*) is *Sayujya*. Even though the concept *Mukti* (liberation) comes in the *Jnana marga*, *sayujya* is more fit in the *Bhakti marga*. It is the state in which the *jivatman* becomes united with *Paramatman* but it is not absorbed in *Paramatman*, but remains inseparable from 'it'.

[*Sadharmya*: This word is given by *Gita* to explain *mukti*. It is meant by “identity of nature.” There are different interpretations of this concept. Dr. Radhakrishna says that it is not the identity but only similarity of quality. In *moksha* or *mukti* the *jivatman* becomes qualitatively like *Paramatman*, i.e. a similarity of attributes is affirmed in this context.]

Through these four states *Sarupya*, *Salokya*, *Samipya* and *Sayujya* the human soul becomes one with God and it produces a total change in the *jivatman*. [*Sarupya* and *Sayujya* are more close to the *Bhakti Marga*.] It is a very intimate union that cannot be dissolved. *Brahman* is *Sat-cit-ananda* (*Sat*= ‘Being’, *Cit* = Intellect/mind, *Ananda* = Bliss): needing nothing for the perfection of His life, wanting nothing for the fulfilment of His desires, lacking nothing for the replenishing of his being. *Brahman* is eternal bliss. One who really yearns for the union with Him will be filled with His happiness.<sup>11</sup>

There are *Videha mukti* and *Jivanmukti*. *Videha mukti* is the more perfect one that one achieves after the immortal soul drops out of the mortal constituent. In order to attain this state we have to wait till our soul sheds its mortal coil. *Gita* teaches that the one who dies in the love of God wins Him. “At the moment of death one who remembers Me attains Me: there is no doubt about this.”<sup>12</sup> In order to obtain *videha mukti* one must be united with God in love and must remember Him with unwavering mind. Here it is very important to remember God and utter His Name at the time of death. This cannot be achieved all on a sudden, for this, one has to prepare oneself in his or her lifetime - uttering and remembering God. Swami Narendranand, in his book *Hindu Spirituality* writes:

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<sup>11</sup> Reference: Swami Narendranand; *Hindu Spirituality*; exhortation V, *Prarthana*; Jyoti Ashram, Sultanpur, UP; P. 45

<sup>12</sup> Bhagavad-Gita: 8, 5



As has been a man's spiritual orientation, so will be his end. A tree falls in the direction it is leaning. *Chandogya Upanishad* teaches that as a person's will is in this life, so does he remain after death. Hence the *Gita* devotes chapter 18 stanzas 51 to 56 to explain how a blameless, virtuous and holy life has to be led and thus to reach one's end uttering the name of God: *Do thou fix thy thought constantly on Me.*<sup>13</sup>

The *mukti* that can be obtained while one is alive in his/her human body is called *Jivanmukti*. A *jivanmukta* (one who has achieved the state of *Jivanmukti*), even though he or she is in physical existence, he/she is above 'good' and 'evil' because he/she has become non-dual with the Absolute. For such a person body and spirit, death and life do not exist any more. Some of the philosophers of *Advaita* ('not two') do not admit the possibility of *jivan mukti*. On the other hand *Sankya Yoga* and the *Advaita Vedanta* of Sankaracharya teach it. Although one cannot obtain the absolute *mukti* in this world, several saints have experienced a relative *mukti* in this life. Ultimately this *Jivanmukti* is also the experience of God. This experience results in 'God – realisation' that is constant and unremitting. It is also an uninterrupted union with the Absolute.

The aspect of meditation is an important factor in *Jnana yoga*. There are three steps in meditation, which are the practical teaching proposed by the *Advaities*\*. They are the following:

1. *Sravana*. This means the hearing of the Holy Scriptures. It is a process of collecting thoughts for the next step *manana*.

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<sup>13</sup> Swami Narendranand; *Hindu Spirituality*; Jyoti Ashram, Sultanpur, UP; P. 18

\*The philosophical thought that explains 'I' and 'God' are not two.

2. *Manana*. It is a pondering over or meditation on the thoughts that are already being collected. *Manana* purifies our heart.

3. *Nidhidhyasana*. This is the final and important step in meditation. It is a long, continuous and unbroken contemplative meditation.' It is the work of the mind.

As one categorises meditation under *Bhakti marga/yoga* and *Jnana marga/yoga* one must not forget that both the *marga/yoga* has a transforming power.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 Mysticism in Christian Spirituality

Christian Mysticism has a rich tradition. Among the New Testament writings the Gospel of St. John is considered to be the main text related to mysticism. Jesus leads his disciples to the state of contemplation, saying, "Truly, Truly, I say to you, you will see

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<sup>14</sup> V. F. Vineeth, *Meditation*, Vidya Vanam Publications, Bangalore, India. 2003. P. 73:

Whether Jnana or Bhakti method you adopt, meditation has great transforming power. The Indian text says: 'one who knows Supreme Brahman, becomes Brahman' (*Mundaka Upanishad* III. 2.9). This does not mean that we become another God, but we become God-like, more and more divine. Meditation is a profound concentration, i.e., fixation of attention on one point, be it a thought or an image or thought into ourselves and allow ourselves to be characterized by it. For example, if I meditate Jesus, I allow myself to be characterized by the virtues and qualities of Jesus. I put on his consciousness and spirit. If I am sincere in this process, my action will follow suit. I will be more gentle, more loving, more serving just as Jesus to other persons. If I meditate on a 'saying' of Jesus, my attention may be focused on his word. Such meditation may be more of Jnana type. But here also transformation of my consciousness by the word of God, which is meditated, is more important...

heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”<sup>15</sup> In the 24<sup>th</sup> verse of the fourth chapter he exhorts that the real worship is the ‘worship in spirit and truth.’ St. Paul is called the ancestor of Christian mysticism and the father of Catholic mysticism. In 2 Corinthians 12, he describes his personal mystical experience. For him the life of a Christian is nothing but “to be in Christ.”<sup>16</sup> Christian mysticism deep rooted in the New Testament has also been influenced by two other non - Christian sources, namely, the New Platonic School and the Stoic school. In the early Christian tradition, in the east, there were mystics like Makarios the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom. Makarios the great taught that the soul is under the power of evil. The soul will be liberated from this bondage only through prayer, fasting and repentance. Repentance and asceticism lead to a mystical level that is nothing but the union with God. According to Gregory of Nyssa human being in his/her empirical nature cannot approach God. The example he shows is the meeting of Moses with Yahweh on Mount Sinai. Moses could not look at Him. However man is created in the *likeness of God*. Leaning to the Platonic thought he says that the soul is the divine manifestation of the ‘Eternal Beauty.’ This beauty is covered by the sufferings and desires of the body. Through asceticism the soul will be freed from the coverings of passions and sufferings and the soul will be able to come near to God. Like Moses the human being must go through the *divine darkness* that is otherwise called the mystical knowledge of God. This knowledge of God takes the soul to a sublime level.<sup>17</sup> The mystical experience of John Chrysostom is Christo-centric.

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<sup>15</sup> John 1,51; RSV; Catholic Edition for India.

<sup>16</sup> Reference: Rom 8,1; 2 Cor 5, 17

<sup>17</sup>Reference: Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, VI, IV Band, Verlag Herder Freiburg, (1968) P. 1212, P. 1310.



Another trend of mysticism in the East explains two main steps: *union* and *blending/mixing*. In the stage of 'union' there exists the difference between the 'subject' and the 'object'. In the sphere of blending there will be no difference. Influenced by Origen's teaching, Euagrios Pontikos (4<sup>th</sup> century AD), Stephanos bar Sudaili and Philoxinos von Mabbugg come in the same line of thinking. Because of the influence of the teachings of Origen, the Council condemned the teachings of Euagrios in 553. The development of the soul in its ascending stage to the union with God is the main theme of their teaching. Here also asceticism is very important.<sup>18</sup> In this stage the soul takes its original stage where there will be no differences. This is somewhat based on the teaching of Origen's '*Apocatastis*'.<sup>19</sup> In the west, St. Augustine in his writing *confessiones*, writes to his mother, which is really focused on the contemplation. In the middle ages mysticism reached its peak point during the time of Bernard of Clairvaux, the Victorians in France, Francis of Assisi, Bonaventure in Italy etc. There are two streams of mysticism in the west namely, *path of love or devotion* and *path of*

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<sup>18</sup> Reference: Oriens Christianus, Band 63. 1979; Otto Harrassowitz. Wiesbaden. P. 46

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. P. 49.

„Wisse mein Sohn, daß alle Dinge in den Vater vermischt werden. Nicht geht verloren, nicht wird zerstört, nichts wird vernichtet. Alles kehrt zurück, alles wird geheiligt, alles wird eins, alles wird vermischt, und das Wort wird erfüllt: Gott wird sein alles in allem. Höllen werden vergehen und Quallen hinweggetan, Gefangene werden befreit, Verworfene freigesprochen, Ausgestoßene zurückkehren und diejenigen, die weit entfernt sind, werden herbeigebracht..... Alle Dinge werden eins sein. Selbst Gott wird vergehen und Christus wird aufgehoben und der Geist wird nicht mehr Geist genannt werden; denn Namen vergehen, aber nicht das Wesen, denn wenn die Unterscheidung vergeht, wer wird wen nennen? Und wer wird wem antworten? Denn das Eine nennet nicht, noch wird es genannt. Dies ist das Ende und die Bestimmung von allem „(Marsch 120-121)

*knowledge*. These are somehow parallel to the Indian concept of *Bhakti Marga/Bhakti yoga* and *Jnana Marga/Jnana yoga*.

The two major authors of mystical writings in the western mysticism especially in the medieval period were Bonaventure and Eckhart. Bonaventure comes in the *path of love (Bhakti)* and Eckhart in the *path of knowledge (Jnana)*.

### 2.2.1 Path of love

Bonaventure, the supreme master of Franciscan mysticism says: “There is no other path but through the burning love of the crucified, a love which so transformed Paul into Christ when he was carried up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) that he could say: With Christ I am nailed to the cross. I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20).”<sup>20</sup> In the treaties of mysticism he comes close to the concept of *Bhakti marga*. His approach as the *path of love* is ultimately the devotion to the humanity of Christ. However the *path of love* involves intellectual contemplation too. Ewert H. Cousins states:

In his (Bonaventure's) intellectual approach, he is here to the Platonic and Neoplatonic tradition as this flowed into the Western Middle Ages through Augustine, Boethius, and the Pseudo-Dionysus. The path through knowledge of the Neoplatonists involved an intellectual perception of the hierarchical structure of reality with matter at the bottom, then spirit, then God. By contemplating this structure and by ascending the metaphysical ladder, one could reach contemplation of and even union with God himself. Granted that this provides the landscape of

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<sup>20</sup>Bonaventure; *The Souls' Journey into God*; Prologue, 3 – 4; translation; P. 54 - 56.

Bonaventure's journey, his point of departure; his motivating force throughout, and the goal that he reaches are permeated with love and devotion.<sup>21</sup>

In short one can say that his approach to 'God as Being' is based on the intellectual and his approach to God as Good consists in the contemplation of God in the affective level. With regard to mysticism he speaks on the divine self-diffusion. On his contemplation on Trinity he applies this notion, i.e. self-diffusion, which is explained by self-communicating that is the spontaneous self-communication within the divine life. "For the good is said to be self-diffusive; therefore the highest good must be most self-diffusive."<sup>22</sup> Jesus Christ in his humanity is the expression of the self-diffusive love of God and he is the path to the Original source. Therefore, the devotion to the humanity of Christ is the vehicle of the passage from contemplative to ecstatic consciousness.<sup>23</sup> He calls this stage as a *passing over from intellect to devotion*. In Bonaventure's own words:

But if you wish to know how these things come about, ask grace not instruction, desire, not understanding, the groaning of prayer not diligent reading, the Spouse not the teacher, God not man, darkness not clarity, not light but fire that totally inflames and carries us into God by ecstatic unction and burning affections. This fire is God, and his furnace is

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<sup>21</sup> Indian Philosophical Annual; Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Bonaventure; *The Soul's Journey into God*; translation; P. 103

<sup>23</sup> Ref. Indian Philosophical Annual; Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 1



in Jerusalem; and Christ enkindles it in the heat of his burning passion.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.2.1.1 Christian mysticism is essentially liturgical

In the sphere of 'path of love' Christian mysticism can be considered liturgical. In order to be free of the pantheistic thinking, mysticism in the Christian tradition has taken over the concept of anthropocentrism—a relationship between God and the Soul. However, the New Testament concept of mysticism is 'agape'—to be in the love of God and its sanctifying power. God has so loved the world that he has sent his only son to the world. Through his death and resurrection he saved the world and the Spirit of the risen Lord leads the Church and through the Church each one participates in this mystery of the love of God. The Holy Spirit has revealed *Himself* in the Church and every member of the Church is called, sanctified and blessed by the Holy Spirit. Christ lives in this Church. The Church is the bride of Christ. The mystical union of Christ and the Church is symbolically and mystically revealed in the liturgy and sacraments (mysteries). Therefore one can say that Christian mysticism is essentially liturgical or sacramental. It is a 'congregational union with God', in other words it is a mystical union with God and his chosen People. The individuals are the real members of the mystical body of Christ and the blood of Christ 'circulates' through the members. Through the *Sacrament of Baptism* one becomes the member of the body of Christ. In the *Sacrament of Confirmation* one receives the new life of the Body. In the *Holy Eucharist* one offers oneself with all the members and brings oneself to the altar of the Lord and in the sacrificial banquet one is being united internally with the mystical Body. When a

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<sup>24</sup> Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*; prologue, 6; translation; P. 115

member becomes 'weak' and 'sick', through repentance and penance he/she receives a new life in the *Sacrament of Reconciliation* and in the *Sacrament of anointing the sick*. *Priestly ordination* makes one a leader of the body of Christ and *Holy matrimony* is the model of the mystical union between Christ and the Church.<sup>25</sup>

Every liturgical celebration can be called a 'transfiguration' of the worshipper in the sense that in the celebration of the paschal mystery of Christ he or she is 'transfigured' in a 'mystical way' with the Risen Lord. The Church is in a supernatural communion in Christ; through Him all are bound together. It is a community experience as the members of the Church whose head is Christ himself. In the liturgy, the Church, filled with the Spirit of its bridegroom, celebrates the mystery of both herself and of her Saviour. The sacraments in the Church are the real means to the real life that is portrayed in a mysterious way. In faith and sacraments, our Lord lives in the Church. Faith and sacraments are the beginning of the eternal life. In the Church they are the ways to God, towards the fulfilment of each one's call to the eternal life, which is ultimately the eternal union with Him. The first seal of the faith is pressed in baptism and confirmation for a new life in Christ. In the Holy Eucharist, Christ gives himself to the community in the form of bread and wine. He himself is the sacrifice and the nutrition for eternal life. Through these mysteries we are united to Jesus who is God and man, and through him to the Father. This relationship is not to be explained by reasons, but it is a mystical experience - a union with the mystical Christ. Thus the liturgy and sacraments are the essential elements for the believer to relate himself/herself with

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<sup>25</sup> Reference: Odo Casel, *Mysterientheologie*, Verlag Friedrich Pustet, Regensburg. P. 170

the mystical Christ and in this sense Christian mysticism is essentially liturgical.

### 2.2.2 Path of Knowledge

The important author in the intellectual approach is Eckhart a Dominican monk who was condemned for heresy<sup>26</sup> in 1329. Like Sankara he focuses on the transpersonal aspects of God. "By penetrating intellectual analysis he attempts to liberate his hearers from attachment to creatures, even from 'God' himself."<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that his method is negation rather than affirmation. It does not mean that he rejects the way of affirmation but he affirms that God is reflected or manifested in creatures. He speaks of 'the desert of the Godhead' rather than the ever-flowing fountain

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<sup>26</sup> Eckhart taught that "God's ground and the soul's ground is one ground," and the way to the realization of the soul's identity with God lay less in the customary practices of the religious life than in a new state of awareness achieved through radical detachment from all created things and a breakthrough to the God beyond God. Though Eckhart's thought remained Christological in its emphasis on the necessity for the "birth of Son in the soul," his expressions of the identity between the soul that had undergone this birth and the Son of God seemed heretical to many. Without denying the importance of the basic structures of the Christian religion, and while insisting that his radical preaching to the laity was capable of an orthodox interpretation, Eckhart and the new mystics of the 13th century were a real challenge to traditional Western ideas of mysticism. Their teaching seemed to imply an autotheism in which the soul became identical with God, and many feared that this might lead to a disregard of the structures and sacraments of the church as the means to salvation and even to an antinomianism that would view the mystic as exempt from the moral law. (Obliged to the Website on Eckhart)

<sup>27</sup> Indian Philosophical Annual; Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 13



of divine fecundity. His way of thinking is very radical, which is shown in his own words:

I wanted nothing, I longed for nothing, for I was an empty being. Nevertheless, when I went out from my own free will and received my created being, then I had a ‘God,’ for before there were any creatures, God was not ‘God,’ but he was what he was. So let us pray to God that we may be free of ‘God,’ and that we may apprehend and rejoice in that everlasting truth in which the highest angel, the fly, and the soul are equal – there where I was established, where I wanted what I was and was what I wanted.<sup>28</sup>

In the path of knowledge there is no place for attributes of God. God is who ‘IS.’ Eckhart speaks:

I speak in all truth, truth that is eternal and enduring, that this same light [the spark of the soul] is not content with the simple divine essence in its repose, as it neither gives nor receives; but it wants to know the source of this essence, it wants to go into the simple ground, into the quiet desert, into which distinction never gazed, not the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup>

In attaining the mystical experience there are two ways of looking at it. One may attain the mystic experience by doing a rigorous ascetic training. In Catholic mysticism there are references of three steps towards the mystical experience. It is the pilgrimage of the spirit through the ‘purgative’, the ‘illuminative’ and the ‘unitive’ ways. In this aspect a rigorous ascetic training and

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<sup>28</sup>Bonaventure; *The Soul’s Journey into God*; prologue, 6; translation. P. 200

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. *Sermon* 48, translation. P. 198

discipline is necessary for the mystical experience. Many of the mystics in catholic tradition and in another religions are those who have gone through this rigorous spiritual training. In Indian spirituality this discipline can be called *tapas* (deep and intensive contemplative meditation). The second instance is the sudden experience of mystical union. Here the ascetical training and *tapas* are not important. Boehme und Ramana Maharshi are good examples of mystics who come under this tradition. “Mystic experience, so it appears, is not at the end of spiritual life, but constitutes the very breath and being of spiritual life. It pervades the life of a mystic at every stage in all its manifestation, once he is transported as it were to that realm.”<sup>30</sup> Here one can note that the mystical experience, as it is mentioned, is the very breath and being of spiritual life. It is a continual process, an uninterrupted stream of sublimation.

### 2.3 Summary

When we study all the mystics and their mystical experience we can come to a consensus that no matter it is east or west or Christian or non-Christian one thing is basically the same – the union with the Ultimate. The *Bhakti marga/Bhakti yoga* of the Indian mysticism comes closer to the ‘path of love’ of the western mysticism and the *Jnana marga/Jnana yoga* of the Indian mysticism goes parallel with the ‘path of knowledge’ of the west. The same concept is explained and experienced in different terminologies and different life style. In the Christian spirituality mysticism is the fellowship with Jesus Christ, which is deep rooted in the mystery of baptism. It is experienced through the faith and love. It is a sacramental life, which transcends our comprehension, and its goal

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<sup>30</sup> *Indian Philosophical Annual*; Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P .226.

is the union with God. It is a free gift of God and at the same time one has to strive for it.<sup>31</sup> Mysticism is not the end of the spiritual life but it is **an unbroken unity with the Supreme Reality**. The aesthetic and the religious feelings go hand in hand. The arts especially music and dance are forms of aesthetic realities and constituted of the potentiality to lead the human being to a deep mystical level. In the Indian concept music is the manifestation of *Nada Brahma*. As it is already mentioned, through music one can reach God. The Malankara musicality has the fundamental qualities of the Indian music that fully reveals the mystical nature of the oriental music. Since this study is on the 'mystical character of Malankara liturgy and music' the next chapter will be dealing with the 'mystical nature of Indian music' and 'the musicality of the Malankara liturgy.'



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<sup>31</sup> Reference: *Handbuch Theologischer Grundbegriffe*, Kösel-Verlag München.



## CHAPTER 3

# THE INDIAN MUSIC SYSTEM AND THE MUSICALITY OF THE MALANKARA LITURGY

“Is there any relation between the *Malankara music* and the Indian music?” It is a very significant question asked by many. By 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the Antiochian liturgy began to expand and grow in the soil of *Malankara*.<sup>\*</sup> It has formed itself in many forms in these 400 years. In its externals also there have been evolutionary changes. The very important factor of the liturgy in its poetry and music too there occurred many changes. As already mentioned, India is a land rich in its culture and arts. The music system is the manifestation of the religious experience of Indians. As the oldest music system it has an influence on the other cultures in the orient. The music of the Antiochian Liturgy that is also oriental is not alien to Indian Music. However no studies has ever been made on the common patrimony of Malankara liturgical music and Indian music (For detailed study please refer 3.4). Unfortunately for very many Christians Indian music is something *pagan* and western music is *Christian*. The Indian music system that is deep rooted in its mystical nature (details in the following part) originated as temple music. Because of its particular relation with the temples and by the very fact that most of the music compositions are centred on Hindu deities, many consider Indian music a Hindu music. The colonial reign had imported its music to India and due to its influence Christians looked down upon Indian music. It was not only with music but also with the other culture. The identity or entity of a nation is manifested through its cultures. India is a ‘land of mystics’ (*Arsha Bharat*). In general that Indians inherit this spirituality of mystics and this mystic nature is revealed through cultures and arts. The Malankara liturgy originated from a mystical tradition of ascetics. Even if the Malankara liturgy belongs to the family of Antiochian Liturgy it is an Oriental Liturgy with all its nature of the

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\* Malankara=the land of hills i.e. Kerala.

Orient. When one makes a study on the musicality of the Malankara liturgy he/she can come to the conclusion that the Musicality of the Malankara liturgy is based on the fundamental principle of the Indian Music System. To make such a study one must analyse the basic principles of the Oriental Music System and differentiate it from the Western Music system.

### **3.1 The melody character of oriental music, leading to a mystical experience.**

Basically there are only two kinds of music systems in the world of music: the Oriental Music System and the Western Music System. What differentiate these two music systems are the musical principles of 'melody' and 'harmony'. When Oriental Music is based on 'melody', Western Music is centred on 'Harmony'. In the oriental music system the music is created through the successive movement of single notes; on the other hand in the western music system it is caused by the progression of multiple notes. In other words the first one is fixed on the modal tonal character and the other on the succession of group of notes, called chords. When the melody nature takes one to a mystical sphere, the harmony nature invigorates. What is mentioned here is only the essential difference. There are exceptions i.e. there are also mystical compositions in western music and crisp compositions in Oriental music. The harmony nature of western music is exhibited in its full vigour through union and co-operation. The melody nature of eastern music is displayed in the individual effort, which is the important factor in its mystical character. The *gamaka* (graces) in oriental music serve to vivify, beautify and embellish the notes of a music piece and gives a unique character and colour to it in much the same way as the harmony accompaniment to a music piece in the west. The *gamaka* contributes much to the uninterrupted flow of music. The *gamaka* are not simply the vibration of notes. In the pure Oriental Music the vibration of notes are of little importance. The *gamaka* is the collective term given to the various shakes, graces, ornaments and embellishments used in Oriental music especially in Indian music. "It is not a mere accidental ornament but it is the essential part of the melodic structure. It is the graceful turn or curve or corner touch given to a note or to a group of notes that emphasises the melodic individuality of a *raga*. There is always an



uninterrupted flow of melody from one note to the other in the ascending or the descending manner. *Gamaka* lends colour to Oriental music in as much the same way as harmony to European music.”<sup>1</sup> If one listens to the chanting of *mantra* or the sacred books in a temple, chanting of Koran in a mosque and the singing of the liturgical prayers in a church of oriental rite, one will realise that there is a basic similarity in its musicality and mystical character. Since Indian music is the only well systematised music system in the orient it is very important to study its nature before we go deep into the Malankara liturgical music.

### 3.2 Indian Music that manifests the mystical nature of the whole nation.

Music is an integral part of India’s culture. India is a country of many religions, philosophies and cultures. The goal of all the religions of India is to lead the human being along with the whole cosmos to the Supreme Being and help human beings to experience *eternal bliss* in union with the Ultimate Reality. According to Indian spirituality there are many *marga* (paths) to reach God. However, music is the easiest and the most pleasant *marga* to reach Him. The Hindu religion gives a prominent place to music because of its mystical nature that is manifested in all its nuances. In this respect the concept of God as *Nada Brahma* (Embodiment of musical sound) is very significant. This concept implies that human beings can come into union with God through Absolute music i.e. through *Sangita marga* or *Nada marga* one can reach God. This method admits two divisions: *Gana marga* and *Kirtana marga*. *Gana marga* comes under contemplative music that is nothing but meditation on God through Absolute music. In the *Kirtana marga* God is praised and glorified through songs or hymns (*Kirtana* = song or hymn). *Kirtana marga* is easier than the *Gana marga* (contemplative music) because it is accessible to the common man. The Indian music system is enriched with its poetry also and naturally there are thousands of sacred songs whose *sahityas* (literature/wordings) are doxologies and panegyrics. It is believed that by singing them or listening to their accredited renderings, one can attain *Mukti*

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<sup>1</sup> Sambamurthy, South Indian Music, Book. I; The Indian Music Publishing House, 41 Bunder Street, Madras 600001; 1983. P. 18



(salvation). Praising God and uttering His name leads to salvation. Thousands of sacred songs have been composed in Sanskrit and in regional languages. In south India alone there are collections of thousands of hymns that are sung regularly in temples or in other sacred places. These sacred songs are sung by *Bhagavatars* (music masters and *gurus*) and the listening congregation is being spiritually elevated by *sravana* (listening) that is one of the nine *Bhaktis* (devotions). The sacred songs that are sung in proper *sruti* and *laya* bring about a sense of purification to the congregation.

In the Indian Music system, Music comes under *Gandharva Veda* (the science or knowledge of deities). It is one of the four *Upa Vedas* (secondary *Vedas*). The other three *Upa Vedas* are *Dhanur Veda* (archery), *Ayur Veda* (about life and medicine) and *Artha sastra* (Politics & Economics). The main contribution of the Indian music system is the notion that God is *Nada Brahma*-embodiment of sound (music). The term 'music' is named '*Sangita*' in India. The study of music or musicology is called *Gandharva tatva*. Ancient writers of music held the view that vocal music, instrumental music and dance together constituted *Sangita*. Because of the fast development in the realm of pure music, the art of dance was separated and the first two alone - vocal music and instrumental music - were taken as *Sangita* by later writers. *Sangita* is based on *Nada*. It is very important to note that according to Indian spirituality, one can attain celestial bliss through *Nadopasana* (musical meditation). India's spirituality and its peculiar genius are reflected in her music. It has evolved in a strong spiritual background as temple music. Music and dance are the only two fine arts that are given a divine origin in India. Many great exponents of music in India were great mystics.

There are two branches in the Indian Music System: *Karnatic* music and *Hindusthani* music. There was a time when a single system of music prevailed all over India. The division into North Indian (*Hindusthani*) and South Indian (*Karnatic*) systems came later on and became more pronounced during the reign of the Mogul emperors in Delhi. The terms *Karnatic* music and *Hindusthani* music came to be known in the work, *Sangita sudhakara* written between 1309-1312 A.D. by an ancient musician, Haripala. Basically the two systems are similar—the same *srutis* and *svaras*

are used. They are to be distinguished by the peculiar style of singing the notes and the treatment of *ragas*, based on the very same *svaras* and *sruti*. Relatively speaking, *Karnatic* music is more systematised than *Hindusthani* music. The term *Karnatic* is used in two senses: 1) the ancient and 2) the southern part of the Indian Peninsula. After the invasion of Malik Kafir in 1294, North Indian music had become almost persianised. This was called *Hindusthani* music by Haripala Deva, and the music of South India was called *Karnatic* music, meaning southern music and the ancient (old) music. In order to analyse the mystical nature of Indian Music one must examine briefly the various terminologies and concepts used in the Indian Music system.

### 3.2.1 *Nada* and its mystical reference.

*Nada* is a musical sound. It is to be differentiated from other sounds. *Nada* is the sound that is pleasing to the ears. Professor Joachim Ernst Berendt in his book on '*Nada Brahma*' states that '*nada*' relates originally to a roaring sound, especially of the River (*Nadi*). The storm and the river roar. In the evolution of this term, *nada* has taken the tonal character of music. What is particular to be noted is that the energizing power is the creating power of the vibration of sound.<sup>2</sup> The whole subject of music is based on *nada*. *Nada* gives rise to *srutis* and these produce *svaras* and *svaras* again *ragas*. *Nada* is classified into two: *Ahata nada* and *Anahata nada*. The *nada* is self originated or *nada* heard without the conscious effort of man is termed *Anahata nada*. The *nada* produced by the conscious effort of man is called *Ahata nada* (*Ahata* means 'struck' and *Anahata* means 'unstruck.'). *Anahata nada* is called the music of the spheres (nature's 'fa'), the music of Nature. Since this *Anahata nada* does not pertain to the empirical faculty of human beings it does not come under the 'System of Music'. It is a transcendental music that is recognised by the suprasensuous faculty of *Yogis* (mystics). The mystic and the great musician Saint

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<sup>2</sup> Reference: Joachim-Ernst Berendt, *Nada Brahma*, Die Welt ist Klang, by Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, August 1986, P. 23.

„...Verwandt nämlich ist Nadi: der Strom, der Fluss, aber auch rauschend, tönend, klingend...“



Thyagaraja refers to the greatness of the *Anahata nada* in the first *charanam* (stanza) of his song *svara raga sudharasa* in *Sankarabharana raga*. The aim and the end of *Nadopasana* (Meditation through music) is nothing else but the recognition of the *Anahata nada*. It has no beginning and no end; it is the incessant flow of music of the soul in union with its Creator.

The *ahata nada* that is accessible to the empirical sense is being studied and practised but it is only the means to enter into the stage of recognition of *Anahata nada*. *Ahata nada* has no existence of its own. It is the manifestation of the *Anahata nada* too. This is the reason why music in India is considered divine and mystic. In the *slokas* (a kind of poetry) of *Sangita ratnakara*, (13<sup>th</sup> century), it is written:

Let the *Nada Brahma*, which pervades the whole universe and is of eternal joy and which is the prime cause of all life be worshipped. Through the contemplation of *Nada Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesvara* who are the embodiment of *nada* are worshipped. In practice, the *nada* emanating from the chest is called the *mandra* that from the throat is called the *Madhya* and that emanating from the region of the head as *tara*. The notes of the *tara stayi* (high octave) are twice in frequency compared to the corresponding notes of the *Madhya stayi* (middle octave); likewise the notes of the *Madhya stayi* are twice in frequency compared to the corresponding notes of *Mandra stayi*.<sup>3</sup>

[From this *sloka* it is clear that many centuries ago, it has been proved that a note and its octave note bore the frequency relationship 1:2.]

Based on the timbre of the notes produced, *ahata nada* is divided into six categories:

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<sup>3</sup> Reference: *Sangita Ratnakara*, Chapter I; Svaradhyaa, 3rd Prakarana. (Obliged to *South Indian Music*.)



1. *Sariraja* - It is the *nada* produced by the human vocal cords.
2. *Nakhaja* - ,, emanating from the plucking instruments.
3. *Dhanurja* - ,, produced by bowed instruments.
4. *Vayuja* - ,, emanating from wind instruments.
5. *Charmaja* - ,, produced by skin-covered instruments (drums).
6. *Lohaja* - ,, caused by metallic instruments (cymbals).

From the source of origin, again it is divided into *Prani sambhava* (animate source), *Aprani sambhava* (inanimate source) and *Ubhaya sambhava* (involvement of both animate and inanimate source).

Years before the science was developed, musicians like Sarngadeva explained the causation of *nada*. According to him the *nada* is caused thus: The *Atman* (spirit or soul) desiring to speak or sing, stirs the mind; the mind strikes the fire abiding in the body; the fire stimulates the wind; the wind abiding in the *Brahma granthi* (an imaginary organ situated at the end of the spinal cord) going along the upward path, manifests the sound successively on the naval, the heart, the throat, the head and the mouth. The *nada* is thus produced by the conjunction of *prana* (life) and *anala* (fire). Thyagaraja, in his *Kriti* (composition) *Mokshamugalada* in *Saramati raga*, has referred to this. Etymologically one can say that in the word *nada*, 'na' stands for *prana* (life) and 'da' for *fire*. In this explanation one can observe the relation between *Atman* and *nada*. *Atman* is always divine in nature and is related to the *Paramatman* (Ultimate Being).

*Nada* has a creative power and a destructive<sup>4</sup> power. In the *Shivistic* philosophy<sup>5</sup> creation (*srshti*) comes from the vibration of

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<sup>4</sup> In the Indian concept it is not destruction but re-absorption (*pralaya*).

<sup>5</sup> One of the philosophical systems of India where *Shiva* is the Supreme reality. Everything comes from *Shiva* and again absorbed into *Shiva*.

the 'dancing Shiva'. This cosmic dance of Shiva causes the creating energy, which is portrayed in the sculpture of '*Nataraja*.' In the Biblical concept *nada* in its original sense can be taken as the prototype of 'Logos.' In the Book of Genesis in the priestly tradition, everything has come to existence by the creating Word of Yahweh: "And God said, "Let there be light" and there was light..."<sup>6</sup> The mighty 'voice' of God is very poetically described in Psalm 28. All this pictures show the divinity of *Nada* that is ultimately the manifestation of the Ultimate reality (the Eternal *Nada*) and this *Nada* is again manifested in music through *svaras* (notes) and *ragas*.

### 3.2.2 *Svaras*, the manifestation of *nada*.

*Svara* is defined as the musical sound or *nada* that has a particular value of frequency. The transcendental nature of the *nada* is exposed in each *svara*. In the western music system it is called musical note. The basis of all systems of music is the seven notes or *svaras*. However the origin of the *svaras* in the Indian music system is related with nature and cosmos. Just as there are the seven days of the week, and seven colours of the rainbow, there are *sapta svaras* (seven notes). In the Indian music system these seven *svaras* are denoted by the syllables 'Sa', 'Ri', 'Ga', 'Ma', 'Pa', 'Da' and 'Ni'. (In the western music system these are called, 'Do', 'Re', 'Mi', 'Fa', 'Sol', 'La', 'Si' or C, D, E, F, G, A, B). Each *svara* stands for a name, namely, 'Sa' for *Shadjam*, 'Ri' for *Rishabham*, 'Ga' for *Gandharam*, 'Ma' for *Madhyamam*, 'Pa' for *Panchamam*, 'D(h)a' for *Dhivatam* and 'Ni' for *Nishadam*. It has been already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (Ref. 3.2) that the naming of *svaras* is found from B.C 1000 in Indian Music. It would be interesting to look into the origin of the naming of the *svaras* because it has a very deep relationship with nature and the cosmos. The sound produced by the peacock, especially when clouds gather in the sky, is taken as *Shadjam* (Sa). The lowing of the cow, when calling for her calf that is dragged away from her, is likened to *Rishabham* (Ri). The bleat of the goat in the midst of the flock is compared to *Gandharam* (Ga). The cry of the heron is taken for *Madhyamam* (Ma). The note sounded by the Indian nightingale in spring is taken for *Panchamam*

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:3 ff, R. S. V, Catholic Edition for India.

(Pa). The neigh of the horse is likened to *Dhivatam* (Da). Finally the trumpeting of the elephant is compared to *Nishadam* (Ni).<sup>7</sup> Among these seven *svaras*, 'Sa' and 'Pa' are called *achala svara* (changeless) and the other five *svaras* are named *vikrta* (changeable) *svaras*. The *svaras* 'Sa' and 'Pa' have a special reference to the *Immutable Ishwar* (The Supreme God). The *svara* 'Sa' is the *Adhara Shadjam* (the basic pitch). At the beginning of an Indian classical music concert it is obligatory to sing the *svaras* 'Sa' and 'Pa', which means the concert is begun by singing praise of God who is immutable or changeless. In other words, all the reality is comprehended in the *Immutable Ishwar*. An expert of music can recognise in a well - tuned tamburu all the seven *svaras* emerging one after another. The concentration on these *svaras* itself is a good theme for a long meditation. In conclusion one can say that the whole mystery of the universe is revealed in singing the *svaras* in which the *nada* is manifested. The combination of these *svaras* gives rise to *ragas* that are the soul of Indian music.

### 3.2.3 *Ragas*

*Raga* is the soul of the Indian music system. *Ragas* are aesthetic facts and they derive their individuality through *svaras* (notes) of defined pitch entering into their formation. They are originated in delicate *srutis* and subtle *gamaka*. 'Raga' means literally: that which creates passion or *rasa*. It is called a melody mould or melody-type because in the mould of a *raga* unlimited numbers of music pieces can be composed. *Ragas* are aesthetical facts having a distinct individuality. They can be compared to beautiful icons. Hearing the exposition of it anyone who is a little bit trained in music can recognise a *raga*. *Raga* is the nucleus of Indian music system. The idea of Absolute music originated from the concept of *ragas*. The fundamental principle of *raga* is based on modes (modal music). Notes of defined frequencies in its structure cultivate the individuality of a mode. It is interesting to observe the establishment of a *raga* in its inter- relationship between the notes as well as the relationship of each note to the basic tonic note. All

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<sup>7</sup> For the naming of the *svaras* obliged to *South Indian Music*, Volume I to VI.



the hymns of the classical type in Indian music are composed in *ragas*. Many of the folk music and traditional hymns too have been composed in some recognisable *ragas* or mixed *ragas*.

*Ragas* can be classified into *Melakarta ragas* (basic *ragas*) and *Janya ragas* (derivative *ragas*). *Melakarta ragas* are considered major *ragas* and *Janya ragas* are the *ragas* derived from the *Melakarta ragas*. There are 72 *Melakarta ragas* and 483 *Janya ragas* that are in the first degree and multiplying 72 with 483 gives the possible number of *ragas* i.e. 34776. In each *raga* unlimited number of music pieces can be composed. Therefore one can come to a conclusion that the *raga* is inexhaustive and this inexhaustive nature reveals its transcendental nature that helps human beings to come to a mystical experience.

The scope or potentiality of *ragas* is related to the two parts of the Indian music system. *Ragas* reveal themselves through the twin channels of *kalpita sangita* and *manodharma sangita*. *Kalpita sangita* refers to all the music compositions (*kalpitam*=already determined). *Manodharma sangita* is the music that is improvised on the spot (*manodharma*=according to the mind). The mystical nature of Indian music is very well portrayed in the *manodharma sangita*. It pertains not only to creative music but also to the innate mystical nature of the musician. Many compositions of Thyagaraja and Dikshitar and other musicians come under *manodharma sangita*. They reveal the deep mystical experience of the composers. The most famous *Pancharatna Kirtans*\* are the spontaneous improvisations of Thyagaraja and naturally they are very mystical and inspiring. *Manodharma sangita* or creative music is the distinctive character of Indian music. It imparts a dynamic character to Indian music. In a concert, one can hear not only the music compositions of great musicians but also the spontaneous improvised compositions of the performer. The musicians play or sing the compositions of great musicians as well as interpret and contribute their part to the compositions very spontaneously. Since a concert or a musical performance is creative music and the nature of

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\* *Pancharatna kirtans* are the five compositions of Thyagaraja, which are spontaneous creation but they are the richest compositions in Indian music system.

the music is mystical, a life-long *Tapasya* (perseverance) or *sadhana* (dedication) is required from the part of the musician. Therefore one can say that a *Sangita Vidwan* (Master of music) must be (also) a 'spiritual man' or 'mystic' who can lead the audience to a celestial experience.

A very important division in the *manodharma sangita*, which helps in the study of the mystical nature of Malankara Liturgy and music is the concert piece called *Raga alapana*. *Alapana* in its literal sense is 'that which is sung.' In the concert the musician expresses the nuances of a *raga*. The *raga alapana* really makes the concert hall a meditation hall. For the musician it is a meditation on the uninterrupted flow of the *nada*. The musician must concentrate on the *raga* that he describes all through the *alapana*. A minor error in singing a *svara* in its right frequency can result in the destruction of the identity of the *raga* itself. It is the flowing of his/her heart to the *Adhara shadjam*, the Ultimate. In the *raga alapana* the musician speaks to 'the cause of his own being' in the form of music and he/she imparts the radiance of the self-realization to the audience. [Here lies the importance of music therapy that will be dealt with later.] Thus the uninterrupted flow of the *alapana* leads both the performer and the audience to a celestial bliss. Because of the divine and the mystical nature of Indian music it cannot be taken (only) as an entertainment programme but it is to be taken in a spiritual atmosphere and meditation. [An Indian classical concert that is conducted in a restaurant as an entertainment programme for the guests destroys the dignity and the mystical nature of the music].

Remaining in its own melody character, the melodies or compositions possess all the nature and qualities of the *raga*. When a *raga* is compared to an ocean, the numberless melodies composed in this particular *raga* are the drops of water taken from this ocean. Since the *ragas* are modal music, each *raga* has a particular *bhava* (expression). Each *raga* is suitable and fit for a particular occasion and time. There are morning *ragas*, midday *ragas* and evening *ragas*. For example, the *raga Bhupalam* and *Malayamarutam* are morning *ragas*; the *raga, Madhyamavati* is the midday *raga*; the *raga, Kalyani* is an evening *raga*. A *raga* is formed in such a way that it is deeply related to the physiology and the psychology of the human being and to some extent it can even influence animals and



plants. The morning *ragas* have a simple and delicate structure so that they do not strain the vocal cords that have rested during the sleep. At the same time these *ragas* contain a vital energy that enables one to spring up from bed and plunge into the daily routine. The midday is time of relaxation (interval) and naturally the midday *ragas* have the capacity of relaxation. The evening *ragas* are very majestic in their nature. Because of the exercise in the day - time the body and the vocal cords are fit to express their potentiality in its full vigour. Therefore, even though the evening *ragas* are hard in their manifestation, as they are sung in the evening they will not strain the vocal cords.

Based on the quality and expression of *ragas* they can be arranged in a 'time table' that is named *Gana kala*. It shows the specified time of singing a *raga*. The *Gana kala* tradition gives a list of *ragas* that are to be sung in the determined time. During temple festivals the *Gana kala* is strictly followed especially in playing *Nagaswaram* (a wind instrument). The arrangement is the following:

From 4 A.M to sunrise: *Ragas: Bhupalam, Bauli, Malayamarutam, Valaji, Nadanamakriya, Mayamalavagaula.*

From sunrise to 8 A.M: *Bilahari, Kedaram, Jaganmohini, Gaulipantu, Suddha dhanyasi.*

From 8 A.M to 10 A.M: *Dhanyasi, Saveri, Asaveri, Suddha Saveri, Suddha bangala, Abhogi, Devagandhari, Arabhi, Devamanohari.*

From 10 A.M to 12: *Sriragam, Manirangu, Madhyamavati, Brindavana saranga, Darbar.*

From 4 P.M till sunset: *Purvakalyani, Mandari, Vasanta, Kalyani, Sarasvati.*

From sunset till 8 P.M: *Sankarabharana, Hamsadhvani, Bhairavi, Todi, Kharaharapriya, Shanmukhapriya, Simhendramadhyamam, Anandabhairavi, Kanada, Sama, Kedaragaula.*



The *Gana kala* tradition is one of the important factors that indicate to the relation of Indian music with the Malankara musicality.

### 3.2.3.1 Raga and emotion

Since the *ragas* are based on *rasa* (emotion/feeling) they can evoke feelings in the human being. In the formation of *ragas*, all possible combinations of notes for creating emotional effects have been utilised. Music can be called the language of emotion. The idea of *Nava rasa* (nine feelings) is one of the fundamental concepts of Indian aesthetics. The nine *rasas* are depicted very artistically in some of the ancient sculptures and paintings. It is a very interesting subject of study with regard to the mystical nature of Indian music. As we have already seen, the mystics especially in the *Bhakti yoga* or path of love, their union with the Ultimate is expressed in the following nine main (basic) *rasas*.

1. <i>Sringara</i>	Love, Romance.
2. <i>Hasya</i>	laughter.
3. <i>Karuna</i>	pathos.
4. <i>Raudra</i>	anger.
5. <i>Vira</i>	enthusiasm.
6. <i>Bhayanaka</i>	fear.
7. <i>Bibhatsa</i>	disgust.
8. <i>Adbhuta</i>	wonder, surprise.
9. <i>Shanti</i>	serenity.

The nine *rasas* have been further expanded by the addition of *bhakti* or devotion. *Sringara* and *bhakti* became the main *rasas*

because they are the expression of the supreme emotions of the 'soul'. In the *Bhajans* of the mystic Meera Bhai we can recognise these *rasas*. *Sringara* and *bhakti* are two main aspects in the 'bridal mysticism' where the *atman* (soul) is taken as the bride and the *Paramatman* (Ultimate Reality) as the bridegroom. In the day-to-day life of human beings these two *rasas* are frequently experienced. These *rasas* are again expanded to other *rasas* like *vatsalya* (affection, esp. towards the offspring), *preyas* (friendship) and *desha bhakti* (patriotism).

Among the *rasas*, *Sringara rasa* is known as *rasa raja* (king of *rasas*) and it can be called the representation of all the *rasas*. The theme of *Sringara* has been the favourite of composers. The *nayaka* (hero) performing a heroic act can result in *vira rasa*. The separation of the *nayaka* is expressed in *karuna rasa*. The *nayaka* failing to turn up at the promised hour can provoke in the *nayaki* (heroine), *raudra rasa*. The continued neglect and the disappointing attitude of the *nayaka* may provoke in the *nayaki*, a feeling of disgust. *Nindastuti kirtanas* are an example for this. "A music piece like, *Ilalo Pranatartiharudanuchu* (*Athana raga*) suggests anger provoked by disgust at the indifference of the Lord towards the composer."<sup>8</sup> The occurrence of an unforeseen pleasant event may cause *adbhuta rasa* (a surprise) in the *nayaka* or *nayaki*. In the music compositions of mystics like Thyagaraja, Meerabhai, etc. the above mentioned *rasas* could be observed because the dialogue of mystics with God is often anthropomorphic. Among all the *rasas* *bhakti rasa* (related to devotion) has been glorified as the *ujvala rasa* (Supreme emotion).

The emotional effect of a *raga* is dependent upon the frequencies of the notes that enter into its formation. The pairs of

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<sup>8</sup> Sambamurthy, *South Indian Music*, Bk. V, 41Bunder St, Madras 600001, 1982. P. 171

notes bearing the frequency ratios: 1:2 or 2:3 or 3:4 - i.e. a note and its octave, a note and its *panchama*; and a note and its *suddha madhyama* respectively - when sounded together, give a pleasing effect. This is the scientific theory that was known centuries ago. 'Raga and *rasa*' like 'chords and their effects' is a fascinating subject and is of interest especially in the realm of the psychology of human beings. Since the inter-relation of the notes of a *raga* determines its *rasa*, the drone is of great importance. The drone is the meter or the basic note through which the frequency relationships of other notes are established. Factors like pitch, intensity, timbre, massiveness, form, grace, language, and rhythm are also contributory factors in establishing the *rasa*. Normally, slow tempo is taken for portraying *karuna* and *bhakti rasas* and fast tempo for portraying *raudra* and *vira rasas* (this principle is applied in many of the Malankara Hymns). There are *ragas* for expressing the different degrees of intensity of a particular *rasa*. When we consider a *rasa* it can be valued in different measures such as superficial, ordinary, bearable, unbearable, deep overwhelming, heart-rending etc. *Ragas* like *Mukhari*, *Nadanamakriya*, *Punnagavarali*, *Ghanta* and *Ahiri* can be used respectively to portray these different degrees in the *rasa* of grief. Likewise, *ragas* like *Aarabi* and *Athana* can be used respectively to portray the feelings of anger provoked by a trifling situation and anger provoked by a serious situation. There are *ragas* like *Ahiri* that can produce a single *rasa*. On the other hand *ragas* like *Todi*, *Kamboji*, *Mohanam*, *Sankarabharanam* and *Kalyani* reveal more than one *rasa*. A single note by itself has no *rasa* because its value is based upon the frequency of the *Adhara shadjam* (basic note). For the proper enjoyment of the *rasa* of a *raga* or a composition in this *raga*, the atmosphere of the singing or *alapana* should be saturated with the *sruti* notes of the tamburu or other drone instruments. <sup>^</sup>

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<sup>^</sup> Reference: Sambamurthy, *South Indian Music*, Bk. I, II, III, IV, V, VI; 41 Bunder St, Madras 600001.



The following are some of the themes and the appropriate *ragas* to depict them:

THEME OF THE SAHITYA	RAGA	EXAMPLES
<i>Sringara-vipralamba</i> i.e. sorrow due to seperation.....	Mukhari.	<i>Vadasiyadi</i> (19 <sup>th</sup> ashtapadi)
<i>Sringara: sambhoga</i> (joy in union)	Pharaz	<i>Smara</i> <i>sundaranguni</i> (Javali)
<i>Vira</i> (heroic)	Bilahari..	<i>Mannil arasar</i> <i>pola</i> (Rama natakam) This is a dialogue between rama and parasurama after the former's victorious return after bending Sivas bow.
<i>Karuna.</i> (pathos)	Ahiri.	<i>Viksheham katha</i> (Krishna lila Tarangini) The lament of Rukmini when she comes to know that her chances of marrying Krishna become remote. This is grief bordering on despair.

<i>Raudra</i> (Cruel expression)	Arabhi.	<i>Yahi Madhava</i> (17 <sup>th</sup> ashtapadi)
<i>Hasya</i> (Fun making)	Kambhoji.	<i>Konangi</i> (divine clown) song figuring at the commencement of dance dramas.
<i>Bhayanaka</i> (frightning)	Ghanta.	<i>Unnatavuna</i> (Nawkacharitram)
<i>Bhibhatsa</i> (disgust).....	Varali.	<i>Indukemi</i> (Nowka charitram) Disgust arising out of a feeling of helplessness and outraged self-respect.
<i>Adbhuta</i> (Wonder)	Hindustanbehag.	<i>Idudano tillai sthalam</i> (Nandanar charitram) The joyous surprise of Nandanar when he reaches Chidambaram, the object of his life dream.

<i>Santa</i> (serene)	Sama.	<i>Santamu leka</i> (Thyagaraja)
<i>Bhakti</i> (devotion)....	Kedaragaula...  Bhairavi.....	<i>Varijanayana</i> (prahlada bhakti vijayam) <i>Sriraghuvara.</i> (Thyagaraja)
<i>Santosha</i> (joy).....	Bilahari .....  Mohana .....	<i>Kanugontini.</i> Do  <i>Nanu palimpa.</i> Do
<i>Vatsalya</i> (affection esp. to child)	Nilambari.....	<i>Lali Sri</i> <i>Krishnayya..</i> cradle song.
Taunting (satirical)	Saveri.....	<i>Telisennura.</i> (Padam).
<i>Yuddha vira</i> (Martial)	Nata and Kedaram.....	The tune called Mallari played by nagasvaram players in Gambhira Nata raga at the commencement of a temple procession is a good example. It infuses courage and enthusiasm.



<p><i>Anutapa</i> (repentance or penance)</p>	<p>Yadukulakambh- oji.....</p> <p>Asaveri..... .....</p>	<p><i>Ezhaiparpan.</i> (Nandanar Charitram)</p> <p><i>Saranam,</i> <i>saranam,</i> <i>Raghurama.</i></p>
<p><i>Ahankara</i> (Ego/Pride)</p>	<p>Devagandhari... .....</p> <p>Surati.....</p>	<p><i>Evaru manaku</i> (Nowka charitram)</p> <p>Conceit resulting from <i>saundarya garvam</i>. This song is sung in a challenging mood as the <i>gopis</i> are proud of their personal beauty, charm and attraction.</p>
<p><i>Maya</i> (vanity/illusion)</p>		
<p>Entreaty (pleading)</p>	<p>Ritigaula.....</p>	<p><i>Sringarinchukoni</i> (Nawka charitram)</p>
<p>Resolution following an intriguing situation.</p> <p>Loneliness, detachment from world, forest- life etc.</p>	<p>Purvakalyani... .....</p> <p>Mohanam.....</p>	<p><i>Nannu vdichi.</i> (prahlada bhakti vijayam)</p> <p><i>Satre vilagi.</i> (Nandanar charitram)</p>

Jealousy.	Vasanta.....  Kalyani.....	<i>Vedavakyamani.</i> (Nawka charitram)  Overture to <i>Nawka</i> <i>charitram.</i>  <i>Enkanum vara</i> <i>vara.</i> (Tamil padam) <sup>9</sup>
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### 3.2.4 *Gana rasa*

*Gana rasa* refers to the aesthetical sphere of music. *Ragas* evoke in man aesthetic enjoyment. However it is not necessary that all *ragas* should create in us some particular sentiment. The *raga Kadana kutuhalam* or the composition like *koluvaiyunnade* (*Bhairavi*) generates aesthetic pleasure and not any one of nine *rasas*. *Gana rasa* can be defined as the aesthetic pleasure that one feels in listening to a beautiful piece of music. The *nava rasa* and the feeling of *Bhakti* can be experienced through a study of literature but the emotion of *gana rasa* can be expressed only through the medium of music. The instrumental music is an apt example of *gana rasa*. The quality of *gana rasa* contributes itself very much to the mystic nature of Indian music. Here the music itself speaks to man, which is a 'speechless speech.' The aesthetic enjoyment is sometimes independent of *rasa*. This is particular when one listens to a very attractive composition in *alapana* or singing. On such occasions one feels as if one is taken up to sublime heights. Listening to an *alapana* that is rendered in good artistic

<sup>9</sup> The Chart of *Rasa* is taken from *South Indian Music* by Sambamurthy, Bk. V, 41Bunder St, Madras 600001; P. 172-175

style can cause tears of joy flow down involuntarily from one's eyes. Prof. Sambamurthy says that this ecstasy is *sangitananda* (bliss of music) and in such cases it is meaningless to search for *rasas*. This is the mysterious character of Indian music, which indicates its divine nature.

To conclude this brief explanation of *raga*, one can assert that *raga* is the soul of Indian music. The *ragas* take one to the zenith of sublime heights that simply indicates the mystic nature of Indian music. It has a very special reference when one comes across the musicality of Malankara Liturgy in particular.

### 3.2.5 *Sruti & Laya*

In Indian music “*Sruti* and *Laya* are considered the mother and father of a music piece.”<sup>10</sup>

*Sruti* can be defined as the smallest audible sound, the sound that can be distinctly heard. Technically it can be named quartertone, microtone, enharmonic note or interval. In Indian music it is generally called the *adhara shadjam* (The basic note) that can be explained as the keynote. This is the minute pitch that a refined and trained ear can distinguish. In the Indian music system an octave is divided into 22 intervals of unequal pitch. These are called 22 *srutis*. In ancient music, the 22 *srutis* were distributed over all the *sapta svaras* (seven notes). But later on, ‘Sa’ and ‘Pa’ considered to be *avikrta svaras* (changeless and without varieties) took one *sruti* each and the remaining 20 *srutis* were distributed amongst the five *svaras*: Ri, Ga, Ma, Da, Ni at the rate of 4 for each note. Thus  $(4 \times 5) + (1 + 1) = 22$ . The 22 *srutis* of ancient music is not mere theoretical postulates but were solid musical facts that were ascertained when *Rg Vedic* hymns and melodies were sung with Sa, Ma and Pa as the tonic note or *adhara shadjam*. In western music *sruti* can be compared to pitch. In the western music composition,

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<sup>10</sup> Dr. S.V. Leela, *Indian Music Series*, Bk. II, Minerva Publishing House, Madras-600008. P. 1



the composer determines the pitch of the composition. In the Indian music compositions the *sruti* is not already fixed. The musician is free to sing or play a composition in his or her own *sruti*. Through out the concert or singing, the *sruti* should be heard (played on *sruti* instrument) continuously.

*Laya* can be explained as the musical time, tempo, rhythm, speed etc. In Indian terminology and concept it is one of the *tala dasa pranas* that makes Indian music more divine. The *tala*\* system (system of rhythms) is perhaps the most difficult and complicated branch of Indian music especially of South Indian Music. There is no comparison to it in the other musical systems of the world. Prof. Sambamurthy states: “The time measures used by all the nations put together will form but a small fraction of the innumerable varieties of rhythm used in Indian music.”<sup>11</sup> The development of *tala* mnemonics and the art of drumming have contributed to the high development of the *tala* system. When a *mrdangam* or *tabla* player accompanies a musician, he/she does not merely beat rhythmically on the drum but provides a cross-rhythmical accompaniment based on the style, movement and rhythmical construction of the pieces rendered. It is to be taken special consideration that *tala* also comes under the creative music. One can easily meditate on the hearing of

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\* Reference: Sambamurthy, South Indian Music, Book IV, Indian Music Publishing House, 41Bunder Street, Madras-600001.

“Time measure was introduced in European music only about the year 1150. But compositions set to regular time measures have been in vogue in India from the 7<sup>th</sup> century – the period of *Tevaram*... in the place of the few time measures used in modern European music, more than 300 *talas* exist in Indian music. Russian folk songs have the 5 and 7 time rhythms i.e. *Khanda Chapu* and *Misra chapu talas*... The *mela* system, *raga* system and the *tala* system of India are perfect and finished systems in the sense that no future genius can possibly conceive of a *mela*, *raga* or *tala* which will not come within the ambit of the existing systems. The rhythmic wealth of Indian music is a thing unknown in other countries.”

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Bk. II; P. 18

*mrdangam* or *tabla* playing accompanied with a proper *sruti* instrument. The power and the spiritual nature of the *tala* are depicted on the famous sculpture *Nataraja Vighraha* (statue of 'dancing *Shiva*'). This explains the philosophy of creation in the *Shivist* Philosophy. It is interesting to observe that creation comes from the vibration of the drums played by *Siva*. There is a *tala* sculpture in *Sri Meenakshiamman* Temple, (Madurai in Tamilnadu State) which shows the 35 *talas*. The ancient books on music classify *tala* into *margi* and *desi* and enumerate the classical 108 *talas*. Later 35 *talas* were developed from these 108 *talas* that are in simpler form. *Chapu talas* are another *tala* system that has a very deep mystical character.

### 3.2.6 *Manodharma sangita & Kalpitha sangita*

Indian music system has two channels through which the music is manifested: 1) *manodharma sangita* and 2) *kalpita sangita*.

In *manodharma sangita*, the musician sings or performs his own improvisation - music improvised on the spot without any previous thought. It is the music created and sung by him/her on the spur of the moment and flows incessantly out of him/her spontaneously. Keeping in mind the particular *lakshana* (identity) of the *raga* and its *svaras*, the musician exposes the *raga* in such a manner that the exposition brings out the excellence and nuances of a *raga*. The impregnated musical thoughts generated within him/her, struggle to find expression through his/her voice or the instrument. The potentiality of the music is so great that the musician exposes only a fragment of the particular *raga* as possible as he/she can. It is important to observe that it is during such performance of *manodharma sangita* blessed and gifted musicians make the audience forget this worldly existence and elevate them to a higher and sublime stage. The concept of Absolute music is reached in this branch of art.

*Kalpita sangita* consists of compositions previously composed, memorised, practised and performed. *Varnam* (a form of composition), *Kirtanam* and *Kriti* are *kalpita sangita*.



The *manodharma sangita* is of five kinds: -

1. *Raga alapana*: This is a long or short description of the *raga* in which the music composition is to be sung or played. Here the proficiency of the musician is revealed in the possible revelation of the prescribed *raga*. An *alapana* has an attractive charm of its own. An *alapana* comes every time fresh and new and it has its own appeal. A musical composition (*Kalpita sangita*) has a concrete melodic form and is practised hundreds of time before it is rendered in a concert. A musical composition produced by a musician at two different times may be identical in all respects but on the other hand the *alapana* rendered by a musician on two different occasions may be entirely different in its structure and style. When a musician composes a new piece of music, he is also creating music. But he has at his disposal ample chances and his own time to correct it, embellish it, to recast or remodel it and release it to the world when he feels that the piece has reached its perfection. There are musicians who release their compositions anonymously and when the public accepts their compositions they reveal their identity. In the *kalpita sangita* the musician has enough time to exercise his/her thoughts, judgement, skill, discretion and imagination in giving a final touch to his/her composition. The risk to his/her reputation in this matter is very little. However in the realm of *manodharma sangita*, the musician has to speak fresh to the audience or listeners, where his/her proficiency in music and spiritual power (*innere Kraft*) are estimated. All the more it requires a very strong 'mystical power' and energy. *Raga alapana* is also important in the comparative study of Indian music system and the Malankara liturgical music (for details please refer 3.4).
2. *Madhyama kala* or *Tana*. This is also another form of *raga alapana* but in a specified tempo. It is the most lively and attractive part of the *raga* exposition and comes after a long drawn-out slow-rhythmic *alapana*. *Tana* are *alapana* (description) in *madhyama kala* (medium Speed). The



rhythmical flow of music in *madhyama kala* is very catchy and crisp.

3. *Pallavi* exposition: The *pallavi* is the most important branch of creative music. The creative talent of the musician, his/her mastery of rhythm and grasp of technical details are all revealed here. In this part of *manodharma sangita*, the musician has ample opportunities of displaying his creative talents, imaginative skill, artistic sense and musical intelligence. The term *pallavi* is formed by the combination of the first three letters of *Padam* (words), *Layam* (time) and *Vinyasam* (variations). 'Pa' + 'La' + 'Vi' = *Pallavi*. While *Raga alapana* is unmeasured music *Pallavi* is measured music. The words of a *Pallavi* can be either a sacred or secular theme and can be sung in any language. A *Pallavi* may be composed in any *raga* and *tala* provided they satisfy the ordinary rules of musical composition.
4. *Svara kalpana*: This branch of *manodharma sangita* consists of singing of phantasy notes in the prescribed *raga*. Here the musician has the opportunity of expressing the various rich and colourful aspects of the *raga bhava* (expression of *raga*) through the medium of *svara sanchara*, i.e. the notes being rendered with their characteristic *srutis*, *gamakas* and intonation.
5. *Sahitya prastara* or *Niraval*: A part of the chosen theme from a *Kriti* is sung in various tunes, sometimes in various *ragas*. It is a spontaneous creation of a particular theme of the *Kriti* (hymn/composition), first on part of the theme and then on the whole theme, keeping the rhythmical setting intact. *Niraval* gradually progresses from the *Madhya stayi* (medium octave) and extends over to *Tara stayi* (higher octave).

The *manodharma sangita* that points to the transcendental nature of Indian music demands from the musician both a spiritual motivation and an intellectual attitude to music. It is not only the proficiency of the musician but also a spiritual flow of the mystery

of divine music. Because of this mystical nature of Indian music, a musician requires a long spiritual preparation before he/she enters on the stage of the concert hall. Naturally musicians were considered 'spiritual persons' through whom the '*Nada Brahma*' is revealed. The concept of *manodharma sangita* is very important in the study of Malankara Liturgical music, which will be dealt with in 3.4.3.

### 3.2.7 The healing\* power of Indian music

\*

The great musician and composer, Dakshinamurthy had a performance for the mentally sick people in the Mental Hospital, Pererurkkada, Trivandrum, which indicates the healing power of Indian music. The news paper report in the internet version of The Malayalam Daily, *Deepika* states:

*"Manasinte sunyathayil amrthavarshamai sangitadhara"*.  
(Music as the life-giving stream in the empty hearts)

Human beings are the flowers in the garden of God. As the colour and fragrance differentiate the flowers, the differences in the level of inherited and acquired nature give each person his or her individuality. However beyond this horizon of individuality and differences there is a golden line that makes the human kind 'human' and unites them. Only when one is able to acknowledge it, he or she can be called a human being. This acknowledgement leads one to God. This feeling of transcendence and knowledge is sometimes lost in the whirlpool of the confusions of the world and this causes darkness and emptiness in the heart of man. This emptiness can be filled with the divine music. This is what Dakshinamurthy, the famous musician and composer proved yesterday, at the mental hospital at Peerurkada.

The treatment with the life-giving stream of music was really an '*Amruta*' (medicine of eternity) in the emptiness of the hearts of more than a hundred people who are mentally sick. The effect of the healing touch of music is revealed through their gestures (enjoying and clapping). As they returned to their rooms a satisfaction and serenity can be seen on their face.

At the old age of 83 too there was no interruption in the flowing of music from him. His music was like a refreshing shower and it was just like a treatment...

Since music has an influence on the psychosomatic function of the human being it has been used to heal certain diseases. It is scientifically proved that music has a 'healing touch' on human being and also on other living beings. The potentiality of Indian music in this sphere is greater than that of any other system of music because Indian music is modal music, based on *ragas* that have a psychosomatic influence in the human being. Prof. H.C. Joachim-Ernst Brendt<sup>^</sup> points out that Indian music is tranquillising music. In spite of acquiring a well furnished melodic music system, the healing effect of musical therapy has not received due prominence in India. However it is to be appreciated that today the potentiality of Indian music is being studied and there are nature cure centres in India especially in the south where music therapy is practised. In his book, South Indian Music Prof. Sambamurthy has written that there was a manuscript called *Raga Chikitsa* (treatment with *raga*) in the Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Library. Dr. Burnell refers to it. This work treated of *ragas* that were useful for particular ailments. (Unfortunately now, there is no trace of this manuscript).

There are particular *ragas* that are used against certain ailments including psychological disorders. *Raga, Nilambari* is used to cure sleeplessness. The afflicted person is required to listen to pieces in this *raga*, periodically and under specified conditions. There are many cradlesongs in this *raga*, which make the children fast asleep. *Raga, Shri* heard after a heavy lunch catalyses digestion. *Raga, Sama* brings back mental peace and tranquillity in agitated or tensed minds. *Ragas, Bhupalam* and *Malayamarutam* when sung in the morning, invite one to get up from slumber and make one able to do enthusiastically the daily activities. *Raga, Dvijavanti* gives relief to paralysed people. *Raga Bilahari* has a potency to cheer up people who are very much depressed and gloomy. Making them listen to pieces in *raga Nandanamakriya* can make rough people

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[ Personal translation - Internet 'Deepika' dated on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2002 ]

<sup>^</sup>Reference: Joachim-Ernst Berendt, *Nada Brahma die welt ist Klang*, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Mein, Germany. Chapter X



more human. *Raga Sankarabharanam* has a soothing power. Listening to this *raga* is recommended for patients who are mentally upset. Those who are suffering from Hypertension/high blood pressure are recommended to hear the *raga Anandabhairavi*. Likewise, martial fervour can be instilled in persons by making them listen to *ragas* like *Bilahari* or *Kedaram*. Palpitation or irregularity in the rhythm of heartbeat can be cured through music. At first the music should be played in the same tempo and then the tempo has to be gradually decreased till it reaches the normal tempo. Normally the heart is bound to react sympathetically to the music. In all these cases, the patient should listen to the tone of *tamburu* (drone instrument) for a few minutes, attune himself/herself and then listen to the *raga alapana* or pieces in that *raga*. In some places in South India, there is a tradition that pregnant women who listen to the music played on the stringed instrument *Vina* are assured of a safe delivery. There are other interesting traditions based on experience and in most cases it is possible to give a scientific explanation to them. It is a very old practice to conclude concerts, *Bhajans* etc. with the *raga Madhyamavati*. When it is sung at the end of a concert, a state of aesthetic equilibrium and tranquillity is maintained in people who had been subjected to emotional appeals of varied character in the concert or religious exposition.♥ In the reformation of the liturgical music based on *raga* the healing power of the *raga* should be taken into consideration.

### 3.2.8 *Guru kula sambradaya*

*Guru kula sambradaya* means the tradition of imparting *vidya* (education) to *sishya* (from *Guru*). *Guru* means 'Master'; *kula* means 'house' or 'family'; *sambradaya* means 'system'. In the *guru kula sambradaya* the *sishya* (student/disciple) lives with the *guru* for many years and learns from the 'mouth' of the *guru*. The *guru* is everything for the *sishya*. The *sishya* renders service to the *guru*. When the *guru* is pleased in the *sishya* he pours down on the *sishya*

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♥ Reference: Sambamurthy, *South Indian Music*, Indian Music Publishing House, 41 Bunder Street, Madras-600001.

the best of his *Jnana* (knowledge). It is an oral transmission of knowledge. The *guru kula sambradaya* was the system of school for music, archery etc. All *vidya* (knowledge or education) come from the Supreme Being. This *vidya* is being manifested through *guru*. In other words *guru* is the representative of *Ishwar* (God). The divine and the mystical nature of music is portrayed in this concept. The *vidya* can be learned only through the *guru*. A student is called a *brahmachari* and he remains chaste until he learns all the *vidya* from the *guru*. *Brahmachari* means the one who walks (in) with God. The *brahmachari* must not have any goal other than acquiring the *vidya*. That is why he remains chaste until he becomes self-sufficient. This system has a great influence in the oral tradition of the Indian Music System. The notation and the written form are less important. No *raga* can be learned from notation only. The peculiar expression and identity of musical notes cannot be learned from books but only from hearing. The notation and the written form are a remote help in the learning process. The *sisya* (disciple) is not expected to depend upon books and notes because it can distract him from the *guru* who is the representative of God. Unfortunately the *guru kula sambradaya* in its real sense exists no more. Today music is taught in universities and schools. Even if it is taught in schools, the importance of *guru* still remains. From books nobody can learn a *raga* in its full expression. The *raga bhava* (expression) must be received from the mouth of the *Guru*. Today we get almost all the musical compositions in notation. However, they themselves are of no use until a *guru* teaches them. Because of this reason and in the realm of *manodharma sangita*, the written notation is not important in the Indian Music System as in the Western Music System. This only gives witness to the mystical nature of Indian Music. It is also an uninterrupted flow of handing over the mystical experience from the *guru* to *sisya*. In *guru kula sambradaya* the ‘ascetic’ and ‘disciplined’ life of the *guru* is very important. The *guru* is responsible for transmitting the values of life and tradition to the coming generation. The importance of *guru* is very touchingly expressed in the Malankara liturgy also. Along with the parents, the teachers (*guru*) are also remembered in many of the prayers. There is a touching prayer that is said by the priest during the offertory. Holding the chalice and the paten he prays: “We remember also our



fathers and brothers and teachers who taught us the word of truth...”<sup>12</sup> From this, one can assume that the concept of *guru sishya bandha* (The relation between *guru* and *sishya*) is given very much importance in the Orient. Keeping all the above-mentioned notions of Indian music, which indicate its deep mystical nature, one can make a research into the nature of the musicality of the Malankara Liturgy.

### **3.3 The mystical character of Malankara Liturgy and its musicality**

The Malankara liturgy originated from the Antiochian liturgy that is one of the oldest liturgies, which is the prototype of many other liturgies. This liturgy was brought to Kerala in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and then onwards the Antiochian liturgy in its ‘Indianised’ form is called the Malankara Liturgy. The Antiochian liturgy has evolved in a monastic tradition and naturally the ascetical and mystical life of the monks contributed to the mystical nature of the liturgy. The architecture of the churches, the liturgical prayers, the liturgical music etc. herald the mystical nature of the liturgy. It uses many symbols that express the mystic nature of the liturgy. The altar and the altar coverings, the vestments, the veil, the prayers etc, are enriched by symbols that direct towards the mysterious nature of the liturgy, which is the basis of its mystical nature. It has been already mentioned that mysticism is deeply rooted in mystery. It is expressed in the definition that closing the eyes and stopping blabbing in order to experience the *mystery* is essential. The architecture of the church, the liturgical vestments and the liturgical prayers point to this wonderful mystical character. It would be worthwhile to examine some of the above-mentioned aspects.

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<sup>12</sup> *The Divine Liturgy of the Syro- Malankara Rite*; Printed at: St. Mary’s Press Pattom, Trivandrum. 1980. P. 11



### 3.3.1. The externals add to the mystical nature of the Malankara Liturgy

#### a) The architecture of the Church.

A Malankara church in its original architecture is divided mainly into *Madbaho* (the most holy place where there is the altar), *Qaestruno* **قَاعُ السَّمَاءِ** (the place of the choir which symbolises heaven where the angels sing the glory of God) and *Hyklo* **مَحَلُّ** (the worshipping community, the people of God). This structure indicates that the temple of God is the earthly heaven and it is a meeting point of heaven and earth. Its mystic nature is revealed in the fact that one who enters the church becomes anxious to see what is there. This anxiousness is the symbol of man's strife to fathom the endless depth of the Wisdom of God.<sup>13</sup>

#### b) The Altar.

The altar is situated in the middle of the *Madbaho* (holy of holies). The altar is named *thronos* **مَوْجِدَانُ** (throne) that symbolises the holy place where God appeared to the prophet in vision. It is called the *Table of Eternal life* where the divine life is shared with human beings. The Malankara altar symbolises the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. Therefore it is not shaped as a table but is formed as a hollow block. The cross is not a crucifix (with the figure) but a cross with rays in the centre, which signifies the resurrection. In the middle of the altar is the *Tabalito*, **طَبَالِيتُ** a wooden plank that is the symbol of the Cross. It is consecrated with *muron* **مُرُونُ** by the bishop and the names of the Holy Trinity are written on it. It is the altar proper. During the Eucharistic celebration a three-coloured cloth

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<sup>13</sup> Reference: Rainer Volp, *Liturgik I*, Gütersloher Verlaghaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh 1992;

„Ein Gottesdienstraum der Ostkirchen, sofern er ist nicht pompös überladen ist, macht den Eintretenden oft neugierig auf das, was sich darin ereignet.“ P. 292

covers the *tabalito* **ܐܘܪܝܢܐ**. The outer part of this cloth is red, the middle part is green and central part is white. The red coloured part symbolises the cosmos, the green stands for the earth and the white for the Church. This portrays very beautifully the universal character of the Holy Sacrifice in which the whole creation is being brought forth. This universal character of the Holy Liturgy is very much revealed in the first petition of the priest to the people of God: he says, “Pray for me that I may be counted worthy to celebrate the holy and living sacrifice for the whole church.”<sup>14</sup> It is very clear from this prayer that the Holy Qurbano is not to be limited to a particular intention only. Every Holy Qurbano is celebrated for the universal Church, which includes the dead and the living and the whole creation. The altar is the rock from which the waters of life flow. It is the centre of all our festivals and celebrations. In the first service of the preparation of the table, there is a very beautiful and meaningful prayer that is said by the priest: “Bind our festivals, O Lord, with cords to the corners of your altar.”<sup>15</sup>

### c) The Veil.

The veil separates the *Madbaho* **ܡܕܒܚܐ** (the Holy of Holies) from the *Hyklo* **ܗܝܟܠܐ** (the place of the holy gathering). It is a curtain, made of linen cloth in purple or any other accepted colour. This curtain is drawn aside only on particular occasions of the service. The veil itself is the symbol of mystery. It represents the unapproachable and the incomprehensible stature of God. Even though God has become man and taken up all the weakness of human nature, except sin, the creation and the salvation history of God is beyond our reasoning capacity, i.e. it remains a mystery for ever.

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<sup>14</sup> *The Divine Liturgy of the Syro-Malankara Rite*, Printed at St. Mary's Press, Pattom, Trivandrum. P. 2

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* P. 3

#### d) The Censer.

The censer is short and decorated with small bells. The three chains represent the Holy Trinity. The twelve bells represent the twelve apostles. In every Holy Qurbano there is a solemn blessing of the censer in which the manifestation of the Holy Trinity during the Baptism of Jesus in Jordan is celebrated.

#### e) The Holy Vestments

The Vestment the priests wear is full of hidden meaning. It represents the vestment that was worn by Aaron. The *Alba* symbolises purity and holiness. The Stole is named to be the armour of justice. The over garment which is made of precious cloths symbolises the dignity and the righteousness of the priest that is the requirement of the priest to celebrate at the altar of the Lord. The special shoes (out of colourful material) the priest wear at the altar indicates his readiness to proclaim the message of peace.

#### f) The structure of the Divine Liturgy.

The Malankara liturgy is formed in such a way that the worshippers can experience in a mystical way the salvation history of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Qurbano begins with the offertory. The preparatory prayers and offertory commemorate the preparation of the Old Testament time for the coming of Messiah. The Old Testament passages are read out during the first and second service of the offertory. The service of the offertory and the preparation of the altar are conducted behind the veil. The second part of the H. Qurbano is the opening service. The Veil is drawn aside and together with the deacons and altar boys the priest makes a procession solemnly around the altar. This solemn procession celebrates the time of the birth of Jesus and his public ministry. The blessing of the censer, in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, follows it. This ceremony presents symbolically the manifestation of the Holy Trinity at Jordan. The Eucharistic prayer and epiclesis follow it. The ceremony of the breaking of bread commemorates the suffering, the death on the cross and the resurrection of Christ. It is



to be noted that the mixing ceremony is held behind the veil in order to portray the mysterious aspect of the suffering and the death on the cross, which cannot be fully comprehended by human beings.

The elevation of the holy things is separated from the consecration. The elevation symbolises the Ascension of our Lord to the Father. The following part of the H. Qurbono till the Eucharistic procession represents the Church that is being led and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The second coming of Jesus Christ is commemorated by the procession with the holy mysteries. The real communion with God in the *Eschathon* is being foreshadowed and proclaimed in the Holy Communion. It is important to observe that in the Malankara liturgy the Holy Mysteries are kept on the altar till the last blessing. This is a very symbolic expression of the continuous presence of Our Lord in the Church and in the *Eschathon*, which is already experienced by the worshipper in a mystical way in the Holy Qurbono that is the centre of the liturgical life.

Purity of soul and body is a requirement for the mystical union with God because God is Holy. The priest who celebrates the Holy Qurbono is the representative of Christ who is always in union with the Father. During the Holy Liturgy the priest must be in union with Christ who is present in the Holy Mysteries. That is why before the H. Qurbono there is a long service in which the priest is required to prepare himself to be worthy to stand at the Altar of the Lord. It was the tradition of the Malankara Orthodox Church that the married priests are to come to the church on Saturday and spend the rest of the time till the H. Qurbono in fasting and prayer. This points out to the oriental concept that the harmony of the soul and body in purity -an uninterrupted union- is necessary for the mystical experience.

The daily, the weekly and the yearly cycles are centred on the mystery of the resurrection of Our Lord. The resurrection of Christ, which is the hope of our life, is the message of the Gospel. It is a mystery that we hope for not only in the coming of the Lord but it is already present in a mystical way in every Holy Qurbono. Sunday is the day of resurrection. It is the day of the Lord, which is the source

of Christian liturgical life. All the prayers of Sunday focus on this theme. Monday is dedicated to the kingdom of God. The Church is the Kingdom of God in this world. In this day the Malankara Church recalls especially the call of John the Baptist to repentance. The necessity of penance is repeatedly stressed in the liturgy of Tuesday. The prayers as well as the hymns point out that the kingdom of God is present today in the Word of God, in the Sacraments and in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Wednesday is the day dedicated to Mary the Mother of God who consented for the incarnation of God. Thursday is separated for the Holy Eucharist and for the veneration of the Apostles and the saints. Friday is the veneration of the cross, the symbol of God's love towards man. Commemoration of martyrs is particular to Friday because martyrs are the ones who directly participated in the suffering of Jesus. The mystery of death is meditated in the prayers of Saturday. Many of the hymns of Saturday lead the faithful to a meditation on the fragile and mortal nature of man. However the theme of the hymns is not only the vanity of worldly life but also the expectation and hope for the *Parussia* **فَرُوسِيَا** where one can enjoy the eternal happiness.

The yearly cycle begins at the end of October or at the beginning of November. The two consecutive feasts are called *Qudos Idto* **قُدُوسِ اِيْدْتُو** and *Hudos Idto*- **هُدُوسِ اِيْدْتُو** that means the consecration and the sanctification of the church. The six Sundays before Christmas are called the Sundays of Annunciation-*suboro*. **سُبُورُو** The sixth Sunday before Christmas is in remembrance of the Annunciation to Zechariah. The fifth Sunday commemorates the Annunciation to Virgin Mary, the fourth Sunday the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, the third Sunday the birth of John the Baptist, the second Sunday the vision to St. Joseph and the last Sunday is called the Sunday before Christmas. The two Sundays after *denho* **دِنْهَو** (Epiphany) are called *Kohno & Anido*- **كُوْنُو اَنْيِدُو** the remembrance of the priests and all who died in faith. Eighteen days before the lent there is a short fasting for three days, this commemorates the fasting, and penance of the people of Nineveh. The Lent season consists of forty days as the preparation to participate in the paschal



mystery of Our Lord. The Lent season is the time of repentance and penance. The Easter season is the time of Joy and thanksgiving. Forty days after Easter is the Ascension of Our Lord. Fifty days after Easter the Pentecost is celebrated.

The architecture of the church and the structure of the liturgy are like the outer doors to the *mystery* of the Liturgical celebration. When one enters through these doors one can come to the living stream of the mystical experience in the liturgy in praise and worship. Musicality plays a vital role in the praise and worship in the Malankara Liturgy. In other words musicality takes the worshipper to the zenith of mystical experience.

### **3.3.2 Musicality takes one to the zenith of mystical experience**

In order to study the musicality of the liturgy, both the poetry and music of the composition should be taken into equal consideration. The hymns that are used in the Malankara liturgy are either the original Syrian hymns or their translations and the tunes are 'Syrian tunes'. It is very important to note that the musicality of the Malankara liturgy that is to be dealt with in this chapter is to be differentiated from the study of poetry or the Syrian literature alone. There is already a book called '*Suriyani Sangitam*' (Syrian Music) written by Rev. Fr. M.P. George, published by M.O.C. Publications, Kottayam, Kerala. It is a pioneer work and it is to be appreciated because the author has tried to explain the Syrian tunes and he has given a short history of the *Suriyani Sangitam* (Syrian music). Even though the title of the book is 'Syrian music', the main thrust of the book is not on the musicality but on the Syrian poem and its structure. It does not speak about the basic system of music in which the Syrian tunes have been composed and does not touch on the nature of its 'musicality'. Considering the mystical nature of the liturgy, the poetry and music are intermingled. Because of this very reason, in the study of the mystical nature of the liturgy, the musicality and the poetry must be studied together. According to St.



Ambrose poetry and music are like two wings of the Liturgy.<sup>16</sup> Even though a poem is a mystical one, unless it is recited it has no 'life.' The beauty of a poem or hymn is more revealed in singing than in the mere narrating or reciting it.<sup>17</sup> A hymn or poem may be very rich in its theology and in its literature, but it remains abstract until it is transmitted through the media of *Nada* (basic of musicality). According to the Indian concept music itself is a *marga* (way) to reach God. It is a channel or medium through which the mystical nature of the liturgy and the spirituality are revealed. In the Malankara liturgy there is a double saturation process i.e. the liturgical hymns themselves have a mystical nature and the medium (musicality) through which they are being exposed is also mystical. Therefore in the study of the mystical nature of the musicality of the Malankara liturgy and especially in the interpretation of the hymns it is inevitable to look into the evolution and structure of the hymns used in the Malankara liturgy, which will be dealt with in 4<sup>th</sup> chapter.

### 3.3.2.1 Musicality makes the Malankara Liturgy mystical

The stream that takes one to the zenith of mystical experience in the Malankara Liturgy is its musicality. This musicality is to be differentiated from the mere liturgical singing. The musicality that is dealt with here is the essence (*Wesen*) of music. It is better to be taken as 'the life' of the liturgy because the Malankara liturgy and

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<sup>16</sup> Reference: Michael Breydy, *Kult, Dichtung und Musik*, Band II, Kobayath-Libanon. 1971. P. IV.

*“Die Musik war ihm teuer, ebenso die Poesie. Er betrachtete sie mit Recht als zwei Flügel, durch welche die von Reue, Hoffnung und Liebe bewegten Seelen zu Gott emporegetragen werden... Die Dichtkunst hatte er sie überall in der unendlichen Harmonie der Erde und des Himmels.“*

<sup>17</sup> On the auspicious of honouring the famous music director and composer Devarajan, the famous poet O.N.V. Kurup has said that his poems became so famous because they have been brought to the public through the music of Devarajan. (Obliged to *Deepika Malayalam Daily*).

its musicality are merged into one another. All its liturgical celebrations are soaked in music. Its structure and music are able to lead the worshipper to a mystical experience. Every liturgical celebration, especially, the Holy Qurbano is always a solemn celebration. There is no 'high mass' or 'low mass' in the Malankara liturgy but the Holy Qurbano is a solemn celebration of the Church. Many westerners, who have participated in the Malankara liturgical celebrations, have shared with the author their experience. Even if they did not follow the language they had gone through a kind of celestial experience that they do not experience in other liturgical celebrations.\* It is a unique character of the Malankara liturgy that has a deep mystic nature. The structure of the liturgy, the prayers and the external setting of the whole liturgy are mystical in nature. However one cannot claim that these are something unique to the Malankara liturgy. The offertory, the ministry of the Word of God, the consecration, the breaking of the bread, the communion etc. are essential part of the Eucharistic Celebration in any rite. That which is particular to the Malankara liturgy in *its structure* is nothing but the experience of an uninterrupted flow in the celebration of the mystery of the whole Salvation Economy of Christ - The H. Qurbano starts with the offertory with its prayers and settings in the context of the Old Testament time of expectation of the Messiah. The public ministry of Jesus is proclaimed through the Ministry of the Word of God, the consecration followed by the breaking of bread that opens the way to the Paschal mystery, the communion rite that symbolises the eternal communion in the Parussiah.... This structure of continuity is something peculiar to the Malankara Qurbano. What is to be mentioned here is that the contents of the

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\* On 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2001, the author has got an opportunity to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the Syro-malankara Rite in the Salvator parish church that belongs to the Diocese- Graz, in Austria. The text was in German language. Under the leadership of the vicar a small group of people were trained from the same parish to give response in the celebration of H. Qurbano. All who attended the H. Qurbano have shared their experience with the author. Even if the liturgy was strange to them the whole community was taken up by the liturgy. It was very surprising to note that in a few minutes the whole congregation could join to the leading group.

liturgy is not something peculiar to the Malankara liturgy, but the way it is being constituted is something of its special nature. However, the unique factor in all the Malankara Liturgical celebration that keeps the mystical atmosphere intact is its musicality. Keeping steadily the *raga* and the spiritual atmosphere, the musicality elevates the worshipper to a mystical sphere.

### 3.3.2.1.1 Musical structure of the Malankara liturgy

The musical structure of the Malankara Liturgy, as already mentioned, based on the “Oktoechos”. “Etymologically, Oktoechos suggests indirectly the idea of eight musical formulas of some sort.”<sup>18</sup> However it cannot be taken as modal in the scalar sense or as a *raga* proper in the Indian music. Rather Oktoechos are eight tunes. They are a group of eight adaptable melody types, which can be named in Syriac as *rish qole* ܩܘܠܐ ܪܝܫ. In their musical nature they are very much related to the *raga* system of Indian music, however in the scalar principle of the music they are not at all equal. The term Oktoechos was used not only for musical purpose but also for other applications. Gustave Reese states:

It is clear that a codification existed, and the term oktoechos received one of its several meanings by being applied to it, but whether it was at first made for specifically musical reasons is doubtful, as will presently be shown. Other applications of the term were (1) to the oldest collections of songs for liturgical purposes, not taken from the Bibel – this was an important use; (2) to the book containing the collection; and (3) to the season of the church year corresponding to the time after Pentecost.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*, W.W. Norton & company, INC, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NY, 1940. P. 71

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. P. 72



The first reference of Oktoechos as the collection of songs is found in the *Plerophoriai*, an important source of Church history written about A.D.515 by John, bishop of Maiuma, the port of Gaza.<sup>20</sup> Aelred Cody writes: “The word ‘Oktoechos’ was first associated with the name of Severus of Antioch (c.465-538), patriarch of that see from 512 until he was deposed for his monophysite tenets in 518, when Assemani used it to characterise an early eleventh-century Jacobite codex, now Vatican Syriac 94, containing Syriac *manyata* which are independent strophes like Byzantine troparia in form and content, prefaced by one or two psalm-verses and hence perhaps the rough equivalent of Greek antiphona...”(A. Cody, *The Early History of the Octoechos in Syria*, 1982, p.89-113). It is interesting to note that the eight echoi are ascribed to be related to the four qualities of cold, warmth, dampness, dryness, and each of them have one or two qualities. Considering the structure and mode of Oktoechos, technically they are not exactly the scalar doctrine or the *raga* system but they are musical.<sup>21</sup> St. John of Damascus (died in 754) has arranged chants

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. P. 72

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. P. 72.

“John of Maiuma’s mention of the Oktoechos is made in an anecdote about a monk who complains that he is plagued by indifference and sleepiness and that, when he rises at night, he cannot recite a psalm without chanting an Echos. In reply, Silvanos – a fourth century Palestinian abbot who evidently was a kindred soul of Pambos (an enemy of music) – tells him that the song hardens the heart. The monk rejoins, “ Since I have been a monk, I sing the Office of the Canon and the Hours and the contents of the Oktoechos.” Silvanos has no doubt that the monk’s addiction to song is the reason why contrition has fled from him, and contemns the singing of echoi etc. The tail is of interest since the monk, by classing the Oktoechos together with the Office of the Canon and the Hours, indicates that it was looked upon as a sort of breviary, while, in almost the same breath, he has referred to an echos as something to which one may sing a text – “echos” being used by him not, so far as appears, as a term with a

for a cycle of eight Sundays in accordance with the *echoi*. This book is also called 'Oktoechos.' Jacob of Edessa ( $\approx 675$ ) arranged some of the Syriac texts (as hymns) in the Oktoechos among which some have numbers indicating the *echoi* to which they have to be sung. Here also one may not find any music theory of scales. There is no evidence that the Oktoechos are derived from the Greek or any scale theory. However obviously it indicates the influence of oriental music (this will be dealt with later). The scholars have the opinion that the Oktoechos might have influenced the Gregorian chant.

The tunes of all the hymns are specifically indicated in 'Ekkara' or 'Beth Gaza' **ܕܒܝܬܟܘܨܝܘܬܐ** (the treasure house). The word 'Ekkara' comes from 'Ekkoro' **ܕܢܦܘܪܐ**. The literal meaning of 'Ekkara' is 'root.' It consists of all the tunes of the liturgical hymns but these are not written in notation. The tune of the hymn is given at the beginning of every hymn. The student learns the tune from the 'malpan' **ܡܠܦܢܐ** (pundit or *Guru*). This system of learning comes close to the *Gurukula sambradaya*. The tune and the musicality are handed down from 'malpan' to *sishya*. With this process the mystical nature of the music is also transmitted to the next generation. [The 'weakness' of this system, one can say, is that there is a lacking of uniformity in the teaching of liturgical hymns because each 'malpan' has his own interest and tradition that can be different from the other traditions. However, at the same time one must not forget that oriental music is creative music – spontaneous improvisation - and it is not rigid. Each one can contribute one's part to the music without destroying the identity of the original musicality.] The Oktoechos can be called eight modes of tone. Fr.

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technical significance, but merely as a term for a melody. In other words, he seems to distinguish between the Oktoechos as a kind of prayer book and the Oktoechos as a collection of songs arranged in a musical standpoint, and, at the same time, to hint that some relationship existed between the two aspects."



M.P. George in his book *Suriyani sangitam* writes: “The Greek liturgy also uses Oktoechos in its liturgical music and there are eight modes in the Gregorian chant too. The practice of singing the liturgical hymns in eight modes became a common phenomenon in the sixth century A.D.”<sup>22</sup>. These eight modes of liturgical music are named ‘Quinto’ in Syriac. These are also called eight colours. It is being in dispute who systematised this system of eight ‘Quinto’ in the Syrian tradition. It is believed that Severios of Antioch was the pioneer in this work. Mar Severios of Antioch was very much influenced by Greek culture and he wrote the ‘Mavurbo’ مَورْبُو in Greek language. Later these were translated into Syriac. Asemani has reported that the systematisation of ekkara was done in the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The Syrian tradition and the Greek tradition are related to one another. Many Greek poems have been translated into Syriac and many writings of Mar Ephrem were adapted into the Greek liturgy. The eight ‘Qintho’ قِنْثُو come under different moods: joy, sorrow, devotion, penitence etc. In a ‘Qintho’ all hymns end in the same note and this nature of the musicality leads to an uninterrupted flow of music. These eight ‘Quinto’ are called eight colours too.

## The application of Ekkara

There is a general rule in using the seven colours. In the Syrian tradition two colours are used in a week. (In the Greek Liturgy only one colour is used in a week.) Each ‘Quinto’ (colour) begins with the evening prayer of Sunday. If the first colour is used in the evening, the same will be continued on the rest of the day. From Monday evening onwards the fifth colour is taken. On Tuesday it is again switched on to the first colour and so on. The next Sunday begins with the second colour. So it is continued as 1-5; 2-6; 3-7; 4-8; till to the forth Sunday and on the fifth Sunday onwards: 5-1; 6-2; 7-3; 8-4. With this a cycle is completed and again another cycle is

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<sup>22</sup> Fr. M. P. George, *Suriyani sangitam*; M.O.C Publications, Kottayam, Kerala.1993. P. 25



started. Because of the modal quality the first colour is related only to the fifth colour, the second to the sixth and so on.

The chart of the ekkara: [*obliged to: The Customs of the Order of the Imitation of Christ; Suriyani sangitham*]

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Sunday</b>	evening	<b>Colour.</b> <b>1</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Monday	<b>Colour.5</b>
„	Tuesday	„	„	„	Wednesday	„ „
„	Thursday	„	„	„	Friday	„ „
„	Saturday	„	„			
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Sunday</b>	„	<b>Colour.</b> <b>2</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Monday	<b>Colour.6</b>
„	Tuesday	„	„	„	Wednesday	„ „
„	Thursday	„	„	„	Friday	„ „
„	Saturday	„	„			

<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Sunday</b>	„	<b>Colour.</b> <b>3</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Colour.7</b>
„	Tuesday	„	„ „	„	Wednesday	„ „
„	Thursday	„	„ „	„	Friday	„ „
„	Saturday	„	„ „			
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sunday</b>	„	<b>Colour.</b> <b>4</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Colour.8</b>
„	Tuesday	„	„ „	„	Wednesday	„ „
„	Thursday	„	„ „	„	Friday	„ „
„	Saturday	„	„ „			
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sunday</b>	„	<b>Colour.</b> <b>5</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Colour.1</b>
„	Tuesday	„	„ „	„	Wednesday	„ „

„	Thursday	„	<b>Colour.</b> 5	„	Friday	<b>Colour.1</b>
„	Saturday	„	„ „			
6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	„	<b>Colour.</b> 6	6 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	<b>Colour.2</b>
„	Tuesday	„	„ „	„	Wednesday	„ „
„	Thursday	„	„ „	„	Friday	„ „
„	Saturday	„	„ „			
7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Sunday</b>	„	<b>Colour.</b> 7	7 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	<b>Colour.3</b>
„	Tuesday	„	„ „	„	Wednesday	„ „
„	Thursday	„	„ „	„	Friday	„ „
„	Saturday	„	„ „			



8 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday	„	Colour. 8	8 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	Colour.4
„	Tuesday	„	„ „	„	Wednesday	„ „
„	Thursday	„	„ „	„	Friday	„ „
„	Saturday	„	„ „			

The liturgical year begins with ‘kudos-idtho.’ The ‘Quinto’ also begins with ‘kudos-idtho’ Sunday. The colours are not used continuously but it is being repeated for four times in a liturgical year:

- The colours must be continued till the Sunday before ‘Denho’ دنس (baptism of Jesus).
- The Sunday after ‘Denho’ دنس begins with the first colour. If دنس is on Sunday the first colour is used and the cycle is to be continued up to the Sunday before Nineveh fasting.
- The Sunday before Nineveh fasting takes over the sixth colour. On the ‘kohno’ Sunday the seventh colour is used and for the ‘Anido’ انيدو Sunday the eight colour is fixed. The first colour is taken again for the ‘Kothino’ كوثينو Sunday (the first Sunday of the 50 days lent.)
- The Sunday after the Holy Cross Feast starts with the first ‘Quinto.’

## Specified colours for the feast days:

Kudos-idtho.	Sunday	1 <sup>st</sup>	colour.	Monday	5 <sup>th</sup>	colour.
Hudos-idtho.	..	2 <sup>nd</sup>	..	..	6 <sup>th</sup>	..
Annunciation to Zechariah.	..	3 <sup>rd</sup>	..	..	7 <sup>th</sup>	..
Suboro week.		4 <sup>th</sup>	..		8 <sup>th</sup>	..
Visitation to Elisabeth.		5 <sup>th</sup>	..		1 <sup>st</sup>	..
Birth of John the Baptist.		6 <sup>th</sup>	..		2 <sup>nd</sup>	..
Revelation to St. Joseph.		7 <sup>th</sup>	..		3 <sup>rd</sup>	..
The Sunday before Denho.	Sunday	8 <sup>th</sup>	..	Monday	4 <sup>th</sup>	..
Denho.		1 <sup>st</sup>	..			

**After Denho:** On the first Sunday and Monday colours 1 & 5 are taken respectively. Then it is to be followed as 2-6, 3-7, 4-8.

<b>The Sunday before Nineveh fasting</b> takes the 6 <sup>th</sup> colour and Monday, the 2 <sup>nd</sup> colour.
<b>Kohano Sunday</b> takes the 7 <sup>th</sup> colour and Monday the 3 <sup>rd</sup> colour.
<b>Anido Sunday</b> is determined by the 8 <sup>th</sup> colour and Monday the 4 <sup>th</sup> colour.
<b>Kothine</b> Sunday is reserved for the 1 <sup>st</sup> colour and Monday is reserved for the 5 <sup>th</sup> colour.
<b>Garbo</b> (Sunday of the healing of leper): colour 2 <sup>nd</sup> colour; Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> colour.
<b>Msaryo</b> (Sunday of the healing of paralysed): ..3 <sup>rd</sup> .. .. 7 <sup>th</sup> ..
<b>Healing of the Canaanite woman</b> , Sunday: .. 4 <sup>th</sup> .. .. 8 <sup>th</sup> ..
<b>Kpipto</b> (Healing of the crippled), Sunday .. 5 <sup>th</sup> .. .. 1 <sup>st</sup> ..
<b>Samiyo</b> (Healing of the blind), Sunday .. 6 <sup>th</sup> .. .. 2 <sup>nd</sup> ..
<b>Ushana</b> (Palm Sunday): 7 <sup>th</sup> colour.

**Hasha** ܠܘܨܝܘܬܐ (Holy week): In the holy week there are special colours. The eight colours are not used in the holy week.

It is to be noted that in the **Nineveh fasting** and the **50 days fasting** the eight colours are taken only for the night prayer (lilio).

**Qyomto** (Easter): from evening prayer till the first 'Kaumo' of the lilio (night prayer) 8<sup>th</sup> colour is taken and then it is being switched on to the 1<sup>st</sup> colour.

**Heworo week (Easter week):**

2<sup>nd</sup> colour Monday

3<sup>rd</sup> „ Tuesday

4<sup>th</sup> „ Wednesday

5<sup>th</sup> „ Thursday

6<sup>th</sup> „ Friday

7<sup>th</sup> „ Saturday

**The first Sunday after Easter.** From evening prayer till the first 'kaumo' of 'lilio' the 8<sup>th</sup> colour followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> colour are being used. The whole week is tuned up to 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

5<sup>th</sup> colour. **Ascension.**

7<sup>th</sup> „ **Pentecost.**



The following Sunday takes the 8<sup>th</sup> colour and it is to be continued regularly till the feast of the Holy Cross.

The first Sunday after the feast of Holy Cross begins with the 1<sup>st</sup> colour and the cycle is to be ended with 'Kudos-idtho.'

<b>Moronoyo (Obligatory feasts)</b>	
Yaldo (Christmas).	1 <sup>st</sup> colour
Denho (Epiphany).	2 <sup>nd</sup> colour
Mayaltho (entry in the temple).	3 <sup>rd</sup> colour
Suboro (Annunciation).	4 <sup>th</sup> colour
Sulokko ( <i>Assumption of Our Lady</i> ).	5 <sup>th</sup> colour
St. Peter & St. Paul.	5 <sup>th</sup> colour
Transfiguration.	6 <sup>th</sup> colour
Shunoyo (bringing in the temple).	7 <sup>th</sup> colour
Sleebo (Holy Cross).	8 <sup>th</sup> colour

Commemoration of Mary, Mother of God	1 <sup>st</sup> colour
„ Saints	8 <sup>th</sup> colour
„ Priests	7 <sup>th</sup> colour
„ Faithful	8 <sup>th</sup> colour

Colours used in sacraments:

**Baptism:** 2<sup>nd</sup> colour, but there are exceptions.

**Holy matrimony:** first service-3<sup>rd</sup> colour, second service-7<sup>th</sup> colour.

**Priestly ordination,** consecration of bishop and consecration of Holy Muron. There are no definite colour for consecration of church, consecration of bishop, Priestly ordination and the consecration of Holy Muron. However particular colours determine the 'Quqilion'

### **Anointment of the sick**

6<sup>th</sup> colour.

*Kanthila* (anointing of the sick priests): The word meaning is similar to 'candle'. It is a service with five candles or lamps and is usually meant for the anointment of the sick priests. There are five services and each service takes a colour respectively (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

### **Burial (men & women)**

First service	5 <sup>th</sup> colour
Second service	6 ,,
Third service	7 ,,
Fourth service	8 ,,

### **Burial (children)**

First service	1 <sup>st</sup> colour
Second service	2 <sup>nd</sup> ,,
Third service	3 <sup>rd</sup> ,,
Fourth service	8 <sup>th</sup> ,,

Kohonaito (burial of priests). (There are eight services in the rubrics of 'kohonito'. The introductory part and the conclusion are not bound by a particular colour but according to the tradition the first colour is used.)

First service	1 <sup>st</sup> colour
Second service	2 <sup>nd</sup> „
Third service	3 <sup>rd</sup> „
Fourth service	4 <sup>th</sup> „
Fifth service	5 <sup>th</sup> „
Sixth service	6 <sup>th</sup> „
Seventh service	7 <sup>th</sup> „
Eight service	8 <sup>th</sup> „

House blessing

1<sup>st</sup> colour (with exceptions)

Divine office: In divine office also the colours are used but it is not applicable for all. 'Lilio', ܠܠܝܘ the 6<sup>th</sup> hour –prayer and the 9th hour – prayers are sung in colours. On Sundays 'qyomto' ܩܝܘܡܬܘ is followed.

Divine Office on week days	Evening prayer Quqlion	Suthoro	Morning Prayer Quqlion
Monday	6 <sup>th</sup> colour	6 <sup>th</sup> colour	2 <sup>nd</sup> colour
Tuesday	6 <sup>th</sup> colour	6 <sup>th</sup> colour	8 <sup>th</sup> colour
Wednesday	7 <sup>th</sup> colour	7 <sup>th</sup> colour	7 <sup>th</sup> colour
Thursday	5 <sup>th</sup> colour	5 <sup>th</sup> colour	1 <sup>st</sup> colour
Friday	1 <sup>st</sup> colour	1 <sup>st</sup> colour	6 <sup>th</sup> colour
Saturday	1 <sup>st</sup> colour	1 <sup>st</sup> colour	8 <sup>th</sup> colour



### *Qintho* قِنْثَا in the west Syrian liturgy.

There are different schools that follow different traditions among which the Antiochian, Mosul and Turabdin are the prominent ones. In every tradition there are differences in the usage of *Rish Qolo* رِش قَوْلَا (melody type or *Muster*) and even in the pronunciation of Syriac language. A colour begins with *Quqilion* قُوْقِيلِيُون and is followed by *B'outho* ب'وُثَا, *Qaumo* قَاوْمَا and *Maz mooro* مَزْمُورَا. The *Qaumo* for morning is different from the evening. The following *Rish Qole* are used in the Mosul tradition. One can select another *Rish Qole* (even a popular secular melody), provided they must have the same tune of the *Quinto*.

#### *Quqilion* قُوْقِيلِيُون

1. *Moryo b' hayklo dh'qudseh halel ...*  
مُورْيَا ب' حَايْكَلَا د'قُوْدْسَه. هَالَلَا ..
2. *Moryo maanoo nemar b'masknok ..*  
مُورْيَا مَانُوو نِمَار ب'مَسْكَنُوك ..
3. *Anhar aaphaik al abdhok. halel ...*  
اَنْهَارَا اَافَايِك اَلْ اَبْدُحُوك. هَالَلَا ..
4. *àinao d'hmoryo al zadhike. halel ...*  
اَيْنَاوَا د'حْمُورْيَا اَلْ زَاذِيكَا. هَالَلَا ..
5. *Men kulhen sakelvos phason. halel ...*  
مِنْ كُولْهِن سَاكَلْوَس فَاَسُون. هَالَلَا ..
6. *Lok Aaloho e"salem nedhrai... halel ...*  
لُوك اَلُووَا اِيْسَالَم نِدْهْرَاي... هَالَلَا ..

7. *Aitho alaihoon mautho.. halel ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܕܠܝܚܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

8. *Lo thedh'hal mo dh othar gabro halel ...*

ܠܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

***B'outho dh'Mar Yakoob*      ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ**

1. *Qum yamliko w'ul lamdheentho ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ .....

2. *Thekre lok Mor al eedhotho w'al dhayroso ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

3. *Osleen dhore osen dhore o'sobo qayom ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

4. *Hazoor dhahabo dhahaseel vaqreem boomonootho ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

5. *N'phaq men ihudh b'nay isroyel dh'nisloon lamesren ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

6. *Hatphan ramso vabmatarteh dh'lilyo soman ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

7. *Ak dhamshabaheen eerai raumo b'qoodosaihoon ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..

8. *Hos lek eetho dhees bek zarvo men haw dhasdoom ...*

ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ ..







Arezzo (995-1050 A.D.)”<sup>23</sup> The *Vedic* hymns constitute the earliest hymnal music of humanity. It is the first country in the history of the world, to have an appreciation of the concept of absolute music. The Trinity of the Hindu pantheon being associated with musical instruments can be cited as a proof in this connection. God *Shiva* is portrayed with a *damaru* (percussion instrument) in his hand. God *Vishnu* has the conch, a wind instrument in his hand. God *Krishna* an incarnation of *Vishnu* is depicted with a flute in his hand and *Sarasvati*, the consort of *Brahma* has the *Vina* (stringed instrument) in her hand. Prof. Sambamurthy, the great musicologist of India in his research work found out that Indian music is the oldest system of music and that it has influenced the other systems of music:

Indian music has influenced foreign music from very early times. Strabo in book X / III says that the Greeks attributed to India nearly all their science of music. Alexander the Great, took with him to Greece a South Indian musician... Centuries before Guido d' Arezzo (10<sup>th</sup> century A. D.), India had developed an excellent solfa notation. The European tonic solfa notation owes its origin to the Indian system. The Indian solfa letters *sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni*, are seen in Kalidasa's (or Sankara's according to some scholars) *Syamala Navaratna malika strotram* and in the *Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad* (first upadesa)... The term *sa grama* gave rise to the word *gamut*. The term *grama* originally denoted a heptatonic scale. *Sa grama* and *Ma grama* were two heptatonic scales. As the art, being progressed, the musical potentialities of more notes in the octave were perceived and later on the term *grama* came to be used in an extended sense to denote a collective scale, including the *suddha svaras* and *vikrta svaras*. It is in this extended sense, that writers from the time of Matanga define this term. (The word *grama* gave birth to *gamma* (Greek) and *gamme* (French) and *gamut* (English). Thus in later times, the term *grama* came to mean the entire or whole musical scale,

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<sup>23</sup> Sambamurthy, *South Indian Music*, Bk. V; Indian Music Publishing House, 41, Bunder Street, Madras-600 001. P. 264 or Bk. VI, P. 34

comprising all the notes between the fundamental and the octave.)<sup>24</sup>

In the research work of Prof. Sambamurthy on the music systems of the world, what is worthwhile to be stated here is that the longest music composition in the world system of music is in South Indian Music:

The sixth symphony (Pastoral symphony) of Beethoven takes about 40 minutes to perform; the third symphony (Eroica symphony) takes about 52 minutes and the ninth symphony (the great Choral symphony) about an hour and twenty minutes to perform. But the 72 *Melaragamalika* of Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar and the 108 *Raga tala malika* of Ramaswamy Dikshitar take more than two hours to perform. Thus these compositions are longer than the longest symphony of Beethoven.<sup>25</sup>

When one compares Indian music with Malankara music one should analyse the basic nature of both the Indian music system and the Malankara musicality. The comparative study will be based on the concepts, namely, *Sruti/laya, raga, kalpita/manodharma sangita* and the oral tradition or the *Guru kula sambradaya* that is based on the Indian concept, God as *Nada Brahma*.

### 3.4.1 Comparison in the *sruti, laya* nature of Indian music

As it is already mentioned in the subtitle 3.1 the *Satvam* (identity/essence) of oriental music is rooted in the melody nature of the musicality and the melody exists in the basic principle of *sruti* and *laya*. “The ancient seers have communicated to mankind some of their sage advices through short and crisp statements. These

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Bk. IV, P. 268, 84, 85

<sup>25</sup> Sambamurthy, South Indian Music, Bk. V, Indian Music Publishing House, 41, Bunder Street, Madras-600 001. Book IV, P. 341.



statement contain within them concentrated wisdom. In the sphere of music we have such statements handed down. One of them is the well known aphorism: *srutir mata laya pita*, i.e. *sruti* is the mother and *laya* is the father.”<sup>26</sup> This fundamental principle of melody has given rise to *raga* with its use of *gamakas*, key phrases, delicate quartertones and one-third tones. The *sruti* in short is the *adhara shadja* (the basic Note ‘Sa’ of the *raga* in which a music piece is being composed). The identity of all other notes is depending upon the *adhara shadja*. That is why in a concert or in a *bhajan* service the *sruti* is being played on the tamburu or other drone instrument and the flow of the musicality is being kept intact.

Comparing this phenomenon with the Malankara musicality, one can find that the same principle is followed in the Malankara musicality. In the Divine Liturgy or in other liturgical services or para-liturgical services the same *sruti* is kept intact all through out the service. In western music there is no necessity for a drone, because in the course of a composition, there may be a change to parallel or related keys. This change is often notable in many of the pop music compositions in the west. It is very important to observe that the Divine Liturgy or other liturgical services of the Malankara Church, is to be taken as a ‘unit’. For example the musicality of the Divine Liturgy is taken as a whole unit and it can be compared to the *sruti* principle of an Indian classical concert. In the Indian classical concert, from beginning till end the same *sruti* is kept all through. So too in the divine liturgical service, the whole unit of the service is saturated in the same *sruti*. If the *sruti* is changed the *incessant flow of the musicality* becomes abrupt, causing damage to the mystical nature of the liturgical service. It is a very serious factor to be taken into consideration in the renewal or reformation of the Malankara liturgy. Giving a new tune (sometimes it may be very attractive or appealing in nature!) to an existing hymn without considering this factor can destroy the mystical nature of the whole

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. P. 269

liturgical service.<sup>27</sup> Selection of the *sruti* (pitch) in the Indian music is open to the free choice of the singer or singers. There is no fixed pitch in a composition so that a singer or singers can sing a composition in their own favourite *sruti*. This freedom of selecting the *sruti* is denied to the western musicians because the composer has already determined the ‘pitch’/*sruti* of the composition. It is taken for granted that, in Indian music, once the *sruti* is selected the selected *sruti* must be observed without any change till the end of the programme. This fundamental principle of Indian music is fully applied in the Malankara liturgical celebration. The prayers, the readings, hymns and even liturgical announcements are to be done in the same *sruti*. The Malankarites, very often unknowingly follow this fundamental principle of *sruti*. For instance many priests prefer the first hymn “In your light we see light” to be sung in the traditional tune before the public ceremony in the Holy Qurbano. All the following hymns and chanting will be on the same *sruti* of the above-mentioned hymn. This phenomenon brings out the unbroken stream of musicality in the liturgy. Here the very fundamental principle of Indian music is unknowingly followed. Another example of proof that can be given is that there is no so-called ‘silence’\* in the Holy Qurbano because such a ‘silence’ can break the flow of the musicality. This phenomenon in the whole unit of the liturgy holds on the participants in one accord all throughout the liturgical celebration and thus this unison in *sruti* creates a mystical atmosphere.

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<sup>27</sup> The musician Jerry Amaldev has given some new tunes to hymns that have been translated into Hindi. It is to be appreciated that the tunes are very attractive but unfortunately these tunes do not fit into the whole *sruti* set up of the Divine liturgy because the musician is ignorant in the proper nature of the musicality of the Malankara Liturgy, which is based on *sruti* principle that gives rise to mystical nature of the liturgy.

\* In many other liturgical rites there will be a one-minute silence after the reading or after the sermon. Even if it is the time of meditation on the readings or sermon, often this becomes a readymade routine.



*Laya* is compared to the father. It is logically mentioned after *sruti* because it is associated with compositions. *Laya* is the time measurement in a music composition. Generally it is named as *tala*. There is no child without a biological father and mother. So too there is no music without *laya* and *sruti*. In Indian music *laya* is a very important factor and it belongs also to the concept of Absolute music. No other music system has such a gamut of *laya* as in Indian music. Indian music employs the largest number of rhythms. There are the 35 *talas*, 175 *talas*, 108 *talas* and the four varieties of *chappu-tala* and some *Sankirna talas* or mixed time measures. The gamut of *talas* themselves makes another part of the system of Indian music. Every classical *tala* has a mystical nature. It is neither simply beating on the drum (as in some of the popular music concerts or tribal dance) nor the computerised programmes of an electronic rhythm-box. In Indian music *laya* is also the manifestation of the *Nada Brahma*, which flows from the inner soul of the musician. The *Tala Vidwan* (tala-master) plays according to the phrases and nuances of the vocal or instrumental recital. In Indian music there are maestros who can even produce musical notes on the percussion instruments. That is why *Laya* is also included in *manodharma sangita* and the player has the ample chance to expose himself/herself and his/her innermost mystic *bhava* (expression). Singing to correct *sruti* and *laya* gives an excellent training (discipline). It can harmonise the functioning of the body and mind (Ref.3.2.7).

All the Syrian hymns are composed in *tala*. The very fact that the Syrian hymns are written in various meters - tetra syllabic, penta syllabic, Septa syllabic, dodecca syllabic - indicates that all the hymns are being determined by *tala*. The *tala* fits into the meter of the poetry or one can say that *tala* is hidden in the metric structure of every poem. Unfortunately most of the translations (in *Malayalam*) of the Syrian hymns have no meter concept and naturally it is very difficult to bring them in *tala*. In the course of time, in the Malankara tradition the relevance of the *tala* is forgotten without knowing the fact that the *tala* also contributes its part to the mystical nature of the liturgy in its uninterrupted musicality and to the rhythm of human nature. It is very interesting to see that some



of the rhythms of the Syrian hymns were adopted from the movement of day-today-life: e.g. ‘*Qole*’ of Semaon Qooqoyo (Simon the potter). Semaon was a potter and the rhythmic movement of the potter’s wheel can be traced in the *tala* of his hymns that are generally known as ‘*Qooqoyo*’. (Some of the hymns in the Malankara liturgy have a rhythmic nature of ‘horse riding’ or ‘camel riding’.) In a music system there are slow-tempo singing and fast-tempo singing. The same composition can be sung in slow tempo or fast tempo, but the mood will be totally different. A *tala* unit (beat) that consists of two syllables, when reduced to one syllable can be called *chauka kala* (slow tempo). This fact is similar in Indian music and Syrian liturgical music. Example: the same tune is used for a hymn in the Easter (*Qyomto*)-morning and for a hymn in the burial service. The difference is that the tune, when it is used in the *Qyomto* (divine office) will be in fast-tempo and in the burial service it will be in slow-tempo.<sup>28</sup> Sometimes it appears to be awkward and pathetic that in some liturgical services no attention is given to the *laya* set up of the hymns. When the slow-tempo creates an atmosphere of sorrow, the fast-tempo creates an atmosphere of joy and cheerfulness. In the Malankara liturgical singing very often little attention is given to this principle. There are many incidents where a joyful situation and a sorrowful situation are confused together and due to this reason sometimes the real context of the liturgy is being totally changed. It is a wrong concept or mistaken mental frame work that many priests in the Malankara Church prolong the syllables and confuse the original tempo of hymns and chanting of prayers in order to make a liturgy solemn. Solemnity has nothing to do with the unnecessary prolonging or dragging of the tunes and syllables; on the other hand it consists of the proper application of the *laya* and *raga*.

It is all the more a scientifically proved fact that irregularity in singing can affect the harmonious functioning of the body and mind also. The human being is always related to the whole cosmos that exists in rhythmic harmony. The cosmos and nature have a rhythm.

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<sup>28</sup> Ref: Qumtho Morning : “*Nadha Nin Rajyathinmahimagamane*”; The burial service of Man/Woman: “*Nin Sarane mrtanam..*”

The countless stars and planets move rhythmically and uninterruptedly. The four seasons and rain, wind, thunder, lightning, etc. are very rhythmically arranged in nature. Every thing has its own time and space. Even if for a fragment of a second, when the rhythm and the continuity are lost, the consequence will be disastrous. The human body has also a rhythmic movement. It may be fatal when the rhythmic pulse of the heart is stopped for a few seconds. The breathing, the blood circulation, the impulse of the motor nerves- every thing has a fixed and uninterrupted 'melody' and 'rhythm'. The movement of nature influences the movement of the body. Considering these phenomena a little more philosophically and artistically one can say that the whole cosmos is mystic in nature. Every thing is fixed to an uninterrupted 'cosmic musicality.'

Every liturgical celebration has a cosmic manifestation. The Malankara liturgy in its structure, musicality and theology has a cosmic mystical nature. The music in the same *raga* from beginning till the end and the whole congregation facing to the Orient indicate to the rhythmic and uninterrupted flow of the soul into its Creator in the deep mystical sense. The meaning of the word mysticism is already stated as the *stopping of all the blabbing and entering into the mystery*. This is a *speechless speech*. The musicality of the Malankara Liturgy is the *speechless speech* that helps the worshipper to enter into mysticism.

In the second chapter it has already been dealt with that Christian mysticism is essentially liturgical. It is a congregational experience because in the community of the liturgical celebration the individuals are united with the Lord who is present in the worshipping community. Here one's relation with the community is very important. One is related to the community in praying, praising and singing with an undivided heart. As one observes in the first Christian community, they were of one heart and soul (reference: Acts 4, 32). One's relation with the other in the unity of heart and soul is also expressed in the congregational singing. Here everyone sings in the same *sruti* and *tala* without any interruption in its

‘flowing in’ and ‘flowing out’ of the musicality, which holds the worshipper on the focal point, the Risen Lord.

### 3.4.2 Comparison of *Raga* with Oktoechos

*Raga* is the soul of Indian music (for details. 3.2.3). The most evident factor which shows the relation between Indian music and Syrian liturgical music is the concept of *raga*. It is the melody nature that makes the Indian music/oriental music mystic. In a *raga* numerous music pieces can be composed. All the compositions in a *raga* have the same nature. Each *raga* has a particular mode and temperament. Even though they are not fundamentally scalar principles, the Oktoechos can be compared to *raga* in a sense that they are also creating passion or *rasa*. In the Indian music a hymn in a *raga* can be sung or played in another *raga*. The same principle is applied in the Oktoechos i.e. most of the liturgical hymns can be sung in all the eight tunes.

The music of all the Asian countries is essentially melodic in character and developed round a few scales. Prof. Sambamurthy in his research work found out:

It is only in India that the *raga* system has taken deep root and the possibilities for composing thousands of musical compositions in different *ragas* have been shown. The *ragas* stand as aesthetic statues, audible and recognisable by any trained ear. The Pythagorean scale with the frequencies

S	R	G	M	P	D	N
1	9/8	81/64	4/3	3/2	27/16	243/128

is actually the *Devagandhari raga* of South Indian Music...When Pythagoras travelled in India, he noted the



aesthetic beauty of this scale wherein the notes progressed by *chatusruti* intervals i.e. 9/8...<sup>29</sup>

The systematisation of *raga* came into its full growth in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Indian Music as the earliest and the only systematised and developed music system in the orient would have obviously influenced the other countries of the Orient. Prof. Sambamurthy has stated:

In the history of world music, the first country to have a fine grasp of the implications and possibilities of the process of modal shift of tones is India. The *chathurdasa murchanas* of ancient music adumbrated in Bharata's *Natya sastra* (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C) were derived by taking the several notes of the *Shadja grama* as the tonic note. This idea travelled to the west and many centuries later, we find the idea echoed in the Meia mode, Irak mode, Mezmoum mode, Edzeil mode, Djorka mode, L' Sain mode and Saika mode of Arabic music and Lydic, Phrygian, Doric, Hypo-lydic, Hypo-phrygian, Hypo-doric and Mixo-lydic modes of ancient Greece and Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixo-lydian, Aeolian and Locrian in the Ecclesiastical modes. Although mixed scales like the melodic minor scale of the west and *sankirna jatis* of Indian music were known many centuries ago, it is only in India that the process of modal tone shift was applied to these mixed *melas* and as a result the colossal number of 5184 *suddha-misra* (Pure *ragas*) *melas* have been worked out.<sup>30</sup>

The very important factor in the relationship of Indian music with Syrian/Malankara hymnal music is seen in the Oktoechos of Syrian music, which are called *Quinto* in Syriac. The major part of Syrian liturgical music is brought under the eight colours. These eight colours are based on different moods - festival atmosphere, sorrowful mood etc. (In determining a particular colour for a

<sup>29</sup> Sambamurthy, *South Indian Music*, Bk VI; The Indian Music Publishing House, 41 Bunder St; Madras-600001, 1982. P. 42, 43

<sup>30</sup> Ibid 44, 45

particular context, of course, sometimes, there are some sort of confusions and interpolations in the Syrian/Malankara hymnal music). Though there is similarity in colours of Syrian/Malankara hymnal music and *raga* in the Indian music, they cannot be taken in equal level because the *raga* classification of Indian music is incomparable in its scientific systematisation and the *ragas* determine the Indian music system. Innumerable hymns can be composed in a *raga*. However, the colours can be taken as *rish qole* (sample tunes). Another factor of similarity that can be observed is the *raga alapana* that comes under the *manodharma sangita*. That which is more or less equivalent to the *raga alapana* of the Indian music is the chanting of *Promion-sedro*, psalms and other narration of prayers in the Malankara liturgy. This can be called *alapana* or musical narration.

The *gamaka* factor in the *raga* system is another point for comparison. *Gamaka* is the collective term given to the various shakes, graces, ornaments and embellishments used in Indian music. It is totally different from the 'vibration' of western music. It is not a mere accidental ornament; rather it is an essential part of the melodic structure. All *svaras* except *Shadjam* and *Panchamam* are sung in *gamaka*. It is a determining factor in the *bhava* (expression) of a *raga*. In the western music system the notes being sung or played plain, are very important in its harmony nature. On the other hand *Gamaka* is the life-giving factor of *ragas* in Indian music. It is an integral part of the music and the note with its grace makes one utterance. *Gamaka* lends colour to Indian music in as much the same way as harmony to western music. Studying the hymns of Syrian/Malankara liturgy one can find that the singing of hymns is not based on harmony but on melody. The nature of the notes can be observed as *gamakas*. The *gamaka* nature is evident not only in singing the hymns but also in the recital of prayers and readings. An example of this *gamaka* nature can be shown in the singing of the *eqbo* of *S'himo*- Monday evening (divine office).



### 3.4.3 The Comparison in the realm of *Kalpita* and *Manodharma sangita*, God as *Nada Brahma*

The two channels of Indian music are *kalpita* and *manodharma sangita*. All the music compositions belong to the *kalpita sangita*, when they are already determined and fixed in their structure. On the other hand *manodharma sangita* is the music that is created spontaneously (For details please see 3.2.6). The task of the musician in *kalpita sangita* is to reproduce the music already composed. Here the spontaneity and the creativity of the musician are limited. In the *manodharma sangita* the musician exposes both his proficiency and the interior mystical experience. Because of this reason *manodharma sangita* demands austerity and dedication. Down through the centuries many musicians without any notation have exposed the same musical compositions. However, it is surprising to observe that all these compositions exist without losing their identity. In India music is being taught in the oral tradition, a tradition comes from the *gurukula sambradaya*. Guru is the manifestation of God as *Nada Brahma*. God as the embodiment of *nada* is a contribution of Indian Music System alone. The *Vedas*, the earliest hymnal music of humanity come under 'srutis', that means *that which is heard*, that which is heard by the sages through/in their *tapas* (deep meditation). These *srutis* are the manifestation of *Ishwar*, the Ultimate Reality. It was being 'heard'. Here lies the importance of 'Shabda'\*. The *shabda* is the external expression of that reality. *Ishwar* is the *Om*. It is a very meaningful and beautiful portrayal of the Ultimate reality. The sound 'oum' has no beginning and no end, that is the eternity. *Shabda* is the *shakti* (power/energy) that creates and dissolves. The *Vedas* have their origin from 1300 B.C\* and so the concept of 'logos' originated very early with the emergence of *Vedas* as 'Srutis'. That is why the chanting of *mantras* and the uttering of the words (*shabda*) became very important factors for the validity of a sacrifice. Music is the evolution from this *shabda* through *nada* and it is the manifestation of *Nada Brahma*. This aspect makes the

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\* sound, word etc.

\* <http://www.encarta.msn.com>



music mystical and the mystics use music as a medium in their mystical union with the Ultimate Being. In this respect every musician becomes the manifestation of this *Brahma*. All knowledge flows from this *Nada Brahma* through the *Gurus*. Here it is very important to note that in such a system the written notes have no importance at all. The student must learn from the mouth of the *Guru*. Naturally the more the student is attached to the *guru* the more he will learn from the *guru*. In Syrian Orthodox Churches there still exists the tradition of *malpan* (pundit/*guru*). In the olden time when there were no seminaries, the students for the priesthood lived together with the *malpan* and learned from him. It was a sort of *gurukula sambradaya*. The 'ekcara' tunes have been handed down to the younger generation through this *malpan* tradition.

There are *kalpita sangita* and *manodharma sangita* in the Malankara musicality. All the liturgical hymns can be included in the *kalpita sangita* because they are already composed and the tunes are fixed. The readings, *promion-sedro* and the reciting of prayers etc. are *manodharma sangita*. A *Malankarite* (faithful of the Malankara Church) does not 'read' the bible but 'recite' it. This recital has a *raga* nature (*raga bhava*), which is inherited from the ancestors. When two people recite a Bible passage in two different occasions, there will not be difference in the *raga bhava*, if at all any difference it will be only in the style of the recital. This is the fundamental principle of Indian music, which is inherited by the *Malankarite*. This recital is according to the *manodharma* of the reader, but not based on any written principle. The recital of *promion-sedro* can be remotely compared to the *raga alapana* or *svara sanchara alapana* (recital of *svaras*) in Indian music. The mystic nature of the one who recites is manifested in the recital. The spontaneity and the creativity of the performer are blended in the recital.

The beauty in diversity and the unity in diversity is a prominent character of the Orient. In the Malankara liturgy there is no written notation for any of the liturgical hymns and in the 'singing' of Holy Qurbono; yet there exists a notable similarity in the '*cholth*' (way of singing the H. Qurbono) of the whole

Malankara tradition. Even though there is a similarity in the '*cholth*' one has one's own style and contribution in the celebration of the Holy Qurbano and in other liturgical celebrations (in the realm of '*cholth*'). The spontaneity and creativity is very important in the liturgical celebration because it removes the boredom of the routine activity. For the mystics, the relation with the ultimate is very dynamic. So too in the liturgy, one's experience of the mystical union with God is dynamic and fresh. In such a relation there is no place for boredom and weariness. It is to be noted that the Malankara people are blessed with such spontaneity in the liturgy and para liturgical life that they can make spontaneous prayer (without the help of a written text). This spontaneity and creativity is found not only in praying and reading but also in the musicality. When one prays spontaneously, one's heart speaks. When one speaks of spontaneity and creativity, it does not mean that there is no need of uniformity and structure. Uniformity is required in community singing and other recitation. In the individual performance in a liturgical service one must be allowed to execute one's spontaneity and creativity without disturbing the liturgical context or setting.

#### **3.4.4 *Avartana* (repetition), in Indian music and Malankara musicality**

Repetition is certainly part of our life. To some, it is dull, non productive; to others, repetition connotes peace, a framework for the inner person to awaken and to think in depth. From childhood on we learn good and evil from repetition. Physical and intellectual fitness also require repetition.<sup>31</sup>

As Maureen Morgan has stated, in our daily life repetition plays a vital role. The experience of love is in the repetition and it shows a loving intimacy between the two people who love one another. That is why a love pair repeatedly says: "I love you

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<sup>31</sup> Maureen Morgan, *Music of the Eastern Greek Churches*, Pastoral Music; National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Feb- March, 1988. P. 18



darling.” A loving intimacy between Jesus and the Father is pictured in the verse, “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”<sup>32</sup> In the Old Testament and in the New Testament there are many examples for prayer of repetition. The psalms are a good example of prayer of repetition. In the tradition of early fathers, ‘Jesus- prayer’ is a noteworthy method of prayer. The repeating of the Holy name of Jesus could produce in us inner tranquillity and strength and it could make one to withstand all the evil desires.

Repetition of words or even stanzas is a special character of Indian Music. Chanting of *mantras*, *Nama japa* (repeating the name of God) etc. come under *avartana* that helps one to fix his/her mind on the focal point. In the Indian music system there are repetitive music forms. For example the *Niraval* singing or *Pallavi* singing are really repetition of words and stanzas, though they are sung in different tunes and in different *ragas*. The repetition in Indian Music is not simply uttering what has already been said, but the repetition gives rise to new interpretation of a piece. The *raga bhava* is fully expressed in repetition. When the musician repeats a line or a stanza, each time the expression and the ‘tune’ will be new. Therefore, *avartana* in Indian Music is not monotony, not at all dull and non-productive, but it is creative and refreshing.

Repetition is a notable character of the Malankara liturgy too. Many of the repetitions have their own hidden meaning also. An example is the salutation of the priest: “peace be with you all”. In the Holy Qurbano this is said repeatedly. The explanation is that after the resurrection whenever Jesus appeared to his disciples, he said, “peace be with you”. So too in the liturgy the peace of the Risen Lord is repeatedly proclaimed. When the priest repeats, “I, a weak and sinful servant....” he acknowledges his sinful nature and at the same time acknowledges that God is Holy. It is a two-dimensional aspect. Only brooding over one’s own sinful nature makes in him/her a negative impact. On the other hand acknowledging the holiness of God and at the same time trusting in his healing Love makes one strong. Many prayers of repetition are

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<sup>32</sup> John. 14:10; R. S.V.



prayed or sung three times because 'three' is the symbol of fullness. The singing of 'trisagion' (three times)- "*Holy are you O God; Holy are you the strong; Holy are you the deathless who is crucified for us, have mercy on us* "- is a very old tradition in the Oriental Churches especially in the Malankara Church. By singing the 'trisagion' one acknowledges the sanctity of God and at the same time expresses one's desire to become holy. When one repeats something it becomes familiar to him/her. So too the music in liturgy intensifies the repeated word whose meaning becomes alive and active in the worshipper.

### 3.5 Summary

In this 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter has been dealt with the important theme 'Indian music' and 'Malankara musicality'. Indian music system is said to be the oldest music system in the fact that the *Vedic* hymns constitute the earliest hymnal music of humanity. The other reason is that India is the first country in the world to evolve a system of solmisation -Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni. This is mentioned in such an early work as the *Narada parivrajaka Upanishad*, written more than three thousand years ago. The western system of solmisation dates only from the time of Guido d' Arezzo (995-1050 A.D.) It is the first country in the history of world music to have an appreciation of the concept of Absolute music. Since it is the ancient music system it had an influence on the music of other regions in the Orient. In Indian Music system the music comes under *Gandharva veda* (the science or knowledge of deities). It is one of the four *Upa Vedas* (secondary *Vedas*). The main contribution of Indian music system is the notion of God as *Nada Brahma*-embodiment of sound (music). The term 'music' is named '*Sangita*' in India. The study of music or musicology is called *Gandharva tatva*. It is very important to note that according to the Indian spirituality, one can attain celestial bliss through *Nadopasana* (musical meditation). India's peculiar genius is reflected in her music and it has been developed with a strong spiritual background. Music and dance (classical dance) are considered spiritual arts that lead one to mysticism. Many great musicians in India were great mystics too. The basic principles of *sruti-laya*, which is built on the

‘melody’ character, distinguish Indian music from western music whose identity exists in ‘harmony.’ The *raga* system is the soul of Indian music, which makes Indian music mystical. The *laya* system goes parallel with the *raga* system and it is also taken in the sphere of transcendental music that leads one ultimately to the *Anahata nada*. The divinity of the Indian music is seen in the concept of God as *Nada Brahma*, which is revealed through *gurus*, handed over to the students in the oral tradition known as *guru kula sambradaya*.

In the analysis of the nature of Indian music and when it is compared with the nature of Malankara musicality one can come to the conclusion that they are similar in their basic principles i.e. *sruti-laya, raga*, etc. Even though the Malankara musicality cannot be taken as a systematised musicality it has inherited the traits of oriental music that is fully revealed in Indian music. This is very evident in the ‘Oktoechos’ or *Quinto* in the Malankara liturgy. Malankara liturgy has been evolved in India and by the very reason it has a ‘blood-relation’ with Indian culture and music. The development and growth of the Malankara liturgical musicality will depend on the acknowledgement of this blood relation and exploring into the unlimited horizon of Indian music. This acknowledgement and exploration paves a path of inter-religious dialogue that is the ‘interpretation of the signs of the times.’ The liturgical hymns are really the ‘interpretation of the signs of the times’. Naturally this awareness demands a formation of the Malankara musicality according to the culture of India and in the context of an ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, which will be dealt with in 4<sup>th</sup> chapter.



## CHAPTER 4

# THE EVOLUTION OF SYRIAN HYMNS, THEIR THEOLOGICAL AND MYSTICAL MOTIVES, THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HYMNS IN THE CONTEXT OF ECUMENICAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*“You know how to interpret the sky but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.”*<sup>1</sup>

Studying the Antiochian liturgy one can observe that the evolution and formation of the Syrian hymns was really an *interpretation of the signs of the time*. Most of the liturgical hymns originated in a polemic and apologetic context. Since liturgy is the centre of Christian life it was the best teacher of faith. That is why it is said that the theology of the east is in the liturgy. All the liturgical hymns in the Syrian liturgy are highly theological. This theology was not a speculative theology but a practical theology. Propagation of the Teaching of the Church and defending the faith were the real need of the time or in other words the Fathers of the Church and composers had ‘interpreted the signs of their time’. To them the liturgy was not only the worship of God but also a solemn celebration of the faith. They had celebrated the theology. In this celebration the faith of the Church was written deep down in their hearts. Therefore the themes of the liturgical hymns were very much influenced by the then situation. The main thrust of the following subchapters is a study into the evolution of Syrian hymnology,

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<sup>1</sup> Mt. 16:3b, Revised Standard Version.



which will be necessary for the interpretation and re-formation of the Malankara liturgy.

#### **4.1 Evolution of Syrian hymnology in the context of polemics, apologetics and in the mystical experience of the composers.**

In the beginning of Christianity there seemed to be some sort of reluctance in the use of music in worship because music was taken as pagan. For example in the Alexandrian monasticism there arose an inimical attitude towards any artistic singing.<sup>2</sup> On the other side the Gnostics and heretics used music and poetry to propagate their teachings because they were convinced of the influence of music on the folk. Later on, being influenced by their non-Christian contemporaries the fathers of the Church also began to use music and poetry to fight against the heretical teachings. However many of them were against instrumental music.<sup>3</sup> Clement of Alexandria (c.150), Tertullian (c.155-222), Origen (c.185-c.254), Eusebius (c.260-c.340), St. Athanasius (c.298-373), St. Basil (c.330-79) and St. John Chrysostom (345- 407) promoted singing in worship. “The singing of the psalms was perfectly suited to bring about sentiments like these, as the fathers of the Church frequently remarked. Basil,

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<sup>2</sup> Reference: Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*; National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Washington, 1983. P. 94

<sup>3</sup> Reese Gustav, *Music in the Middle Ages*, W.W. Norton & company, INC, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NY, (1940). P. 61

“Clement of Alexandria (c.150, at Athens-c.220) was, as his works show, a cultivated man, interested in music and poetry, and unlikely to have been prejudiced against instruments merely on principle. Yet, while he tolerated the lyre and kithara because King David had allegedly used them, he disapproved of most other instruments, doubtless fearing that they might carry to the ears of Christian listeners echoes of pagan festivities and of the, obscene stage...”

for example, notes that the psalms could draw tears even from a person with a heart of stone.”<sup>4</sup>

Gustave Reese writes: “The history of primitive Christian Chant has been divided into three periods. The earliest, roughly speaking, embraced the first two centuries...”<sup>5</sup> Syria was a part of Roman Empire and it was a centre of Christianity. Many Christian chants were composed in Syria and the years from 3<sup>rd</sup> century till 7<sup>th</sup> century was the flourishing period of Syrian poetry. The early melodies and chants in the Syrian tradition have been orally transmitted. As already mentioned, the oral tradition is a unique nature of the orient. Even after the invasion of Arabs, the ancient Syrian chants survived. “Dom Jeannin, the main authority on Syrian Chant states that the Syrians would hardly have adopted a new system, dissimilar to the Arabian, after the invasion, and that the present system must therefore survive from before it.”<sup>6</sup> Even though the Syrians have adapted to the civilization of Arabs, the Syrian musicality kept its identity. The Syrian chants have influenced not only the Byzantine and Armenian chants but also had an influence on the bodies of chant in Italy and France. The composition of the liturgical hymns was a need of the time, especially in 4<sup>th</sup> century when the Arian heresy was in the air. In order to make the liturgical celebration more attractive, the ascetics Flavian and Diodoros had introduced the choral singing of psalms in two groups i.e. men in one group, women and children in the other group. The antiphonal singing was a contribution of the Syrian tradition to the west.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*; National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Washington, 1983. P. 95

<sup>5</sup> Reese Gustav, *Music in the Middle Ages*, W.W. Norton & company, INC, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NY, (1940). P. 60

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. P. 67

<sup>7</sup> Reference: Reese Gustave, *Music in the Middle Ages*, W.W. Norton & company, INC, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NY, 1940. P. 68

The Antiochian liturgy from which the Malankara liturgy has originated has a monastic nature. Some of the liturgical hymns and prayers used in certain divine office directly pertained to the monastic ascetical life.<sup>8</sup> The hymns and tunes are the external manifestation of the mystical experience and ascetical lives of saints such as Mar Ephrem, Mar Balai and Mar Jacob. The real mysticism is not closing one's eye against the reality but exposing oneself to the reality in a deeper sense. That is the reason why these saints, though they spent their ascetic lives in loneliness, were open to the external world. The then existing problems, schisms, persecutions, crisis in the Church, anxiety, longing for God, the popular melodies etc. are clearly seen in the liturgical hymns. Some of these hymns are catechetic and others are exhortations or apologetics. The evolution of the Syrian hymns was obviously influenced by the '*sitz im Leben*' of the composers. Therefore as one goes into the details of the theological motive and structure of the Syrian hymns it would be necessary to look into a short history of the main composers and the polemic and apologetic themes in their compositions. This will help to a contextual interpretation of the Malankara liturgy and its musicality.

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“The intercalating of passages of song between psalm-verses became, in the course of time, an organised practice and was destined to be imitated with telling effect in the West. Among the Syrians, the interpolation was called an enyana.”

<sup>8</sup> Reference: Michael Breydy, *Kult, Dichtung und Musik*, Band II, Kobayath-Libanon, 1971. P.III

„Es ist übrigens allgemein anerkannt, dass die Lelyo, d.h. die Nachtgebete (=4 Stationen oder Nokturnen) sowie die dublierende Tageshören(=Terz, Sext, Non) mehr zur Asketik der Mönche gehören als zum kirchlichen Gebrauch.“



## 1. Mar Ephrem (306-373)

Among the Fathers of the Church Mar Ephrem is the most important one in the Oriental Churches. He is called 'the harp of the Holy Spirit.' In 306 A.D he was born in Nisibis, one of the territories of the Roman Empire. He accompanied Mar Jacob, the bishop of Nisibis to the Synod of Nicea in 325 A.D. He was the chief hymn-writer of Syria. According to the Greek historian Sozomenos (5<sup>th</sup> century AD.) Mar Ephrem was a deacon. Many of his hymns used in the Syrian/Malankara liturgy were to defend the teachings of the Holy Church. He fought against many heresies prevailing at that time. His writings are very theological and mystical. Arius, Bardaisan, Harmonius etc. tried to propagate their teachings through poems. Mar Ephrem also accepted the same method to defend the teachings of the Church against Arianism and Manicheism. In many of the hymns his defence of the faith and teachings of the Church is easily observed. The argument of Arias namely, the substantial subordination of the Son to the Father is being attacked in the *B'outho* of the *Yaldo* (Christmas) second vigil:

Lord have mercy and grant us your grace

Since the saviour is born, we are saved.

In His mercy, *He came down* (self humiliated)

and dwelt in the womb of the Virgin

*In His gesture quakes the earth, tremble the mountains.*

At *His command*, the fragile woman carried Him

How can the manger hold the *Creator*?

It is really a wonder.

How could the manger withstand the strength of the *Lion-cub*?

How could the virgin carry the *Almighty*?

Lord have mercy and grant us your grace  
 Since the saviour is born, we are saved.<sup>9</sup>

In this hymn Mar Ephrem portrays very clearly that Jesus the Son of God is not subordinate to the Father. The poem and its melody are so simple that the theme goes deep into the heart of the people. In the following hymn one may notice that the false teaching of Markion in his dialectic difference between God of the Old Testament and God of the New Testament is being refuted.<sup>10</sup>

*The providence of God and his mercy is revealed in all the creation  
 You have provided medicine for each illness.  
 To overcome the starvation of Egypt You appointed Joseph  
 And in the days of Ahab, Elijah  
 And to the city of Nineveh, Jonah the prophet as preacher.  
 When the world sinned and the people turned away from repentance  
 You sent Your only Son to save the world through His cross.<sup>11</sup>*

In this above-mentioned hymn Mar Ephrem states that there is only one God who is good. The God of the Old Testament and the

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<sup>9</sup> *The Feast Days of the Malankara Church*, Printed at San Jose Process, Thiruvananthapuram-695014, P. 52. (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text)

<sup>10</sup> Reference: *Lexikon für theologie und Kirche*, siebter band, Verlag Herder Freiburg, 1962, P. 92

*Der Gott des AT ist „bekannt“, ist Demiurg der Materie, der Geister und des Bösen. Der Gott des NT ist der „fremde“, der nur gütige Gott der Liebe, der in Jesus offenkundig wird und in ihm Erlösung gibt..*

<sup>11</sup> *S'himo (men'olam)*, The Divine office of the Malankara Catholic Church, St. Joseph's printing house, Tiruvalla, 1996. P.106. [Personal translation from the Malayalam Text]

New Testament is the same because God the Father has sent his messengers to Egypt and Israel and the same God has sent his only Son who is equal to the Father to save the world. The theme of this hymn is also a refutation of Manicheism.<sup>12</sup> The world and the human beings are not something evil but they are the creation of God who is good. The teachings of Gnostics<sup>13</sup> are also used in his hymns where it is implicitly said that Jesus is the Light. One who acknowledges and accepts this 'Light' will be saved. This theme repeatedly comes in the *B'outho* und *Sugito* of Holy Week. An example is in the *B'outho* of the first *Kaumo* (night vigil) of Passover feast:

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<sup>12</sup> Reference: Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, sechster band, Verlag Herder Freiburg, 1961 P.1352

*Manichäismus. \*216 nC. Mani beanspruchte Offenbarung hat die Form eines Dogmas Mythos, der dem Menschen das wissen um sich selbst und die Welt vermitteln und ihn dadurch retten will. Sie beruht auf einem radikalen Dualismus: Welt und Mensch sind schlecht, da sie eine anomale Vermischung zweier entgegengesetzter Prinzipien darstellen: Geist (d.h. Gott) und Materie, Gut und Böse, Licht und Finsternis; das Heil kann nur von einer absoluten Scheidung beider „Naturen“ kommen. Unter diesem dualistischen Aspekt entwickelt der Mythos das vorweltliche Geschehen, die Entstehung v. Welt und Menschen und deren Geschichte bis zum Eschaton.*

<sup>13</sup> Reference: *Lexikon religiöser Grundbegriffe*, Verlag Styria Graz, Wien, Köln, Printed in Austria, 1987. P. 393.

*Mit der Erkenntnis erlangt der Gnostiker seine Erlösung aus dem fremden, feindlichen Kosmos und das Einswerden seines Wahren Selbst mit der jenseitigen, göttlichen Lichtwelt, der eigentlichen Heimat. Die irdische Welt ist als Werk eines von der guten Gottheit unterschiedenen Demiurgen (oder mehrerer Geister) unvollkommen und von bösen Mächten beherrscht.*



The disciple who betrayed Jesus, received the price of blood  
 The *sons of the darkness* came to capture the *Light*...  
 The *evil ones* spat on the face of the *gleaming Sun*...<sup>14</sup>

The Gnostics used the words, sons of darkness for evil. On the other hand they made use of the words, ‘Sun’ and ‘Light’ to explain the good.

The style of his compositions, both in the poetry and music is very simple and even a child can learn it by heart and sing. Most of his poems are septa syllabic which has seven syllables in a line. For the melody and the rhythm of his hymns most probably he depended on the existing ones. Gustave Reese in his book *Music in the Middle Ages* states:

Certainly early accounts state that the aim of St. Ephrem was to substitute orthodox words for those contained in the popular and liturgical songs of the heretics, while preserving melodies already in existence – that is, while using them as *rish-qole*. Evidently St. Ephrem was less concerned about the power of music as contaminator (cf. attitude of Clement of Alexandria etc.) than about its value as an aid in proselytising: familiar airs might attract converts and become the carriers of sacred truths (cf. the attitude of St. Basil). The originators of the melodies he borrowed, therefore, were probably the Gnostics.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Hasha Ganangal* (Hymns for the Holy Week), Printed at St. Josephs Printing House, Tiruvalla. P. 19. [personal translation from the Malayalam Text]

<sup>15</sup> Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*, W. W. Norton and Company, INC, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NY, 1940. P.69

## 2. Mar Balai

Mar Balai was the disciple of Mar Ephrem. The exact date of his birth and death is unknown. Though his poems are written in three forms, namely, tetra syllabic, penta syllabic and Octa syllabic, the penta syllabic hymns are very familiar. Among his writings the *Bo áwotho* are very popular. The *Bo áwotho* حُفْمَا of Mar Balai are very familiar to the Malankarites. The common *Bo áwotho* used in the Malankara liturgy are intercessory prayers and praises. The following *Bo áwotho* is an example:

By the prayer of the Mother and the saints  
 Have mercy on us and on our dead.  
 Let the remembrance of Mary be a blessing  
 Let her prayer be a stronghold for the souls.  
 Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs  
 Request to grant us grace.  
 Shower on our brothers, sisters and fathers  
 The dew of your bliss.  
 Praise to the One who exalts the remembrance of the Mother,  
 the Holy ones  
 And who blesses the dead.<sup>16</sup>

What is very peculiar in his *Bo áwotho* is the simplicity in the structure of the poetry. The nature of the melody seems to be a popular melody which existed in that time. If it is evaluated in its musical structure it can be noticed that there are very few musical notes in a line. When there are fewer notes in a music composition, normally this composition will be simple and popular. Most of the

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<sup>16</sup> Reference: *Shimo*, The Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church, St. Joseph's printing house, Tiruvalla. 1996. P. 51.

folk songs are composed with a few notes. Therefore one can assume that Mar Balai was also influenced by the popular melody.

### 3. Mar Jacob of Serugh (451 - 521)

In A.D. 451 he was born at Kurtan, in Serugh, the delta of Euphrates. He became the bishop of Serugh and he spent most of his time in writing poems. His poems are in Dodecca syllabic form. He has written 760 homilies in poetic form. His contemporaries called him “the harp of the believing Church.” He is a very important composer of the Malankara Church. Almost in every liturgical service there are *Bo áwotho* of Mar Jacob. Even when there is no particular mention of Mar Jacob of Serugh, from the style and the themes of the hymns one can come to the conclusion that they were composed by Mar Jacob of Serugh. His poetic homilies on the motherhood of Mary are a rich contribution to Mariology. He was so much concerned with the polemic situation of his time that he avoided disputable terminologies in his writings. James Puthuparampil in his dissertation on *The Mariological Thoughts of Mar Jacob of Serugh* states:

The use of the title ‘Mother of God’ dates back to the Council of Ephesus. Mar Jacob of Serugh, who lived in the second half of the fifth century, did not often use the expression ‘Mother of God’ (*yoldath aloho* ܡܘܬܪ ܕܥܘܠܐ), without specification. This might have been because he took care, to avoid an expression, which was polemical to his fellow Christians, who had not accepted this title. But such expressions as the ‘Virgin Mother’, ‘the ‘Mother of the Son of God’, the ‘Mother of Jesus Christ, Son of



God', etc., point to Mar Jacob's conviction of the divine maternity of Mary.<sup>17</sup>

An example to be shown is the *Bo áwotho* in the evening prayer of Christmas Eve:

Behold, the one who sits in the chariots of heaven  
The *Virgin* carries Him in her beautiful hands.<sup>18</sup>

At times he uses Gnostic terminology to depict God as the source of light, the source of life. This is very notable in the *Bo áwotho* of Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> hour:

The *day* is gone and the *shadows of death* is surrounding me  
Lord, be a *Sun* to me so that I may see your Grace.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> James Puthuparampil. O.I.C, *The Mariological Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh*, Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum Facultas Scientiarum Ecclesiarum Orientalium, Rome, 2002. P. 14:

“Although from the early centuries of Christianity most Christians called Mary ‘Mother of God’, the origin of this title is obscure. The first use of this comes from Alexander; Bishop of Alexandria, the predecessor of Athanasius. In the context of the Arian heresy he referred to Mary as ‘Theothokos’ in his letter around the year 319. Cf. Alexander of Constantinople 12 (PG 18:568)...” (Footnote 2).

<sup>18</sup> *The Feast Days of the Malankara Catholic Church*, Printed at San Jose Process, Thiruvananthapuram-695014, P. 22. (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text)

<sup>19</sup> *Shimo (mena olam)*, The Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church, St. Joseph's printing house, Tiruvalla. 1996. P. 184. [personal translation from the Malayalam text]

Studying his hymns one can deduce that Mar Jacob of Serugh was a prudent theologian who did not want others to drag him into controversies or disputable statements. Rather he wanted to teach others the mystery of God's love. He can be called an ecumenical theologian.

#### 4. Mar Severios of Antioch (465-538 A.D.)

Mar Severios was a hermit and became the bishop of Pamphylia. In 512 A.D he was extolled Patriarch of Antioch. He has composed *Manitho* ܡܢܝܬܘܟܘܢܐ , *Takshphto* ܬܟܫܦܬܘܟܘܢܐ, *Qolo* ܩܘܠܐ and *Madrosho* ܡܕܪܘܫܘܟܘܢܐ and he was the one who introduced and systematised the eight colours in the Syrian liturgical hymns.

#### 5. Simeon of Gesir /Semaoon Quqoyo ܣܝܡܝܘܢ ܩܘܩܘܝܘܟܘܢܐ (1<sup>st</sup> half, 6<sup>th</sup> century)

He was a cotemporary of Mar Jacob of Serugh. His poems have the rhythm of 'potter's wheel' because he was a potter. In 508 Mar Jacob of Serugh commended his writings and encouraged him to write more. There are many hymns in the Malankara liturgy, which are written in the tune of 'Quqoyo' ܩܘܩܘܝܘܟܘܢܐ. Some of them are attributed to him. Anyway the hymns in the 'Quqoyo' tune are very popular among the faithful of the Malankara Church. Normally the life of a potter is very simple. So too his hymns are very simple. The rhythm of the hymns is in a crisp style. It is interesting to note that in whatever tune one may sing the hymns, the rhythm remains the same, i.e. the rhythm of the potter's wheel. The reference of bible passages are lavishly utilised in his hymns. The *Quqoyo* tune can be sung in eight tunes. Some of the tunes are crisp and others are very poetical and mystical. The following example is a mystical tune that is taken from the *qolo* ܩܘܠܐ of the *Qyomto* ܩܝܘܡܬܘܟܘܢܐ, Sunday evening:

The fragrance of *Muron* مُرُونُ comes out of your wounds, O Lord.  
 Your lips are like the purple line  
*As I came to see you, the soldiers surrounded me*  
 But I left them behind and ran to *Golgotha*  
 There I saw blood oozing out of your breast (heart)  
 Praise and sing halleluiah to Him who saves your servants.

In this poem the poet describes himself as one who is in search of his 'Beloved'. Even if the beloved is wounded and weak the poet saw only the beauty of his 'Beloved'. The tune of this hymn can attract one to the mystical thirst of the poet (this theme will be dealt with further in the subtitle 4.3).

The hymns of Simeon have such an attractive nature that they can touch the heart of the hearers (faithful). This experience is nothing else but the manifestation of the simple faith of the potter. It is important to note that this simple faith of the potter was accepted and promoted by the then 'ecclesiastical structure'. Bishop Jacob of Serugh encouraged him to write more and thus the potter's writings became a treasure of the liturgical tradition.

## 6. Mar Jacob of Edessa. (≈7<sup>th</sup> Cent. A.D)

He lived in the golden age of Syriac literature (7<sup>th</sup> century A.D). Firstly he studied in his native place En-Deba in Antioch and then in Alexandria where Aristotlism was in its flourishing stage. He was well versed in the Greek language and had reasonable knowledge of Greek philosophy. The *Huthommo* ܗܘܬܘܡܡܘ (the concluding hymns in the Malankara liturgical services) are believed to be written by Mar Jacob.<sup>20</sup> The *Huthommo* used in the Holy

<sup>20</sup> Reference: Fr. M.P. George, Suriyani Sangitam, M. O. C. Publications, Kottayam. 1993. P. 21



Qurbano **قربوننا** of Malankara Catholic Church are titled by the style and tune of Mar Ephrem and Mar Jacob. He has written *Madrosho* **مَدْرُوشَا** for each feast. His writings were both mystical and Scholarly.

As a summary of this subchapter one can say that the evolution of Syrian hymns was in a polemic context. Mar Ephrem used his poetic talent and his knowledge of the Scriptures and his own spirituality to defend the faith of the Church. He was not simply defending the faith but really living it out. All the hymns of Mar Ephrem were the manifestation of his spiritual life. In Mar Balai's *Bo áwotho*, the theological problems are not directly dealt with. However they were also the revelation of his mystical experience. Mar Jacob of Serugh was a good ecumenist. He did not want to use disputable theological terms, but at the same time he was very firm in his faith. The faith and spirituality of simple and ordinary people are very important in the worshipping community i.e. the Church. Semaon Quqoyo is an example for this. All his hymns reveal his deep spirituality that was most probably influenced by the meditative reading of the Bible. All these composers were open to the outside realities of their time. Therefore their writings were really an interpretation of the need of their time. This fact is very important in the growth of a liturgy.

#### **4.1.1 Forms of Syrian/Malankara Liturgical hymns.**

The Syriac language in which the liturgical hymns have been composed belongs to a group of languages named by philologists as Semitic. Hebrew, Aramaic, Mandaitic, Phoenician, Moabite and Samaritan come under North Semitic. Syriac is more closely related to Aramaic than to any of the others of this group. The most

important member of the South Semitic group is Arabic.<sup>21</sup> In the course of time the Arabic language somehow dominated the Syriac (7<sup>th</sup> century). Thus the Syriac language became a liturgical language because it is believed that Jesus spoke this language. Syriac is a musical language. There are two kinds of Syriac: eastern Syriac or Chaldean Syriac and western Syriac or *Maranaya* مَرَانَا. A collection of poetic works that have been discovered in 1908 is believed to be the first poetical work in Syriac. As already mentioned in the above subtitle, Mar Ephrem wrote many poems and his writings were considered an impending force for the growth of Syriac. Syrian sacred poetry and music flourished especially from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. This period is called the golden age of Syriac. A variety of poetical forms were composed in this period. All the poems were written in meter, based on the syllabic construction of the poetry. There are four types of poetic works that are based on this principle. They are the followings:

1. Tetra Syllabic: These works have four syllables in a line. Harmonius is the one who is believed to be the pioneer of the tetra syllabic structure in poems/hymns.

2. Penta Syllabic: Poems that have five syllables in a line is named penta syllabic. The poems and hymns of Mar Balai are composed in this style.

3. Septa Syllabic: These are seven syllabic compositions that have seven syllables in a line. Most of the works of Mar Ephrem are in septa syllabic form.

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<sup>21</sup> Reference: *Paradigms and Exercises in Syriac Grammar*, printed in England at the Oxford University Press.

4. Dodecca Syllabic: These are the poems that have twelve syllables in a line. Mar Jacob and Mar Ephrem have written many poems in this meter.

### The poetic forms of Syrian hymns.<sup>22</sup>

1. *Bo áwotho* ܒܘܐܘܘܬܘܐ. They are mainly petitions. The *Bo áwotho* of Mar Ephrem are very popular among the Malankara Christians. An example for this is the hymn that is sung during the *fraction* in the Holy Qurbono ܩܘܪܒܘܢܘܐ.

2. *Eqbo* ܐܩܒܘܐ. These are equivalent to stanzas. It comes before the *qolo* as a herald of the theme portrayed in the *qolo*. *Eqbo* is followed by *promion-sedro*.

3. *Ényono* ܐܢܝܘܢܘܐ. This is a responsorial style. Some of them are petitions and others are psalms. The canon in the Byzantine liturgy is similar to *enyono*.

4. *Qonuyo Yaunoyo* ܩܘܢܘܝܘܐ ܝܘܢܘܝܘܐ. This is also a free style poetry and similar to the *canon* of the Greek liturgy. Each line is different from the other. Examples can be seen in the divine office of Palm Sunday, *Denho* ܕܢܗܘܐ (Baptism of Jesus), and Pentecost. These have been sung in simple tunes.

5. *Quqlion* ܩܘܩܠܝܘܢ. These are intercessory hymns that are very familiar to the faithful in the Malankara Church. These are dedicated to Mary Mother of God, saints and the dead. *Quqlion* has

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<sup>22</sup> For the Structure of the Syrian hymns, it is obliged to Michael Breydy, *Kult, Dichtung und Musik*, Band II, III & Rev. Fr. M.P. George, *Suriyanisangitham*, printed at Catholicate Press, Kottayam-38. P. 13-17



its own structure. A *Quqlion* consists of *petgomo* **فَهْرَمَا** (verse), *éqbo*, *qolo* and *Bo áwotho*. The *petgomo* is normally a verse from an appropriate psalm. When it is dedicated to Mary, the psalm 45 (v.10 ff.) is used. If it is a *Quqlion* of the saints, the psalms 92 verses 13, 14, 15 are sung. The *petgomo* of the *Quqlion* dedicated to the priests who are dead, is taken from the psalm 132 verses 9, 10, 11, 12 and for all the dead the psalm 103 verses 13, 14, 15 are sung. The psalms are the basis of *petgomo*. *Eqbo* can be taken as stanza (Ref. 2. *Eqbo*). There was a tradition of reading the *promion-sedro* (prayer of absolution and penitence) after the *eqbo*. *Quqlion* is sung at the end of every divine office. There is also a *Quqlion* in honour of *Sleebo* **سَلْحَا** (Holy Cross). The construction is the same but the *petgomo* is taken from the psalm 44 verses 5, 6, 7.

6. *Madrosho* **مَدْرُوشَا**. The etymological meaning of *Madrosho* is not only 'dispute' or 'argument' but also 'simplifying of a teaching' or making it graspable.<sup>23</sup> They are long exhortations composed in such a style that the monks could sing them and meditate on the theme of the poems. The main proponent of this form of hymns is St. Ephrem. The tunes are very attractive and meditative. "It is believed that the *Madroso* is the model of 'kontakion' that is used in the Greek liturgy."<sup>24</sup> Normally the *Madroso* hymns are long and are intended to be sung for a long time.

7. *Ma'nitho* **مَنْثَا**. Normally it is not composed in meter; rather it is free style poetry and is similar to the antiphon of the Greek liturgy.

<sup>23</sup> Reference: Michael Breydy, *Kult, Dichtung und Musik*, Band II, Kobayath-Libanon, 1971. P. XV

<sup>24</sup> Reference: Dom Auslem Hughes, *New Oxford History of Music*, Volume.II, P. 9

8. *Maurbo* مَعْرُوبَا. This is known as Magnificat or praises. *Maurbo* are the commemoration of Mary, Mother of God, all the saints and the dead. It is believed that Severios of Antioch is the composer of *Maurbo*.

9. *Memro* مَمْرُو. These are generally homilies and discourses that are very deep in theology. This is both poem and prose.

10. *Qolo* قَوْلَا. This is the form used in the liturgy very frequently. The word meaning of *Qolo* is voice, tone or sound. This can be taken as stanzas too. All the stanzas have the same tune. There is a similar style in the Greek liturgy, which is called *Troparia*. Usually two groups sing the *Qolo* alternately.

11. *Sebalto* سَبَالْتَا. The word meaning of this is ladder or scales. The theme of these compositions is the commemoration of Mary the mother of God, the saints and those who died in faith.

12. *Sugito* سُوغِيْتَا. The word meaning is a soulful/lively song. Michael Breydy has the opinion that the melody of the *Sugito* is melancholic in an atmosphere of yearning.<sup>25</sup> The style of this form is similar to *Madroso*. The difference is that the theme is very dramatically portrayed in the poem. An example for this is the dialogue between the two thieves on Golgotha, which have been very dramatically depicted in the *Sugito* of the Good Friday divine office.

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<sup>25</sup> Reference: Michael Breydy, *Kult, Dichtung und Musik*, Band II, Kobayath-Libanon, 1971. P. X

13. *Takshephtho* |ܐܘܫܦܗܘܬܐ|. It comes also in the form of *Ma'nitho* |ܡܢܝܬܐ|. These are composed in a way that these can be sung in eight tunes. They were composed at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

There are many other hymns which do not come under these categories, which are used for lent season, holy week and for other liturgical contexts.

Going through the history of the composers one cannot see any particular mention of their scientific knowledge in music. However, most of the hymns are composed in attractive melodies, which are most probably the popular tunes which existed at that time. They used the regional culture and art to propagate or to teach the faith of the Church. Above all the hymns are saturated with the mystical experience of the composers. The future study and renewal of a liturgy is totally dependent on this factor (this theme will be dealt with in the section 4.4). Egon Wellesz has pointed out:

Christianity started in one of the border provinces of the Roman Empire... This province was administered by a Graeco-Roman governing class, the population consisting of a mixture of Aramaeans, Cappadocians and Armenians, as well as the Jews. Since Christianity was at first a popular faith in direct opposition to the authorities, it was natural that the art that developed with the new ritual should be to a large extent, the product of native artists. The future study of music will have to reckon with this fact... It is most likely ... that many of the new tunes were sung to familiar tunes. ...A period of real creative musical activity cannot have begun until... later, when Christianity had gained strength and Christian ritual had



begun to develop. This activity first showed itself in Syria and Armenia.<sup>26</sup>

## 4.2 Importance of the liturgical hymns in their theological approach

As already mentioned, in the orient 'knowledge' was transmitted from generation to generation orally. In the oral tradition the method of 'learning by heart' is the best method of learning. Poems or music pieces are very easy to learn by heart. For example, the oldest hymns of the world, *Vedas* are also poems which are to be sung in a particular musical structure so that any one can learn them by heart.<sup>27</sup> Every singing is a celebration. Celebration is the function of the *heart*. The object of the celebration lives in the heart of the one who celebrates. Faith is also

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<sup>26</sup> Wellesz, 6. Obligated to: Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages*; W. W. Norton and Company, INC, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, N.Y, 1940. P. 71.

<sup>27</sup>Reference: <http://www.encyclopedia.com>:

Veda (Sanskrit, "knowledge"), the most ancient sacred literature of Hinduism, or individual books belonging to that literature. This body of ancient literature consists primarily of four collections of hymns, detached poetical portions, and ceremonial formulas. The collections are called the *Rig-Veda*, the *Sama-Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda*, and the *Atharva-Veda*. They are known also as the *Samhitas* (roughly "collection").

Origins and Transmission: The four Vedas were composed in Vedic, an early form of Sanskrit. The oldest portions are believed by scholars to have originated largely with the Aryan invaders of India some time between 1300 and 1000 BC; however, the Vedas in their present form are believed to date only from the close of the 3rd century BC. Before the writing down of the present texts, sages called *rishis* transmitted the Vedic matter orally, changing and elaborating it in the process. Large masses of material probably taken from the original Aryan milieu or from the Dravidian culture of India were preserved, however, and are distinguishable in the texts.

a celebration. The object of faith lives in the heart of the one who celebrates. Liturgy is a celebration and the object of the liturgy lives in the heart of the one who celebrates. In the orient the 'faith of the Church' and theology is encapsulated in the liturgy, more precisely in the hymns and chanting. In singing, one acknowledges the faith, learns further and propagates the faith. That is the reason why singing became very important in the liturgical worship especially in the orient. The fathers of the Church have composed many hymns that manifest the faith and teachings of the Church - the theology of the Church. When the Church sings she celebrates her faith. The theology of the East is in its liturgy. Therefore one who spends time to study the theology of the East must look into its liturgy. The hymns that are generally used in the Malankara liturgy are mainly Christo-centric in their theological motive because they originated in the polemic period of heresies (ref. 4.1). The hymns with the Christo-centric motive were used to fight against the Arian heresy. However, in the Malankara liturgy the hymns of a feast clearly bring out the theology of the particular feast. Because the theology is being revealed and affirmed in the liturgy there is no place for an academic theology that has no relation with the practising faith. Liturgy is the centre of Christian life whose nucleus is the Risen Christ (please refer Ch. 1). Theology and mysticism cannot be separated in eastern spirituality. The theology of the East is called mystical theology also. However, only for 'technical advantage' the theological motive and the mystical motive are taken individually in the following paragraphs. It will be a great project to analyse all the hymns and evolve a theology of the Malankara Church. Above all it is beyond the limit of this doctoral thesis. Therefore it would be better to be satisfied with some examples and analyse their theology especially in the Trinitarian, Christological, Mariological and Ecclesiological motives, which come under the interest of this thesis.

## 1. The Trinitarian motive of hymns

The faith in the Trinitarian God is the core of Christian life. Though Christendom is divided into many denominations, there is always a unity in this Trinitarian teaching.<sup>28</sup> Without the difference of east and west, usually every liturgical celebration begins and ends with the praise of the Trinity – ‘Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit’ or a blessing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the Malankara liturgy the Trinitarian spirituality is very much emphasised especially in the prayers and *Promion- Sedro*. Though most of the hymns used in the Holy Qurbano and other liturgical feasts are Christological there are particular hymns with Trinitarian theology. The Trinitarian motive proper can be seen in the second service of Pentecost:

O, the apostles, the founders of faith and the builders  
of the Holy Church  
Drink the wine of the Holy Spirit and be the light to  
the people in darkness  
Proclaim the *Supreme and the One in essence*  
*but three in persons*  
Halleluiah, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*<sup>29</sup>

The structure as well as the melody of the hymn is very simple so that anybody can learn it by heart and sing. However, it contains the difficult and mysterious teaching of the Trinity i.e. in essence it

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<sup>28</sup> Reference: Lexikon religiöser Grundbegriffe, Verlag Styria, Austria, 1987. P. 1075

<sup>29</sup> *The Feast Days of the Malankara Catholic Church*, Printed at San Jose Process, Thiruvananthapuram-695014, P. 266. (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text)



is *One and the same* but *three in persons*. In the first service of the Pentecost, the *qole* have a very interesting theme. Here it is repeatedly said that the disciples of Jesus were sent 'to proclaim the Trinity', instead of saying, 'to proclaim the Gospel of The Lord.' Even though there is no fundamental difference in these two usages the thrust is on the Trinity. This hymn consists of four stanzas; among them three have the above-mentioned usage. The following hymn is one among them:

In this holy day when the Holy Spirit descended  
And joined with human beings  
To make them the sons of heaven  
*To proclaim the 'Trinity'* to their own people and to the gentiles  
He has given the disciples the gift of tongue.  
He sent his Advocate of consolation  
Praise to Him who has fulfilled His promise.<sup>30</sup>

The co-dwelling and the in-dwelling of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is very beautifully and dramatically pictured in the following hymn that is taken from the feast of *Denho* (Baptism in Jordan). John the Baptist asks Jesus who comes to him to receive baptism:

In which name shall I baptize you?  
If it were in the name of the Father  
He dwells in you.  
If it were in the name of the Son  
You are the only Son.  
If it were in the name of the Holy Spirit  
In essence three are One.  
Praise to you the Holy Trinity,  
Creator and master of all.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. P.253 (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. P. 89. (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text).

The melody of this hymn is very simple, crisp and mystical and the meter is septa syllabic. Such a hymn can imprint its theme on the heart of all who sing it or hear it. Another Trinitarian motive can be observed in the hymn of Mar Jacob, which is sung at the time of Fraction or the breaking of the bread. In the Malankara liturgy the fraction is the celebration of the salvation mystery of Christ especially through his suffering on the cross, death and the resurrection. The Fraction ends with the proclamation of the mystery of Trinity:

...Glory to the *Father, who gave up his Son for our salvation,*  
 Worship to the *Son who died on the cross and gave life to us all,*  
 Thanksgiving to the *Spirit who began and completed the*  
*mystery of our salvation.*  
 Holy Trinity, high above all, have pity on us all.<sup>32</sup>

The ceremony of the breaking of the bread in the Malankara liturgy is done behind the veil so that the worshippers are led to a meditation on the mystery of the cross and the resurrection. Naturally the hymn must be sung in an atmosphere of repentance. The author, in his pastoral ministry, has witnessed many people who shed tears during the breaking of the bread. It is only because of the mystical nature of the melody and the poetic composition of the hymn, which together elevates the heart of the worshipper to the Love of God on the cross.

## 2. The Christological motive of Hymns.

Most of the hymns used in the Holy Qurbano and in the other liturgical feasts are very rich in Christology. The following are some

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<sup>32</sup> The Divine Liturgy of the Syro-Malankara Rite, Printed at St. Mary's press, Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram.  
 P. 37

of the examples. The opening hymn of the public service in the H. Qurbono is impregnated with both Christology and Mariology:

I will magnify you, my Lord and King,  
*The only Son and the Word of the heavenly Father,*  
*who are immortal by nature.*  
 Of your grace you came down for the life and salvation of all  
*mankind*  
 And took flesh of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary,  
*the pure Mother of God.*  
 Without change you became man and crucified for us.  
 Christ our God who by your death trampled on our death  
 and killed it.  
 You who are one of the Holy Trinity  
 And are worshipped and glorified equally with your Father  
 and your Holy Spirit  
 Have mercy on us all.<sup>33</sup>

The hymn is used at the time of the solemn procession around the altar. It is a solemn profession of faith in Jesus Christ who is the Son of God who is equal to the Father. It is addressed here as Mary as pure 'Mother of God', a term that was often taken in dispute (reference: footnote 17). The rhythm of this hymn is in medium tempo that is befitting to a solemn procession and affirmation of faith. The melody is similar to a marching song; at the same time it does not obstruct the mystical nature of the liturgy.

A hymn that directly pertains to the teaching on the two natures of Christ is used for the procession on Christmas day:

Both for The Father and Mary, *the only Son*  
 Without change, but is *one person in two natures.*  
 Halleluiah, one who confesses it will receive eternal happiness.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. P. 16



The hymns for the procession are to be repeated till the end of the procession. Repeating a hymn one can ‘churn’ the theme of the hymn. It is one of the techniques of pedagogy. [The same technique is followed in the procession of *denho* (the baptism in Jordan), where the co-dwelling of the Trinity is explained (refer footnote 30)]. The fathers of the Church used this technique in the liturgy to teach the worshippers the fundamental teachings of the Church. Another reference of the equality of the Son to the Father is explained in the processional hymn of the *Qyomto* (resurrection). The melody and the rhythm of this hymn are very joyful. Here the context is the meeting of Mary Magdalene with the Risen Jesus:

O Mary I am the gardener and truly, I am the *creator of Paradise*  
 Truly I am the one who was killed and buried  
*I am the life and resurrection of everything.*  
 Do not cling on to me for I have not yet gone to the Father  
 Now you go to my disciples and tell them  
 That I am risen from the tomb.<sup>35</sup>

With regard to the Christological motive many references can be pointed out. However in the fear of exceeding the limit of this thesis the theme must be ended here.

### 3. The Mariological motive of hymns

In every liturgical service of the Malankara Church there are hymns with Mariological motive. In the liturgical cycle of the week, Wednesday is reserved for the veneration of Mary. In the divine

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<sup>34</sup> *The Feast Days of the Malankara Catholic Church*, Printed at San Jose Process, Thiruvananthapuram-695014, P. 65 (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid P. 229

office every first stanza of the 6<sup>th</sup> hour/midday is dedicated to Mary. The composers of the hymns look at Mary as an ordinary woman but she is specially called and separated by God to be the mother of the 'Word become flesh'. Because Mary is called and separated by God she is without sin. The composers of the hymns looked on Mary with awe and wonder. An example for this can be shown in one of the *qole* of the Morning Prayer on Wednesday:

Lord and Creator

The mount Sinai trembled at your presence

Him, who carries the mountains and oceans,

Bore the virgin in her womb

O it is a wonder...<sup>36</sup>

From this awe and wonder there are many allegories written on Mary such as 'the burning bush', 'the tabernacle', 'the cloud', 'the shell of Holy Spirit, which contains the life giving Water' etc. In the hymns the perpetual virginity of Mary is always a theme of importance. (For details please refer subtitle 4.1 Mar Jacob of Serugh). This perpetual virginity of Mary is described in the Word 'beauty'. An example can be shown from the *qolo* of Wednesday, first night vigil. Here Mary is compared with the chariot in the vision of Ezekiel (reference: Ezekiel 1, 4ff). Even though the composer compares Mary with the chariot he adds that Mary is more beautiful than the chariot:

Even the chariot in the vision of Ezekiel is not enough

to compare with you, Holy Virgin...

O Mother your knees are the chariot and your hands are the wheels.

Your face is singing praise.

You are more beautiful than the chariot of Ezekiel.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *S'himo*, (*Shubaho*), (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church), St Joseph's Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 174 [personal translation from the Malayalam text]

There is another instance where the disputed term ‘Mother of God’ is dealt with. Here the composer tries to explain why Mary should be called ‘Mother of God’:

O daughter of David how do we call you?

It is not possible to give you a name.

You are a virgin! But you give milk (breastfeed) to your son.

You are a mother! But you are a virgin.

So the best name for you is the ‘Mother of God’.

Let the philosophers and the logicians be ashamed...<sup>38</sup>

The composer boldly points out that the divine mysteries cannot be explained fully by the empirical science because they transcend the comprehension of logics and philosophies. The melody of this hymn has probably been attributed to *Quqoyo* because in the original compositions of *Quqoyo*, normally, such dogmatic and theological issues have not been handled.

The devotion to Mary in the East is different from the West in the dimension of piety. The devotion of Mary related with the terms such as ‘Mother of Perpetual help’, ‘Mother of sorrow’, ‘Mother of Carmel’, ‘Velankanni Matha,\* etc. are strange to the Oriental tradition. The term ‘Mother’ is a ‘living myth’. When this myth is demythologised then it gives the message of ‘unconditional love’, ‘caring’, ‘baring’, ‘joy’, ‘trust’, ‘sorrow’, ‘anxiety’ etc. In the process of demythologisation, the beauty of the myth is often

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<sup>37</sup> *S'himo, (Men'olam,)* (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church), St Joseph's Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 111 [personal translation from the Malayalam text]

<sup>38</sup> *Shimo (men'olam)*, The Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church, St. Joseph's printing house, Tiruvalla. 1996. P. 18 [personal translation from the Malayalam text]

\* It is a pilgrimage centre of Mother Mary at Velankanni in Madras. It is called the ‘Fathima’ of Asia. *Matha*=Mother.



diminished. In other words, a ‘mother’ cannot be ‘specialised’. She cannot be reduced only to ‘mother of *perpetual help*’ or ‘mother of *sorrow*’, but she points out to the totality of life. She is a mystery. The concept of ‘mother’ is most important in Indian culture and spirituality. To the Indians, ‘India’ is not their ‘Father land’ but she is their ‘Mother land’. So too for the Oriental fathers the motherhood of Mary is a mystery and above all she is the greatest mystic. This motive can be observed in the poetic structure and melody of almost all the hymns that have the Mariological motive.

#### 4. The Ecclesiological motive of hymns.

The Church is the ‘bride of Christ’ and she is the ‘mystical body of Christ’. These are the main themes of the hymns with the ecclesiological motive. In many of the hymns the Church is compared to Paradise. Most of the hymns in the marriage ceremony are rich in its ecclesiological motive. Jesus Christ has so loved the Church that he gave her his own body and blood. So too the bride and the bridegroom who as husband and wife, must give themselves to each other in love. Among the hymns of the sacrament of marriage, the last stanza of the *Quqoyo* has a very unique theme where it is stated that the Church as a bride stands in the midst of three strong forts that is nothing but The Holy Trinity:

The Church says: “*Three forts are around me  
So that the deceiver, Satan cannot approach me.  
It is impossible to get through these three forts  
Because it is so intimate that there is no gap between them  
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as Trinity is indestructible  
As the bride in glory I stand in the midst of them  
Halleluiah and halleluiah.*”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>*Kudashakal* (The Sacraments of the Malankara Catholic Church), Printed at St. Joseph’s Press Thiruvananthapuram- 695 014. P. 65 [personal translation from the Malayalam text]

This hymn has the simple melody of *Quqoyo*, in which both the Trinitarian love and the bridal virginity, i.e. the holiness of the Church are brought forth. The analogical description, ‘no gap between them’ stands for the ‘Trinitarian love’ and the adjective, ‘the bride in glory’ points out to the ‘Glory of the Church in her sanctity’.

Another ecclesiological motive in which the term paradise is used for the Church is found in the *Qyomto -lilyo* (Easter-night prayer or Sunday divine office):

*The Church, the bride of Christ, is similar to Paradise  
 where the glory fills.  
 Therein are baptism, the relics of the martyrs and the Holy Altar  
 That is the container of the life giving aushadhi' (medicine).  
 Who wants to talk with the Lord?  
 Enter into the Church because the Lord lives in it.<sup>40</sup>*

In this hymn the composer tries to explain why the Church is compared to Paradise. Holy Baptism gives birth to the children of God, the relics of martyrs symbolise the communion of saints and the Holy Altar stands for the presence of God who is the source of eternal life. The melody of the hymn is very pleasant and when it is sung in the proper rhythm and melody it creates a heavenly atmosphere in the silence of night.

In conclusion one can say that the importance of Hymns in the Malankara liturgy consists of their thematic presentation of the themes of each feast and context and the nature of the musicality that takes one to a sphere of mystical experience.

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<sup>40</sup> Ref: *Qyomtho* (Sunday Divine Office) [Personal translation from the Malayalam text]

### 4.3 The mystical nature of the hymns, in the realm of *Bhakti yoga* (path of devotion/love) and *Jnana yoga* (path of knowledge).

In the study of the mystical nature of the hymns both in its musicality and poetry, it is very important to analyse some selected hymns from the liturgy that are in common use. As St. Ambrose said, the poetry and the music are like two wings of the Liturgy (please refer chapter 3, footnote 16). They are the two wings that take up the worshipper to the peak of the mountain of mystical experience in the liturgy. What is to be analysed in this sub chapter is the mystical motive of the hymns mainly in their poetic narration. With regard to their musicality, it is already explained in the subchapter 3.3.2, where it is said that the melody nature of oriental music has the potency to lead the worshipper to a mystical experience. The second chapter deals with the main notions of mysticism both in the Orient and in the West. No matter whether it is Orient or West the mystics have fundamentally the same experience. This experience is categorised under two terminologies: '*Bhakti yoga*' or 'path of devotion/love' and '*Jnana yoga*' or 'path of knowledge' (please refer 2.1.1 & 2.1.2). In the *Bhakti yoga* or the path of love, devotion and affectivity are important. The Creator-creature relationship, friend-friend relationship, bride-bridegroom relationship, *Vatsalya bhakti* (e.g. mother-child relationship) *guru-sishya* (teacher-student) relationship etc. are various manifestation of *Bhakti yoga*. Another aspect that comes under *Bhakti yoga* is the concept of prayer (*Prarthana*) and petition. These expressions in the *Bhakti yoga* can be called *anthropomorphic*. The major part of the collections of liturgical hymns in the Malankara Liturgy comes under *Bhakti yoga*. On the other hand *Jnana yoga* or the 'path of knowledge' in its real sense is an approach through intellect, not through affectivity or devotion. In some of the hymns the mystical



experience of the composers are indirectly related to *Jnana yoga*. In reference to *Jnana yoga* the usual terminologies used in the hymns are Sun, light, morning etc. God is the eternal Sun. The radiance of this Sun enlightens the whole cosmos. This is the general theme of the hymns that can be taken under *Jnana yoga*. As the *Jnana yoga* belongs to the intellectual sphere it does not mean that it is merely a speculative knowledge of God, rather it is a contemplation that goes deep into the ground of one's being. In this respect the Creator-creature relationship will be much more significant to be viewed through the prism of *Jnana yoga*. The next subtitle is an analysis of some of the hymns that arouse in the worshipper a mystical experience, in their motive of *Bhakti yoga* (path of devotion/love) and *Jnana yoga* (path of knowledge).

#### 4.3.1 The mystical nature of the hymns, in the realm of *Bhakti yoga* (path of devotion/love).

In Indian spirituality there are three ways to reach the Ultimate Being: They are *karma marga*, *Jnana marga* and *bhakti marga*<sup>41</sup> among which the *Bhakti marga* is the most important means to be in union with God. The *Jnana marga* is not that easy for the 'folk' because it depends very much on intellectual discipline and physical training. [In this thesis *Bhakti marga/yoga* and *Jnana marga/yoga* are taken because they are the prominent motives in the hymns of Malankara.] Shri Sankaracharya said that among the means to attain salvation *Bhakti* is the best way.<sup>42</sup> In *Bhagavat purana*<sup>43</sup> it is written: "I do not dwell in *Vaikundta* (≈Heaven in Christian concept) nor in the hearts of *Yogis* but where my *Bhaktas* sing my

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<sup>41</sup> *Karma marga*=way through doing duties; *Jnana marga*=way through knowledge; *Bhakti marga*=way through devotion. *Nishkama karma* (doing the duty without desiring the fruit of it) is the teaching of *Bhagavat Gita*.

<sup>42</sup> *Vivekachudamani*: 31

<sup>43</sup> One of the Sacred Scriptures of India.

name, there do I abide.”<sup>44</sup> God dwells in the heart of the devotee who sings praises to God. This concept is not something unique to the Indian tradition, but it belongs to the tradition of the Orient. From this tradition many hymns have been composed, which are used in the Malankara Liturgy. In singing the praises of God one can reach God. That is why it was already mentioned that most of the hymns in the Malankara liturgy has a motive of *Bhakti yoga*. When one sings a hymn in the worship, one must meditate on the theme and must try to enter into the devotion and mentality of the characters mentioned in the hymns. In the following paragraphs will be dealt with the different aspects of *Bhakti yoga* that can be traced out from the hymns, which are manifested through *vatsalya bhakti model*, *bridal model*, *Guru-Sishya model*, and *penitential model*.

### 1. *Vatsalya Bhakti model.*

*Vatsalya* can be explained as love, particularly, the love of a mother to its child. It is the love that is manifested in many actions like feeding the child, rocking the child, carrying the child on her arms, kissing and embracing the child etc. *Bhakti* can be translated as devotion. Therefore *vatsalya bhakti* can be explained as ‘devotion in affection’. Unfortunately there is no proper word in English that gives the meaning of *vatsalya* in its full sense. So the translation as ‘devotion in affection’ is weak. [*Vatsalya bhakti* can be of two types: 1) becoming a mother/father to God and 2) becoming a child to God. The second type is the general concept in Christian Spirituality. In the fear of repetition it is avoided here]. In the Indian context, through *vatsalya bhakti* one can reach *Moksha*. For example Yashodha the mother of Krishna, one of the incarnations of God is also named as the devotee of Krishna because she became

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<sup>44</sup> Swami Narendranand; *Hindu Spirituality*; Jyoti Ashram, Sultanpur, Utter Pradesh, India; P. 1

the devotee of Krishna through *Vatsalya bhakti*. The same context can be compared with the relation between Mary and Jesus. Mary became the devotee of Jesus in her *Vatsalya bhakti*. Through this *Vatsalya bhakti* she reached the zenith of mystical experience. The following is a hymn in which the composer portrays Mary who feeds the Child Jesus:

Behold, it is a wonder that the Virgin has delivered a child.  
The ancestor of all the generations, wrapped in swaddling cloths...  
Him, who holds the mountains, *a young woman carries*.  
He who sustains the poor (one who is hungry), *sucking milk...*<sup>45</sup>

The composer invokes a *Vatsalya bhakti* in the worshipper who sings and meditates on this picture. Through this *Vatsalya bhakti* the worshipper enters into a mystical experience. In another hymn of the divine office the composer says that he heard Mary saying to her child in a lullaby. It is interesting to note that the melody is also similar to a lullaby:

Walking along the streets of Bethlehem  
I heard a voice in which Mary says to the child in a lullaby:  
*'I am lucky my son that I have become your mother*  
*But I am not even worthy to stand in your presence.*<sup>46</sup>

Here the *Vatsalya bhakti* of Mary is very clearly portrayed because in this hymn Mary accepts her motherhood of the saviour

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<sup>45</sup> *S'himo, Shubaho* (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church); St Joseph's Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 161 [personal translation from the Malayalam text]

For more references: *Shubaho*: P. 153, 187, 197, 225, 226, 267

<sup>46</sup> *S'himo, Men'olam* (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church); St Joseph's Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 34 [personal translation from the Malayalam text]



and at the same time she confesses her 'fragility' to carry the Almighty. The *vatsalya* involves in the acceptance of the motherhood of God and the *bhakti* lies in accepting the presence of God.

In another hymn of the night vigil of Christmas, it is presented very poetically that Mary invites us to share her joy:

The daughter of David, carrying the baby, stands among the folk.

The logicians and philosophers stand around them.

One is arguing and the other is testifying,

Another is acknowledging that he is God.

*Now, the daughter of David invites us heartily...*

*Come and share my joy ...<sup>47</sup>*

Here the hymn indirectly explains the aim of *Vatsalya bhakti* in the liturgy. It is an invitation to experience the mystical experience together with Mary who *nurtures* God. Most of the hymns in the Christmas service have the motive of *Vatsalya bhakti*. The composers present very picturesquely the Child Jesus in the manger with Mary and Joseph. A newborn baby is the symbol of human fragility or vulnerability. Concentrating on the fragile nature of the baby and its innocence, a feeling of *vatsalya* is created in the worshipper. The second step is the passing over of the meditative mind from the 'fragility' to the 'all-powerful' God. Here the worshipper attains the joyful experience of *Vatsalya bhakti*.

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<sup>47</sup> *The Feast Days of the Malankara Catholic Church*, Printed at San Jose Process, Thiruvananthapuram-695014, P. 43 (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text)



mystic longs for the intimacy with God. K.R. Sundararajan in his article, *Bridal model in Hindu and Christian mysticism* points out:

The theologians in the Hindu and Christian traditions have sought to maintain a careful balance between the claims of both divine transcendence and the human need for the closeness and nearness of God. By contrast, the mystic tends to tip this balance by stressing divine accessibility, sometimes ignoring the other side of the divine, namely its transcendence. However, by emphasising the accessibility of the divine, the mystic seems to reflect the concerns of popular piety in a religious tradition more clearly than the theologians of the same tradition. Divine accessibility is the very cornerstone of popular piety and it is indeed the sustaining force behind its spirituality.<sup>49</sup>

Both in the Hindu and the Christian tradition the mystic's longing for God is very often expressed in the 'bridal model'. In both traditions one can observe that the bride's seeking for her 'beloved' is endless. In the 'bridal model' God is always presented as bridegroom and the mystic as bride. According to K.R. Sundararajan the only difference in the concept of bridal mysticism between Hindu tradition and Christian tradition is in the degree of agony of separation of the female from male.<sup>50</sup> In the Christian spirituality, more often the 'bridal model' is used to explain the relation between Christ and the Church.<sup>51</sup> This mystical approach is

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<sup>49</sup> K.R. Sundararajan, *Bridal model in Hindu and Christian Mysticism*, Indian Philosophical Annual, Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: Avvai Achukkoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 194

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. P. 196

<sup>51</sup> Reference: Ephesians 5, 20-23.



used very lavishly in the liturgical hymns of the Malankara Church especially in the Sacrament of Marriage. In the Malankara liturgical hymns the composers bring out both 'the seeking of God' and 'the longing of the devotee'. Since most of the composers were mystics as well as theologians it is natural that they have used a holistic approach, i.e. both God's coming down and the devotee's longing for God.

### **a. The bridegroom who is in search of the bride**

Analysing the hymns of the sacrament of marriage it becomes clear that the first motive in the bridal mysticism is the readiness of the bridegroom to accept the bride. In the first service of the sacrament of marriage that is called 'blessing of the ring' it is poetically described that Christ accepts the Church as his bride:

O Great One who makes all people happy  
 Grand your happiness to your devotees...  
 In handing over the ring to the Holy church  
 Messiah has made her his bride.  
 She has received his Holy Body and Blood.<sup>52</sup>

In this hymn one can observe that it is God's initiative that He made a 'betrothal' and received the Church as his bride. The wedding meal is nothing else but His own body and blood. Because He so loved the Church that He gave himself fully to the Church. This shows the intimacy of the bridegroom and the bride. The aim of the hymn is to invite all the participants in the marriage ceremony to this mystical experience. Giving themselves fully to each other, the bridegroom and the bride participate in the mystical union of Christ and the Holy Church.

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<sup>52</sup> *Kudashakal* (The Sacraments of the Malankara Catholic Church); Printed at St. Joseph's Press, Thiruvananthapuram-695 014, 1988. P. 40

There is another hymn that beautifully expresses the 'dedication' of the bridegroom to the bride:

O faithful Church let there be no anxieties and fear in you  
Because you were *pativrta*\* (faithful) to me, I will not leave you alone.

On the Last Day, even if the earth and the sky vanish

You will live in safety.

Behold, for you a throne is prepared at the home of the Father,  
the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

Here it is important to note that the bridegroom gives the reason why he loves his bride. It is because the bride was always *pativrta*. She was always faithful to her bridegroom. In the book of Ezekiel the unfaithfulness of Israel is one of the themes of the prophet. Since Israel was unfaithful to Yahweh, Yahweh has left her in the cruel hands of gentile Kings.<sup>54</sup> The new Israel is faithful to Christ. Therefore He is always with her. In this 'bridal model' the saving hand of God is the most important theme.

The suffering bridegroom is a peculiar motive in the Christian bridal mysticism especially in the Malankara hymnology:

O Lord I am the one who is betrothed to you

I am the one who is *bought by you*.

By *your cross you have arranged a share for me*

*in your Father's house.*

*You have saved me by your sufferings.*

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\* *Pati*=husband, *Vrtam*=dedication in mind and body; *Pativrta* is the one who is fully dedicated to one's husband.

<sup>53</sup> *Kudashakal* (The Sacraments of the Malankara Catholic Church); Printed at St. Joseph's Press, Thiruvananthapuram-695 014, 1988. P. 47

<sup>54</sup> Reference: Ezekiel 16 ff.

Preparing the marriage chamber<sup>55</sup>, you have invited me  
So that I may become yours.<sup>56</sup>

The Salvation economy of God is explained through the ‘bridal mysticism’ in which the bridegroom is always in search of her bride. This is the difference between Hindu and Christian mysticism.<sup>57</sup> As St. Paul says He humbled himself and became man<sup>58</sup> so that man can approach the glory of God.

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<sup>55</sup> This term is particularly important in Ephrem’s writings. It may refer to the kingdom in its eschatological dimensions. It may also refer to the kingdom as realised or as realisable here on earth.

<sup>56</sup> *Kudashakal* (The Sacraments of the Malankara Catholic Church); Printed at St. Joseph’s Press, Thiruvananthapuram-695 014, 1988. P. 77

<sup>57</sup> Reference: K.R. Sundararajan, *Bridal model in Hindu and Christian Mysticism*, Indian Philosophical Annual, Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: Avvai Achukkoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 197:

Probably the similarity in both Hindu and Christian mysticism could be described as stress on what Peter Berger calls ‘masochism’ (*The Sacred Canopy*, pp. 55-57). Generally the mystical writings reflect the longing of a devotee and suffering experienced as the result of this longing. The love for God is seemed to be measured by the degree of suffering undergone by the devotee. Here the suffering is heightened by the fact that the devotee is helpless and powerless to achieve by self-effort what he or she is seeking. However there are differences here between Hindu and Christian mysticism. First in the Hindu materials there is a greater degree of helplessness and desolation experienced by the mystic than his or her Christian counterpart. The problem here is that the relation between the mystic and God is *not reciprocal*. It is the total absence of the lover that results in a great deal of suffering for the woman...(It is also described as being ‘deserted’ by the husband in *Bhagavad Vishayam*, topic 166 (*Govindacharya*. P. 189). In a way, she has also nobody else to turn to. A virtuous wife can only look to her husband, while the male has recourse to other women if he so desires (*Bhagavad Vishayam*, topic 172 (*Govindacharya*. P. 189).

<sup>58</sup> Reference: Philippians 2, 5ff



### b. The bride who is in search of the bridegroom

In the 'bridal model' of mysticism 'the longing for the beloved' and 'the agony of separation' are the intense experience of mystics. In the Hindu mysticism the intensity of mystical experience consists in the agony of the female/bride. The agony in separation is a suffering. In the Christian tradition suffering is the result of divine activity<sup>59</sup>, whereas in the Hindu tradition it is the result of divine inactivity.<sup>60</sup> Influenced by the 'Song of Songs', the authors of the Malankara hymns portray Christ as most handsome. In one of the *Qole* in the *Qyomto* divine office, the author sings that *he* is attracted by His charm. Here the author stays in the experience of bridal mysticism:

*Your Charm and awe have intoxicated me.*

We have no voice to sing your praise O Son of God.

On the highs you are seen at the right hand of the Father,

In the deep among the thieves...<sup>61</sup>

Attracted by the charm of the lover or bridegroom the mystic sees him in different places. The bride is not only in the glory of heaven but also in the miseries of this world. Here it is very clear that God is not playing 'hide and seek' as in the bridal mysticism of Hindu spirituality nor is He far away in the heaven, instead He is among the human beings too; Immanuel, God is with us.

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<sup>59</sup> Reference: Job 5, 17-18

<sup>60</sup> Reference: *Tiruviruttam*, 36 (Hooper P. 71):

"Even in this age-long time of so-called night when men must grope, he pities not that she stands in her deep immitigable grief... ah, his cruelties..."

<sup>61</sup> *Qyomto*, (Sunday Evening Divine Office of the Malankara catholic Church)



In this *Sugito* one can 'feel' the suffering of the bride to unite with her bridegroom. In her seeking she forgets all other hurdles before her. This is the spiritual progress of the mystic. When the mystic is so active in seeking for her beloved, the lover or Bridegroom is not inactive and play hide and seek (please refer footnote 62), but He too suffers a lot, sheds His blood in order to receive his loved one. The melody of this *Sugito* is melancholic and brings out a yearning atmosphere (please refer 4.1.1 poetic forms) so that it manifests the pain of agony and suffering of the mystic in *her* seeking for *her* lover.

To conclude the passages on Bridal mysticism in the Malankara hymns, one can say that it is the most intensive form of mystical experience expressed in the agony of separation and the yearning of the mystic for God. Singing the hymns meditatively, in every liturgical service the real participant can go through this experience.

### 3. **Guru-Sishya model\***

In the eastern tradition the *Guru-sishya* ( $\approx$  Teacher-student) relationship is considered mystical because Guru is the symbol of God (please refer Chapter 3, Subtitle 3.4.3). A *Guru* in eastern spirituality especially in Indian tradition is the representative of God. All knowledge comes from God only through the *Guru*. Learning depends fully on the degree of intimacy between the *Guru* and *Sishya*. If the *Sishya* can please the *Guru*, he will pour out on the *Sishya* all his knowledge. Therefore, the most important requirement in the *Guru-Sishya* relation is the devotion of the

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\* Even if *Guru-sishya* can be translated to *teacher-student*, the inner meaning is more divine in the concept of *Guru-sishya* than the technical term *Teacher-student*.





quality is very clearly pictured in the terminologies, Lord and saviour. Jesus as *Guru* is the Almighty God. As *Guru* he wants to teach his disciples not only through preaching but also through practice:

*In the dark clouds and in the fog, as God spoke,  
On the Sinai Moses shone in Glory.*

*In this Theophany He has made Moses radiant*

*But as He humbled himself and became man*

*He bowed His head and washed the feet of His disciples.<sup>66</sup>*

The quality of the *Guru* as ‘anchored himself in God’ is very beautifully depicted in this hymn. The same God who appeared Himself in the thorn bush is paralleled with Jesus who bent down and washed the feet of His disciples. In other way one can say that Jesus as *Son of God is anchored in the Father*.

The *Sishya* must be obedient to the *Guru*; sometimes he may demand from the *Sishya* blind obedience. He must accept the will of the *Guru* as his own. This theme can be noticed in the *Bo áwotho* of Mar Jacob:

*If you do not take heed to My words you cannot become My apostle.*

*If you are My disciple, come and accept My will as your will*

*Otherwise you will not receive My discipleship.*

*Without this washing you will not have any share in Me*

*In argument you are objecting to My Will.*

*If you cannot accept My new commandments*

*You will not be able to become the *Guru* of the peoples.<sup>67</sup>*

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. P. 298

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. P. 300

Peter in his humility forbids Jesus from washing his feet. Even if it is not proper for the *Sishya* to let his feet be washed by the Guru, as a disciple he has to obey the words of his *Guru*.

In a nutshell one can say that for the *Sishya* the *Guru* is everything. His mental and spiritual growth depends on the union with the *Guru*. Therefore the *Guru- sishya* model in the liturgical hymns also comes under mysticism.

#### 4. *Penitential model*

The penitential and the mystical motive in the Malankara liturgy are related to one another. The penitential attitude of the devotee is aroused from his/her relation (love) with the *Ultimate Love*. Therefore it is also a mystical experience. In technical term repentance is a reparatory work in the line of the uninterrupted unity between God and man. Repenting on one's sin he or she comes closer to God. In the process of repentance the real penitent does not brood over his or her sins but ascends to the love of God. In this sense the penitential model mysticism is very positive.<sup>68</sup>

The hymn sung during the breaking of the bread is mystical as well as very penitential. Experiencing the Love of God on the cross, the worshipper repents on his or her loveless act that is the cause of the suffering and death on the cross. Repentance and penance have a positive nature in the Malankara liturgy. As already mentioned it is not an act of brooding over ones own sins and weakness, but it is a positive attitude of *acknowledging one's own weakness while accepting the greatness and love of God*. This theme is very picturesquely portrayed in the hymn of Mar Jacob:

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<sup>68</sup> There is an accusation that the oriental liturgy is too penitential that they can increase the guilt-conscience in the worshipper.



Father of truth, behold your Son, a sacrifice of propitiation to you.  
Accept him who died for me, that I might obtain pardon through  
Him...

Behold, his blood shed on Golgotha by evil men pleads for me;  
Accept my petition because of it.

*Great as is my guilt, great is also Your mercy.*

If you weigh them, your compassion will outweigh  
the mountains that are weighed by you...

Because I sinned, Your beloved bore the nails and the spear...

By the mercy which showed compassion on  
the thief at your right hand,

Have compassion on us also...<sup>69</sup>

The Syrian fathers exhort the faithful to do penance in weeping. In many hymns it is described that weeping and shedding tears can 'extinguish' the 'fire of God's anger'. Mar Ephrem in his *Bo áwotho* exhorts:

Keep vigil and come to repentance O sinner

*And shed tears in prayer.*

Because the tears of your eyes can 'extinguish' the 'Ocean of Fire.'

So bring them as much as you can...<sup>70</sup>

The hymns in the *Shubaqono* **شُبَاقُونُو** (penitential service) and in the *Sacrament of anointing the sick* are soaked in repentance because repentance has 'healing power' on body and mind. The

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<sup>69</sup> *The Divine Liturgy of the Syro-Malankara Rite*, Printed at St. Mary's press, Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram.

P. 38

<sup>70</sup> *S'himo, Shubaho* (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church), St Joseph's Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 202 [personal translation from the Malayalam text]

melodies of the hymns and their slow tempo also create an atmosphere of repentance.

Conclusion: In this short analysis of the mystical nature of the hymns of the Malankara liturgy one can notice that the *Bhakti yoga* motive is very prominent in the liturgy. These hymns are the manifestation of the deep love of the mystic composers for God. Singing the hymns the worshippers can also attain this mystical experience in every liturgical service.

#### 4.3.2 The mystical nature of the hymns, in the realm of *Jnana yoga* (path of Knowledge).

While *bhakti* (devotion and love) is the medium of mystical experience in *Bhakti yoga*, *Jnana yoga* is an intellectual approach to God (Refer Ch. 2, 2.1.2 & 2.2.1.2). Sometimes the *Jnana yoga* seems to be very 'abstract' for the 'laity' because it uses negation rather than affirmation.<sup>71</sup> In this respect attributes for God are meaningless. The important aspect in the *Jnana yoga* is self-realisation and through this self-realisation the mystic comes into union with the *Real Being*. Compared to the overwhelming *Bhakti yoga* approaches in the Malankara hymns, the instances of *Jnana yoga* motives are very meagre. Another reason is that the liturgy is a worship of the people of God and this worship is deeply rooted in the love of God. In such a context the approach of negation becomes insignificant. However there are instances in the Malankara hymns, which *indirectly* bring out the mystical motive of *Jnana yoga*. This approach is especially expressed in the 'Creator-creature model' and 'Light analogy'.

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<sup>71</sup> Reference: Ewert H. Cousins, *A Blueprint for a Cross-cultural study of Mysticism*, Indian Philosophical Annual; Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 13

## I *Creator-creature model*

In the Creator-creature model, the *Jnana Yoga* motive consists in the realisation of God as Creator and human beings as the creatures, created in the *image* and *likeness* of God. Man as the creature of God depends ontologically on God. He or she yearns for the *Salokya* (living in the 'world' of *Brahma*), living with God in heaven (Refer Ch. 2, 2.1.2, *Salokya*). From this longing, hymns of praise emerge from the creature. This theme is very prominent in many of the hymns. The following hymn from the Divine office points out this motive:

*Lord, for your glory, let praises emerge from the heavenly creatures  
And the earthly creatures who are created in your image and  
likeness.*

The earth and heaven, the land and the ocean will sing your praise.<sup>72</sup>

The worshipper who sings this hymn is invited to the realisation that he or she has the 'image' and 'likeness' of God. This realisation inspires the worshipper to enter into a mystical union with the 'Real'. The melody of the hymn is in a prayerful mood and the rhythm is in slow tempo.

Another reason for considering the Creator-creature model as *Jnana yoga* is that in this model one cannot see any other attributes of God except the word 'Creator'. The duty of the creature is nothing else but to praise the Creator. In praising the Creator one asserts his or her 'being' in God i.e. the creatures ontological

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<sup>72</sup> *S'himo, Shubaho* (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church), St Joseph's Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 104. [Personal translation from the Malayalam text]



relation to God. An example can be shown in the *Qolo* of Friday evening:

On the sixth day God created Adam from the dust  
 And put in him the 'Spirit'  
 And gave him the faculty of speaking  
 So that he may *praise Him*.<sup>73</sup>

Naturally a question can be raised, that is, how one can praise God without using attributes. Here the usage 'praise of God' is to be understood in a deeper sense. The real praise is a state of mind in which one comes to the realisation of his or her 'being' in God. It is also a '*salokya*' (living in the world of *Brahman*) experience. It is a *living in God*. As St. Paul says: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."<sup>74</sup> If Christ lives in 'me', 'I' live in Christ. In other words it is an uninterrupted union with God and the whole life becomes a 'praise' of God.

## 2 *Light analogy.*

Influenced by the Gnostic terminology the Syrian composers have very often used 'light' as an analogy for God and divinity (please refer footnote 13). It is also a symbol of intellect or knowledge. In the Indian tradition also light and lamp are considered the presence of God. In using this term the Syrian composers were very cautious to avoid the dualism of the Gnostics. That is why Mar Ephrem in his hymn says that the whole cosmos is the creation of God and every creation is a manifestation of His Divine Will (please refer Mar Ephrem; footnote 11). In the light analogy where God is depicted as the light of the world, man is invited to the self-realisation that he or she is also created in the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid. P. 240

<sup>74</sup> Galatians 2, 20

‘image’ and ‘likeness’ of God, that is he or she is also called to be the light of the world. In other words the Eternal Light shines through the human being. However, human beings in his or her sinful nature hide this light that shines in him or her. The self-realisation removes this veil of darkness, and then the Eternal Light shines through him or her. This realisation results in the mystical union with God who is the Eternal Light.

Jesus says: “ I have come as light into this world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness”(John 12, 46). “You are the light of the World” (Mathew 5, 14a). The Syrian composers in the liturgical hymns that deal with the ‘light analogy’ use these two references. In realising that Jesus is the real Light, the worshipper enters into union with this Light and *lives in this Light. Living in this Light* is an uninterrupted union with Jesus, the real Light. This theme is reflected in the following hymn from the divine office on Wednesday morning:

The Lord said to the disciples:

*‘I am the true light’.*

*The darkness cannot touch*

*Those who live in this Light.*

*Fortunate are the disciples*

*Who walked in this Light.*

In several places in the world, they are remembered

Let their prayer be a strong hold to us.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *S’himo, Shubaho* (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church), St Joseph’s Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 179. [Personal translation from the Malayalam text]

Here one can note that the real fortune of the disciples consists in the real union with the true Light. Jesus is being radiated through the disciples. Thus the disciples become 'the light of the world'.

Only in Christ's *Light* Christians can 'see'. This theme comes in the hymn of offertory in the *Holy Qurbano*. The deacon kindles the candles on the Altar and sings the hymn. The same hymn is used in the 'service of fire' in the Christmas night. Kindling the fire the priest sings the hymn:

*In your Light we see light, Jesus full of light.*

*You are the true light who enlightens all creatures.*

Enlighten us with your joyous light,

Splendour of the heavenly Father.

Pure and holy one who dwells in the habitation of light,<sup>76</sup>

Keep from us evil passion and thoughts of hatred;

Grant us that in purity of heart we may do what is just and right.

As a conclusion of this short analysis of hymns in the realm of *Jnana yoga*, one can say that the *Jnana yoga* motive in the Malankara hymns focuses on the mystical union with God as the *Real Being* and as the *Divine Light*. In the liturgy the *Jnana yoga* motive does not limit itself in the negation but it reaches out to the affirmation of *existence* and *conscience*. Through this affirmation the worshipper comes to the realisation that there is only one *Reality*

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<sup>76</sup> Even though this usage is borrowed from the Gnostic terminology, it is also parallel to the concept of *Salokya*, in 6<sup>th</sup> chapter where *Jnana yoga* is dealt with. Reference: *Salokya: The Brahmana* says *mukti* is *Salokya* with the Brahman. It is the dwelling in the *Brahma Loka* (the world of Brahman). *Chandogya Upanishad* teaches that when the soul of the liberated person unites with the Supreme Reality that is light itself and the inhabitants of immense nothingness, it remains with 'It' and in 'It.'



and he or she yearns for the *samipyra* of this *Real Being* (Refer Ch. 2, 2.1.2).

#### **4.4 The formation of a hymnology in the context of inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism.**

The evolution of the Malankara liturgy in its musicality and theology has been dealt with in the above mentioned sub chapters. Studying the Malankara liturgy one can come to the conclusion that the whole set up of the liturgy, namely, the theology, musicality and poetry, is mystical. The musicality and the theology of the liturgy originated in a polemic context and naturally the motive of the liturgy is concentrated on this particular context. Even though the polemic atmosphere has influenced the theological motive of the Malankara liturgy, the theology that is 'soaked' in the liturgy is the basic faith of the eastern Churches. All the more the theology of the east is *mystical theology*.<sup>77</sup> The liturgical hymns that hold the liturgy in a mystical stream is the vital part of the Malankara liturgy. The hymns are the interpretation of the core of the faith. The faith and revelation is the same, but the interpretations of the faith must be contextualised. As it is already stated, the composers of the Syrian hymns were interpreters of their time. In other words they have interpreted and contextualised the core of the faith through their hymns (please refer 4.1). Later, most of these hymns have become the official hymns of the Malankara liturgy. The original Syrian hymns are translated into Malayalam and some of them into other vernaculars also. It is certain that the fundamental faith of the Church is revealed in the hymns and that many of these hymns share the great spirituality of India. However the Malankara Church has never tried to interpret the theology of the hymns in the living context of India especially in the context of religious pluralism.

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<sup>77</sup> Reference: <http://home.earthlink.net/~livingflame#eastern>

Only because of the fact that they originated in the oriental context they become part and parcel of the liturgical life of the Malankarites. One must not forget the fact that the Church is a living Church and the Holy Spirit revitalises the Church. She is dynamic not stagnant. There are mystical revelations all through the centuries down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Malankara Church has to seek and recognise the mystical compositions that are in conformity with the fundamental faith of the Church. Unfortunately one cannot find any such compositions officially accepted in these 400 years. Here it is important to look back to the tradition of the early fathers. Though he was a simple potter Simeon Quqoyo (1<sup>st</sup> half, 6<sup>th</sup> century) was accepted as a spiritual composer and in 508 Mar Jacob of Serugh praised his writings and encouraged him to write more. This shows that the early Church was open to the vitality of the Holy Spirit. To the patrimony of the treasury of hymns the Malankara Church has not yet contributed anything but depends only on the treasury.

Composition of new hymns demands the *interpretation of the signs of the time*. To *interpret the signs of the time* one must be deep rooted in the culture. The myths, arts, symbols, philosophy and spirituality come under the culture of a nation. These are the tools of the *interpretation of the signs of the time*. In the worship of the people of God all these things are to be taken seriously. As explained in the first chapter the Church is a worshipping community. Every regional Church is the worshipping community that lives out the Gospel of the Lord in its particular context. Thus the liturgy becomes the real celebration of the incarnation of God. The cultures, symbols, philosophy, spirituality and the myths of the native land are the media through which the celebration of the faith is actualised. In other words Jesus Christ must be *incarnated* in the regional Church, in the cultures of the region. Dr. Sebastian Painadath writes in one of his articles: “The blooming of the presence of God in Jesus of Nazareth is the indication or symbol of the creativity of man, his or her seeking of God, which takes one to



the spiritual sphere. In this realm Jesus is the real *samskruti*\* in the history. This *happy event that occurred in Jesus* wakes up every human being in every culture and time.”<sup>78</sup> To explain further one can say that the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the glorification of the history in which the culture is the most important and determining factor. The ‘Word’ became flesh in the history of man. Apart from history there is no *flesh-becoming Word*. Since the liturgy is the participation and celebration of this *flesh-becoming Word*, apart from history and culture there is no liturgy. The Malankara liturgy is the liturgy of *Malankara*.<sup>•</sup> She must celebrate the ‘*flesh-becoming Word*’ through the history and culture of Malankara. The mystical theology and the faith of the Malankara Church are being manifested through its hymns, both in their poetry and musicality. As the liturgy is rooted in history and culture, in the liturgical celebration the faithful are bound together in this culture and the faithful are related to all the others who are in the same culture, even if they are outside the community of the faithful. Therefore the musicality of the Malankara liturgy must be able to interpret and celebrate the ‘*flesh-becoming Word*’ in the culture of India, especially in a multi-religious context.

#### 4.4.1 The interpretation and formation of a hymnology in the context of inter-religious dialogue.

Unity in diversity is the underlying principle of the integrity of India. Though the culture, mentality, language, clothes, food etc. are different from state to state there is ‘something’ that makes an Indian really an ‘*Indian*.’ The Indian music, dance and symbols used in day-to-day life are some among them that project one as real

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\* that which is cultured or purified; or it can be translated as the ‘culture’.

<sup>78</sup> S. Painadath, *Aikyadeepam*, Marygiri, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India; Published in September, 2002. P. 12 (personal translation from Malayalam).

<sup>•</sup> *Malankara* = Kerala



'*Indian.*' One who does not live in these factors of identity remains alien. Due to the influence of colonial reign, unfortunately, in the history of Christianity in India there happened a sort of alienation to the native culture. Even though the Christian tradition of India is rooted in the apostolic tradition, the colonial reign tried to 'evangelise' India through an imported culture. It is also an aftermath of intermingling religion with politics. Dr. Sebastian Painadath says:

After the conversion of Emperor Constantine the Christian Church was converted to a very strong religion. Gradually in Europe and in the western part of Asia a Christian culture was formed. This culture was the product of diluting the religion in politics. In the care of the emperors, feudal lords and the colonial merchants it became the undeniable power in the world. Only this culture was imported to the continents of Africa, Asia and America. Neglecting, and sometimes to the extent of uprooting the regional cultures, this 'Christian culture' pervaded these continents. Thus the Latin Rite, Chaldean Rite, Anglicans etc. came to India. Without merging into the regional culture don't they remain foreign? <sup>79</sup>

This statement of Dr. Sebastian Painadath must be taken seriously in the interpretation of the hymnology in the Indian context, especially in a multi-religious society. The interpretation of hymnology can be in three ways. The first one is to search and find out the common element of both Indian and Syrian spirituality. This will really prepare a path to an inter-religious dialogue. The second

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<sup>79</sup> S. Painadath, *Aikyadeepam*, Marygiri, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India; Published in September, 2002. P. 13 (personal translation from Malayalam).

is the merging of the Malankara hymnology into the Indian music system. The third will be composition of new hymns. The composition of the new hymns must be in view of *interpreting the signs of the times*.

#### 4.4.1.1 The common element of both Syrian and Indian spirituality.

As one analyses the hymns of the Malankara Liturgy one can notice many common elements in the realm of spiritual experience. The reason is that there is only one Absolute Reality and all the religious experiences are the meditation on this one Absolute. In the mystical sphere it is already seen that there are similar thinking pattern in the Indian and Syrian tradition, which is described in the second chapter on *Bhakti yoga* and *Jnana yoga*. This subchapter deals with the symbols used in the hymns, which are common to both the traditions. Here, only an example is shown in which one can observe the parallelism in the Syrian and Indian tradition. The hymn sung during the offertory brings out the symbol 'fire' or 'light'. The text is as follows:

In your light, we see light, Jesus full of light  
 You are the true light which enlightens all creation;  
 Enlighten us by your joyous light, splendour of the heavenly Father.  
 Pure and holy one, who dwell in habitations of light,  
 Keep from us evil passions and fruitless tribulations,  
 Grant that in purity of heart we may do the works of justice.  
 Come, sinners beseech and beg for pardon;  
 for the door of the Lord is open to all who knock at it,  
 And he who asks receives and to him who begs it is given  
 Make a good remembrance, Lord, of the faithful dead,  
 Who ate your holy flesh and drank your living blood;

Let them stand at your right hand on the day when your majesty  
appears.<sup>80</sup>

Jnanadas in one of his articles states: “The hymn opens with a mystical note. At the meaning level, there is an experience of Oneness- Jesus the true light, the splendour of the Heavenly Father enlightening all creation. Light, the most powerful symbol of God, is as old as creation itself. In every religion God is conceived as light, lamp, or Sun. The oil lamp lit in the temples and the candles lighted on the altars are symbols of the one enlightening Sun, God.”<sup>81</sup>

According to him the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* repeatedly use this powerful symbol to depict God. He brings out for example one of the hymns or *mantras* which is recited by every Hindu at the break of the day looking at the Sun, popularly known as the *Gayathri mantra*:

We meditate upon the glorious splendour  
Of the vivifier divine  
May he himself illumine our minds<sup>82</sup>

He explains further why there is similarity in these different traditions of experience. “We see that there is an amazing similarity between the two hymns not because both are Eastern hymns (Though they are Eastern, they come from different traditions, the Indian and the Syrian) but because they are mystical experiences of

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<sup>80</sup> Holy Qurbano. English translation.

<sup>81</sup> Jnanadas, *The Indian Elements in the Malankara Liturgy*; Malankara Voice, Mar-Apr. 2003. P. 17

<sup>82</sup> Rgveda III, 62,10



the sages who meditated upon the Absolute. As the experience is one, the expression, naturally is at least similar.”<sup>83</sup>

What is particular with the Syrian text is the assertion that Jesus is the light. Above all the reference is biblical. The undercurrent of the Vedic experience makes it more beautiful and richer.

The striking resemblance between the second stanza and another Rg vedic hymn is noteworthy:

Shine brightly, Agni\*, and chase away  
Our sin, beam down upon us grace,  
May the lord burn away our sin!<sup>84</sup>

In this beautiful prayer, the human, divine and cosmic elements are all present. *Agni* is the material fire, but he is also God and the fire within us. He shines in all directions, purifies all he touches, he kindles our own interior fire and imparts to all fires their power and strength. He illuminates us and thus rescues us from darkness. This hymn affirms clearly that there is a fire that has power to burn away all impurities and sins.<sup>85</sup>

Fire is the symbol of priests. All the faithful are priests who offer sacrifice in the fire of *tapas*, fire of love. In this context the

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<sup>83</sup> Jnanadas, *The Indian Elements in the Malankara Liturgy*; Malankara Voice, Mar-Apr. 2003. P. 17

\* Fire.

<sup>84</sup> Rgveda 1, 97

<sup>85</sup> Reference: Raimando Panikar, *Vedic Experience*. P.495 (obliged to Jnanadas, *The Indian Elements in the Malankara Liturgy*; Malankara Voice, Mar-Apr. 2003. P. 17)

hymn is very relevant during the offertory. V.F. Vineeth in his 'Meditation' on fire states:

The Lord, who designed fire and resides in fire, yet is other than fire, dwells in your speech and is the eternal source of all meaningful words you ever utter. As sparks arrives from fire so do words arrive from inner consciousness, the intense form of burning ardour (*tapas*) kept in our heart. He who dwells in fire dwells in speech... fire is considered to be the symbol of priests, who bring offerings to the Lord and utter *mantras* over them... We all are priests, bringing offering of our own selves to be sacrificed in the fire of *tapas*, the fire of love, the fire of holocaust. Fire gives us warmth, so does our words of love and encouragement convey friendly assurance to others. Fire spreads far and wide, so does our love and concern for others. Fire dispels darkness, so does our words arising from fire of sacred wisdom, dispels darkness from within us and from others.<sup>86</sup>

In the Malankara/Syrian hymn, the same fire, *who* dwells in the habitations of light, is invoked upon so that he may keep us from evil passions and fruitless tribulations.

The last stanza of the introductory hymn is an invocation for the dead. Noteworthy is the link between the living and the dead. God, the eternal, man, the living and dead are linked together. They are parts of a whole, the relation is inseparable. This is one of the unique characters of the Syrian liturgy. Most of the hymns and prayers end up with the commemoration of the dead. This is

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<sup>86</sup> V. F. Vineeth, *Meditation*; Vidya Vanam Publications, Bangalore, India; First Published 2003. P. 80

also very much in tune with the Hindu tradition in which there are many types of rituals to honour the dead.<sup>87</sup>

#### **4.4.1.2 The merging of the Malankara hymnology into Indian music system.**

Since the fundamental principles of the musicality of Malankara hymns and the Indian music system are the same, the Malankara hymnology can be merged into Indian music system. As it is already stated the music of India is the manifestation of the mystical nature and the culture of India. A liturgy that is evolved in India must be soaked in the music of India. Otherwise it will be alienated from the culture.<sup>88</sup> Every liturgy has been developed and evolved in a particular culture and context. There is already an accusation in the air, that is, 'Malankara liturgy as originated from the Antiochian Liturgy is also foreign'. This accusation is not fully correct because even if the Malankara liturgy originated from Antiochian liturgy it inherits the common traits of the orient. However, one cannot neglect the accusation that the Malankara liturgy remains foreign until it is fully regionalised. Philip Vysanethu states:

The Malankara Liturgy is a liturgy that originated from the Antiochian liturgy and grew in India. The nutrition it receives is from the soil of India. The nutrition is nothing but the culture (arts), language, tradition etc. However,

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<sup>87</sup> Reference: Jnanadas, *The Indian Elements in the Malankara Liturgy*; Malankara Voice, Mar-Apr. 2003. P. 17

<sup>88</sup> Most of the Christian denominations in India, especially in Kerala use a 'westernised' music in their liturgy and also in para-liturgical services. The western music comes from the churches and the Indian music emerges from the temples indirectly or directly project the Christians in India as foreigners.



down through the centuries the Malankara liturgy, even if it has been planted in the soil of 'Malankara', still relies on nutrition that is to be 'imported.' As we have already seen the identity of the Malankara liturgy is in its musicality and this musicality is not so strange to the liturgy because of the fact that it belongs to the oriental tradition. But at the same time it is 'a little bit foreign' because it uses its externals and music of the Syrian tradition. As we have already mentioned, the Malankara liturgy is the liturgy of Malankara and it is reasonable and apt to say that the liturgical music also should be Indian. There is no other musical system in the orient other than the Indian music that is so systematised and so mystic. The scope of Indian music is unlimited. Even though we can pick up the traces of Indian music from the Syrian hymnal music it is not based on a systematised and developed system of music.<sup>89</sup>

This merging will pave a path for widening the horizon of the Malankara musicality (it is very exhaustive in its structure) because Indian music system is inexhaustive. As already stated the musicality of the Malankara liturgy is mainly based on the eight colours or *Qintho*. Most of the hymns used for various feasts and occasions are musically composed under eight tunes. This causes a sort of confusion in the selection of tunes.

Most of the hymns in the Malankara liturgy have been categorised into eight colours (Oktoechos). In the selection of colours for different feasts and other services there are some

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<sup>89</sup> Philip Vysanethu, *The Mystical Character of the Malankara Liturgy enriched by the Indian Music*, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz; Unpublished M.Th thesis, 2001. P. 67

‘forgotten’ confusions. For feast days and for burial the same colours are being used. For example the first colour is very solemn and majestic. For all the feast days of Mary, the mother of God, this colour is used, at the same time the same colour is used for the burial of children (the first service)...! Even though human life is a mixture of happiness and sorrows, there are times, which are particularly a time of joy, and there are times when we really mourn or cry. Nobody will sing a funeral melody during a birthday celebration. A tune that is particularly determined for Good Friday is used in the service of priestly ordination also. The colours five and six have particularly a penitential nature. But these colours are used in the feast of Ascension and the feast of Transfiguration. There is another example that shows very evidently this confusion is that the same tune is used for singing the hymn of funeral procession and the hymn of the procession in the ‘Yaldo’ service (Christmas). It is not sure whether it was the practice of the early Malankara tradition or a later practice. In any case it is not at all proper to use the same tune for the funeral procession and for the Christmas procession.<sup>90</sup>

This merging process is also an ‘inculturation’ of the liturgical music. Inculturation is not to be limited by adapting certain externals in the liturgy but it is in the stage of ‘being in the culture’. Mar Ivanios, the founder of the Order of the Imitation of Christ, was a great person who was convinced of ‘this merging into the culture’ of the native land. His deep conviction of accepting and living out the native culture is clearly expressed in the Holy Rule of the Order of the Imitation of Christ: “The aim of this congregation is to follow Jesus Christ in his contemplative and active life based on the native culture of India...”<sup>91</sup> He was such a courageous and dynamic person

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. P. 68

<sup>91</sup> *The Holy Rule of the Order of the Imitation of Christ*, chapter 1 / 4.

that he chose for the members of his religious congregation the saffron coloured religious habit and the simple life style of the Hindu Sanyasis. Being in the culture makes one part and parcel of the culture.<sup>92</sup> Since music has a very prominent place among the cultures it is very closely related with the day-today life of the people. If the Malankara Church explores the horizon of the Indian music that is deeply mystical, and adapt itself to this system, the Malankara liturgy will become the liturgy of 'Malankara' without losing its monastic nature. The Vatican Council II, in the decree on Liturgy, states that the regional music tradition of every country should be given due prominence because the regional music is part and parcel of the culture of the folk.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> The author of this paper is the first catholic priest (the first Christian priest) who conducted an Indian Classical concert in the premise of a Hindu temple for communal harmony. On 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1995, with great anxiety the author entered on the stage in the courtyard of a Hindu temple escorted by both Hindus and Christians. After giving a short speech on 'universal brotherhood' and religious tolerance the concert was begun. When the concert is finished, to the surprise of the author, the Hindu brethren have shown their great respect to the author. After a concert in another temple, though the author was in his religious habit, he was invited to the *Srikovil* (holy of holies) of the temple where only a Hindu priest is allowed to enter. This shows that one's merging into the culture removes all barriers of strangeness. The reports and articles of the event can be seen in the prominent dailies of India:

*Catholic priest sings paeans to Hindu gods for communal harmony*, Times of India, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1995; *Transcending religious barriers through music*, Maharashtra Herald, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1995; *The musical offertory of a Christian priest in the Hindu temple* (Malayalam), Mathrubhumi, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1995; *The concert of Christian priest in Temple* (Malayalam), Malayalamanorama, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1995; *Catholic priest conducts music concert at Hindu Temple*, SAR News, PB No.6236, Bombay 400 010, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1995.

<sup>93</sup> Reference. Vatican II, *The Decree on Liturgy*, Chapter VI, No. 119.



#### **4.4.1.3 Composition of hymns in view of interpreting the signs of the times.**

In the beginning of this chapter it is mentioned that most of the Syrian hymns were the 'interpretation of the signs of the times'. The Syrian composers have interpreted the faith in their own context (Please refer 4.1) and that was the need of that time. As the liturgical celebration is the participation in the flesh-becoming logos i.e., participation in the human history, the liturgical hymns must interpret the theology in the present context. Thus every liturgical celebration becomes not only the commemoration of the salvation event but also the reinterpretation of it in the living context. All the hymns that are used in the Malankara liturgy are very rich in their mystical nature and theological thinking. However, they are determined by the context of the polemics and apologetics. Most of these hymns were composed between 300 A.D and 700 A.D. The hymns used in the Malankara liturgy are the translations of these hymns. Even though they are mystical and theologically rich the symbols and the expression of language cannot fully fit into the context of India. The following is an example to show the difference between two hymns in honour of Our Lady. The first one is a liturgical hymn of 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D, composed by Mar Jacob and the second is a mystical hymn of 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D, written by Jnanadas, a priest of the Order of the Imitation of Christ, in the Malankara Church.

Mar Jacob – 5<sup>th</sup>  
Century A.D.

O the blessed virgin, pray for us so that the Lord may grant us grace.

You are filled with the grace of God. Pray for us who plead for His mercy, that the Lord may have pity on us.

As you heard the strange greeting of the angel, you have asked yourself the reason for this strange greetings:

‘You have promised your Son, but I am a virgin, how can I conceive a child without sexual contact, please tell me.’

Jnanadas – 20<sup>th</sup>  
Century A.D.

Your *lotus feet* is our (*sharanam*) trust, O mother

O virgin mother, mediator of grace and blessings

I venerate your *lotus (flower) feet*

O the figure of love, O the *immaculate*.

O mother let my eyes absorb your shining beauty

Let my ‘*karal*’ (*liver*) be filled with your *prasada* of love.

<sup>94</sup> *S'himo, Men'olam* (Divine Office of the Malankara Catholic Church), St Joseph's Printing House, Tiruvalla, 1996. P. 112. [Personal translation from the Malayalam text]

May He be praised, who sent his messenger, may He be praised who became flesh in her womb, may He, the Holy Spirit be praised who descended on her.

By Her prayer, may the Lord have mercy on us.

O the Son, by the prayer of the one who bore you for nine months, let the punishment of your anger be away from us.<sup>94</sup>

Whether my eyes are closed or opened

Let them see your  
(*Thirumukha darshanam*)  
countenance.

Grant us the blessing  
in your mercy

That I may sing your  
praise.<sup>95</sup>

Comparing the first hymn with the second hymn one can observe a notable difference in their style and structure of poetry and especially in the usage of symbols. In the hymn of Mar Jacob it is very clear that the motive is Christological. The theme is that Jesus is born of the Virgin Mary from the Father. The symbols and linguistic style do not talk directly to the listeners because his audience is not the listeners of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unless one goes deep into the theology of the hymn, interpret it and meditate on it, the hymn will not touch the heart of an Indian of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here lies

<sup>95</sup> Translated by Philip Mathew Vysanethu, from the original text in Malayalam composed by Jnanadas.



the importance of new compositions in the sense that they can interpret the theology in the present situation. The last stanza speaks of the 'anger of God', which nobody likes to hear today.<sup>96</sup> Today the Christian spirituality speaks of 'the love of God' that surpasses every 'punishment' and 'the anger of God'.

On the other side the hymn of Jnanadas totally fits into the Indian context. The symbols and terms to praise Our Lady are easily digestible to an Indian.<sup>97</sup> To make this theme clearer some of the terms can be analysed. The first adjective he uses for the feet of Our Lady is 'lotus'. The lotus flower is a holy flower for the Indians. This flower is associated with deities. Though the lotus grows in muddy water its flower is very beautiful and the flower does not touch the muddy water. Without explaining further the composer brings out the theme of 'immaculate conception' through the adjective 'lotus' that is understood by any Indian. Both Christians and non-Christians in India use the word '*sharanam*'.<sup>98</sup> In the literal sense it means 'trust' (in German, *Vertrauen*). However in the Indian context it is something beyond 'trust'. Unfortunately there is no word in English, which can bring out the real meaning of '*sharanam*'. It can be explained further as 'total surrender'. Any way it reveals the devotion of the poet towards Our Lady. Another word is '*karal*' that means 'liver'. In the Indian context the word

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<sup>96</sup> The concept of 'the anger of God' can be also seen in the popular hymn by Mar Jacob, which is sung during the breaking of the bread.

<sup>97</sup> In 1995 the author of this thesis has composed this hymn in the *raga Charukeshi* (it is a very meditative *raga*) and has sung it during a concert that was conducted at the temple premise. It was enjoyed and appreciated by both Hindus and Christians.

<sup>98</sup> The pilgrims who make their pilgrimage to Shabarimala, the famous pilgrim center of Hindus in Kerala, repeats the word '*sharanam Ayyappa*' as a mantra. Ayyappa is the deity of the temple. By repeating this *mantra* they put their trust on Ayyappa and surrender everything to Him who is the manifestation of God for the Hindu brethren.

'*karal*' is used as the symbol of love or seat of love, intimacy, affection etc. In the Malayalam literature *karal* indicates the *heart*. '*Prasadam*' is the offering from the temple. Every one who worships in the temple receives '*prasadam*' from the priest and distributes this '*prasadam*' to his/her dear ones. One who brings the '*prasadam*' is the mediator of the blessings of the deity. So too Our Lady is the mediator of the grace of God. She brings *prasadam*, the love of God, for everyone. The word '*darshanam*' is used very often in a religious context.<sup>99</sup> It can be translated in English as 'countenance' or in German as *Antlitz*. The Hindu devotee not only worships in the temple but also has '*darshanam*' of the deity. This word is used in almost every religion of India. Considering all these facts one can say that the hymn of Jnanadas, written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century 'interprets the signs of the time' in the Indian context where the love of God is more important than 'theological duel'. The hymn of Mar Jacob interprets the time of 5<sup>th</sup> century where controversies and heresies were prevalent. The period from 5<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century is a transitional period and here one can notice a growth from the 'fundamental faith' to a 'living faith'.

As the conclusion one can say that the composition of new hymns demands the 'interpretation of the signs of the times' and vice versa. Down through the centuries mystical thoughts and mystical hymns have emerged. Following the example of Mar Jacob who encouraged Simeon *Quqoyo* to compose hymns the Malankara Church must find out such writings which are in conformity with the faith of the Church and add them to the treasury of the liturgical tradition. The traditional hymns composed by the Fathers are the patrimony of the Church and the new hymns will be the treasure of the growing Church. This growth from the old to the new will be the

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<sup>99</sup> *Darshanam* is also used in the secular context, especially when somebody is let to see the king.

co-operation of the Malankara Church with the Holy Spirit who renews everything.

#### 4.4.2 Interpretation of the hymns in ecumenical context.

The Christians in India are divided into many denominations, namely, Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Protestants and Pentecostals. Among them there are denominations that are faithful to the apostolic tradition and there are those who do not accept apostolic tradition. Because of this there are theological differences in their teachings. The Catholic Church and the Orthodox / Jacobite Churches in India share the same theology. However, the Supremacy of the Pope is not acceptable to the Orthodox / Jacobite Churches. The Malankara Catholic Church and the Orthodox / Jacobite Churches use the same liturgy and the same hymns. Therefore in the theology and spirituality of hymns there exists no hindrance to ecumenism whose aim is full communion. The Mar Thoma Church that came into existence in 1876 A.D is also called the 'Church of reformation'.<sup>100</sup> This Church uses the anaphora of St.

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<sup>100</sup> From the website of Mar Thoma Church:

However as the theological controversy came to a climax, the two leaders, Palakunnathu Abraham Malpaan (Malpaan means Professor of Theology ) and Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpaan and their followers were dismissed from the Orthodox-Jacobite church. Palakunnathu Abraham Malpan sent his 23 year old nephew who was at that time a deacon, to Syria in 1843 and got him ordained as Bishop Mathews Mar Athanasius by the Patriarch of Antioch. Immediately on return, he was declared the Malankara Metropolitan by the decree of the King. Following this Pulikottil Joseph Ramban of the orthodox tradition went to Antioch and got himself consecrated as bishop with the name Joseph Mar Dionysios. He returned to Kerala with the Patriarch of Antioch Peter III and convened the synod of Mulamthuruthy in 1876. During this synod the church accepted the spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch. Mathews Mar Athanasious died in 1877, and was succeeded by, Thomas Mar Athanasious (1879-1889).



James and practically all other liturgical celebration is in the Antiochian rite. Since it is influenced by Protestant theology the prayers for the dead and all the intercessory prayers of saints are omitted.<sup>101</sup> In theory the theology of the Eucharist is different from that of the Catholic Church.<sup>102</sup> However, analysing the hymns used in the Holy Qurbano one may not find any difference in the theology of the Eucharist with that of the Malankara Catholic Church. An example can be shown in the similarity of the hymn

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The struggle between Bishop Athanasius and Bishop Dionysius led to the excommunication of one bishop by the other and resulted in the separation of the Malankara Syrian Church into Jacobite and Marthomite Churches. Those who supported the reformation within the church organised as Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Christian Church as an independent church without any affiliation with any foreign patriarchate.

<sup>101</sup> Dr. M.M. Thomas, *Abraham Malpan (1796-1843)*, From "Indian Christian Theology: *Life and Thought of some pioneers*; The New Day Publications of India, Tiruvalla 1992. (Obliged: the Website of Mar Thoma Church: [www.marthomachurch.com](http://www.marthomachurch.com)) P. 1:

Secondly, the Malpan, with eleven other clergymen, produced a manifesto (in the form of a memorandum submitted to the British resident) indicating twenty-three corrupt practices in faith and morals in the Church. It was a call for spiritual and moral reformation. Since the liturgy of Eucharist (Qurbano) was the central act of worship in the congregation's life and the recognized means of confessing the Faith and educating the people in faith and morals, they also made certain changes in the liturgy to make it more biblical as they understood it. Whenever Malpan officiated at the seminary and in the congregations, especially in his own parish, he used the revised liturgy for the communion service. He also put an end to auricular confession, invocation of the Virgin and the saints and the celebration of the Eucharist when no one was there to communicate along with the priest. He gave the bread and wine separately as in Protestant churches.

<sup>102</sup> They do not accept the teaching of 'transubstantiation' rather they admit 'transignification'.

sung during the communion in the Mar Thoma Church and the hymn sung during the communion on the Passover day in the Malankara Catholic Church or in the Orthodox Churches. This is common to both the Churches. In this hymn the stress is more on the 'sacrificial nature' than the 'banquet' aspect. The concept of mystery is the theme of the hymn. The sacrifice of the Old Testament time, especially, the shedding of the blood of Abel, sacrifice of Melchizedek and the sacrifice of Abraham point to the Holy Qurbano that is offered on 'this' day. To show that the Holy Qurbano is a mystery the vision of Ezekiel, the vision of Isaiah the son of Amos etc. are portrayed in this hymn.<sup>103</sup> This reveals a truth that in the celebration of the faith one forgets all about the theological conflicts! What is omitted from the liturgical hymns of the Mar Thoma Church is the intercessory prayers of Mary, the apostles and the saints. The two stanzas of the hymn sung during the

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<sup>103</sup> Reference: *Parasyaradhana Kramam* (Text of public service), Published by Mar Thoma Sabha Publication Board, Printed at Mar Thoma Press, Thiruvalla; Forty seventh Edition, July 2001. P. 100:

The following are some of the stanzas that deal with the sacrificial and mysterious nature of H. Qurbano:

1. Mystery, mystery the Lord has said, the mystery is for me and to my household.  
Glory and praise forever to the true Bridegroom in the glory.
2. To the lamb who saved the first born of Israel in Egypt, from the destruction... Glory and Praise...
3. To whom who appeared in the burning bush and given his light to Moses... Glory and praise...
5. To him who is foreshadowed in the mystery of the blood of Abel... Glory and praise...
6. To the lamb, which is trapped in the bush and is sacrificed for Isaac... Glory and praise...
11. You are the one whom Ezekiel has seen in his vision of chariot... Glory and praise...
12. You are the one whom the son of Amos has seen in his vision of the throne of glory... Glory and praise...

offertory are in honour of Mary, the apostles and the martyrs. The Mar Thoma Church has removed these stanzas in honour of the apostles and the martyrs.<sup>104</sup> However the musicality of the liturgy plays a vital role in the ecumenical relation between the Malankara Catholic Church and the Mar Thoma Church.

The 'Church of South India' and the 'Church of North India' use a liturgy that is similar to the Latin Rite.<sup>105</sup> These Churches are very much influenced by the Anglican Church. The attitude of '*sola scriptura*' is very prominent in the liturgy and its liturgical music. Besides the '*Kristiya kirthanangal*' (Christian Lyrics) they use '*Inana Kirthanangal*' (Church hymns) that are the imitations of

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid. P. 70, 71

<sup>105</sup> [www.csichurch.com](http://www.csichurch.com)

The Church of South India is the result of the union of churches of varying traditions, Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Reformed - in that area. It was inaugurated in September 1947, after protracted negotiation among the churches concerned.

The series of consultations, with a view to Church Union in North India, began in 1929. Eventually on the "basis of negotiations" prepared by a series of Round Table Conferences a plan of Church-union drawn up. A negotiating committee was constituted in 1951 by the Church bodies concerned - which were the Church of Northern India, the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, the Methodist Church in Southern Asia and the Council of the Baptist Churches in Northern India. In 1957, the Church of the Brethren and the Disciples of Christ also joined in the negotiations. The plan reached its fourth and final edition in 1965 and, on that basis, the Church Union in North India was inaugurated on 29th November 1970 in Nagpur. However, at the last moment, the Methodist Church in Southern Asia decided not to join the union. (from the website of the Church of north India)



western hymns.<sup>106</sup> These hymns are arranged according to the liturgical year and various occasions. There are no hymns in honour or in the intercession of Our Lady or the saints.

The Pentecostals in India do not belong to apostolic tradition. They do not have specified liturgical rubrics, 'Qudosh' قُدُوش or sacraments. The hymns they use for their worship are mainly popular ones. As far as they do not accept the apostolic tradition, to them any ecumenical movement in worship is irrelevant.

Since the hymns are the interpretation of faith in the present context, they are really 'catalysing agents' of ecumenism and of the unity of Churches.<sup>107</sup> Even though the Christians in India are scattered in various denomination they use certain hymns in their Para liturgy, which are common to all. Composition of new hymns in an ecumenical context will be a remote help for the unity of all Christian denominations. When there is opportunity of ecumenical liturgical celebrations the hymns to be used for this occasion must be also ecumenical. In such context theological terminologies that are disputable must be avoided.

#### 4.5 The Expansion of the horizon of Malankara Musicality.

It is already explained that the fundamental principles of both Indian music and Malankara musicality are the same. However the musicality of the Malankara liturgy is not based on a systematised

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<sup>106</sup> Reference: *Podu Aaradhana pusthakam* ( The Book of Common Worship); Printed at C. M. S. Press, Kottayam, Kerala state. 31<sup>st</sup> Edition-2001.

*Church Hymns*, printed at the C. M. S. Press, Kottayam. 20<sup>th</sup> edition.  
[These two parts are compiled in One Book]

<sup>107</sup>Reference: Ecumenical directory, Nr. 187

music system. This makes the musicality of the Malankara liturgy exhaustive and weak. Indian music that manifests fully the mystical nature of Oriental music is the apt system of music for the Malankara Liturgy (please refer 3.4). In this context the expansion of the horizon of Malankara musicality means the formation of the liturgical music based on the system of Indian music. The Malankara Liturgy came into existence in 16<sup>th</sup> century and in these 400 years the Malankara Church has never done any study both in its musicality and poetry. The Malankara Catholic Church has a liturgical commission, however it has not yet published any document on liturgical music. This liturgical commission has done some corrections in the linguistic style of some of the hymns. There have been some attempts done by individuals in giving new tunes to the hymns. Since these attempts were from people who have not done any authentic study both in music and liturgy, instead of reforming the liturgical music, the new tunes could only destroy the mystical nature of the liturgy. This subchapter is an attempt to bring out some practical proposals in view of forming an indigenous Liturgical music.

#### **4.5.1 Proper study of liturgical music.**

The first and foremost step in the expansion of the horizon of the Malankara musicality is the proper study of it. There are many liturgists in the Malankara Church. Unfortunately they are not authentic in the very important aspect of the liturgy that is the musicality. There is no Malankara liturgy without the musicality. The poetry and music give birth to musicality that elevates the worshipper to a mystical sphere. The study of the nature of the Malankara musicality demands the acceptance and acknowledgement of the richness of Orient that is revealed in its full vitality in Indian music. Since the music system is the important factor of

the culture of India, this study leads one to go deep into the culture of India and ultimately this makes one to be in the culture. Since the propagation of musical tradition of Malankara is through the oral tradition its growth and development depend on bishops and priests. They are the gurus through whom the musicality is handed over to the faithful (please refer 3.2.8). According to the tradition in every liturgical celebration the bishop/priest is the leader of liturgical music.<sup>108</sup> Therefore in the priestly training, especially in liturgical studies, along with liturgical music a basic training in the Indian music is unavoidable. The Vatican Council II, in the decree on Liturgy very clearly instructs that in the seminaries, novitiates, study houses of religious communities (both men & women) as well as in other catholic institutions and schools, education in music should be given great importance. In order to achieve its fruits, the teachers of church music should be well trained.<sup>109</sup> Even though the chapter on Sacred Music is interpreted by the Orientals in the 'western context,' it is more applicable to the Malankara liturgy than all other liturgies because in the Malankara Liturgy music is not an external

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<sup>108</sup> In every prayer, divine office etc. the priest is supposed to lead the congregation. In singing also the priest has to begin the singing, he has to teach the congregation the liturgical songs. These facts very clearly tell us that the priests have a very key position in the liturgical music of Malankara and they must be properly trained in music in order to lead and teach the congregation. Unfortunately many of the priests of Malankara church is without any preliminary training in music. Now a days as the part of the priestly training there have been ample chances given for preliminary training in music. In the study- curriculum of the priest-students there is time reserved for preliminary lessons in music. However the author has noticed that very a few students take this time seriously and utilize this chance properly. The author who has many years directly involved in the priestly formation has observed that the students those who bunk the choir practices and music lessons, later when they become priests, experience difficulties in leading a liturgical congregation.

<sup>109</sup>Reference: Vatican II, *The Decree on Sacred Liturgy*, Chapter VI, No. 115



ornament but it is the inseparable part of the liturgy. Another area where education in Liturgical music should be given is in Sunday Schools (School of Catechism). In the syllabus of Sunday school, Liturgical music should also be included and the teachers must be well trained in it. There are many talented persons in the Malankara community. Among them those who are interested in studying music can be encouraged to do research in music and promoted as teachers in the seminaries and other institutions of the Malankara Catholic Church.

#### **4.5.1.1 The study demands correction and preparation.**

The study of liturgical music demands correction and formation of the liturgy. In the content and structure of the hymns and in the musicality there are instances that need correction. The following are some of the important areas that need correction.

##### **a. In the structure of hymns.**

All the hymns in the Malankara liturgy are translations from the original Syrian hymns. The scholars who translated them have indeed done justice to preserve the meaning of the original texts. However, in the process of the translation most of them have lost their metric structure and this resulted in the collision of lyrics with the music. The metric structure of the stanzas is manipulated and it causes break of the flow of music. To adjust the meter, the words and phrases are at times prolonged and the singing of the hymn often creates a sort of awkwardness.<sup>110</sup> Composing new hymns

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<sup>110</sup> An example can be shown is that the hymn of Tuesday – ‘*Sutoro*’ (divine office). The words and phrases of the first hymn of Tuesday- ‘*Sutoro*’ are unnecessarily prolonged and sometimes shortened and it

without spoiling the original theme of the hymn can solve this problem. For this work a team is necessary, which must include liturgists, lyric composers and Indian musicians.

Another important factor that the Malankara liturgy has disregarded in these 400 years is the rhythmic structure of the hymns.<sup>111</sup> (In the chapter 3 the principle of Rhythm (*laya*) is sufficiently brought out.). Philip Vysanethu in his thesis of Master degree states:

It is a very common statement: 'Singing in rhythm is the business of musicians or of those who have learnt music.' Here we may compare music with language. To communicate properly we have to consider the simple laws of language or communication. When I communicate with somebody there is a regulation and common accepted law in my pronunciation, intonation and gestures. A wrong gesture can be misinterpreted. When I pronounce incorrectly it will not be understood properly. So too is it with liturgical music... The music

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creates an unpleasant atmosphere. The prolonging of the syllables and phrases have gone to that extent, sometimes the meaning of the words are altered. In some places the lines are very long and the musical meter is short and naturally the singing is 'run over' by excess of words.

<sup>111</sup> The concept of rhythm is lost today, especially in the church music. It apparently shows our *non-rhythmic* life with its own consequences and problems. The lacking of this rhythm concept is very evident in many of the church singing in Europe. Once a lady in Austria asked me, "Do you have rhythm-singing in your church?" This question reveals the fact that the concept of rhythm is already forgotten in the church singing, without realizing that the rhythms in which the hymns to be sung are written on the top of every hymn. Very often the organist also pays no attention to the rhythm factor. When we sing without paying attention to the rhythm or in irregular manner, our physical and mental rhythm will be also indirectly affected.

has become part and parcel of the liturgy in the Malankara Church and no word is uttered without musicality. Liturgical singing is a communication with God and with the fellow being through the medium of music. By the very fact that music is an unavoidable part of the liturgy, the simple rules and regulations of music also must be observed. Every human being has rhythm-consciousness. But like every other factor it also needs training. The aim of this training is not to become experts in music but to communicate through music. Then comes another counter question: 'Since sixteenth century we have been singing in the liturgy...with or without rhythm concept...now why should we need to rethink and be trained?' Every system is open to correction and purification. Down through the centuries the musicality of the Malankara liturgy has not been studied and developed. The disorders and weak points are handed down to generations unknowingly. When disorders are discovered, these are to be corrected.<sup>112</sup>

#### **b. In the contents of hymns.**

Since the liturgical hymns are the 'interpretation of the signs of the time', their contents must be contextualised or 'updated'. In the Malankara liturgy some of them are not 'updated'. The following are a few examples of such instances.

There are hymns in the Liturgy that create a sort of 'indifference'. In the liturgy of the Sacrament of marriage, the

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<sup>112</sup> Philip Vysanethu, *The Mystical Character of the Malankara Liturgy enriched by the Indian Music*, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz; (Unpublished M.Th thesis), 2001. P. 70



service of the 'blessing of the crown' is concluded with a hymn of blessing. The theme of this hymn is the relation between Christ and the Church, which is brought out in the bridal mysticism. However in this hymn there is no particular reference of the bride and bridegroom who are going to be united in the marriage. Thus it creates an atmosphere of 'indifferentism'. This may be one of the reasons why this hymn is often omitted in the ceremony. As this hymn is taken into the liturgy, a stanza that directly pertains to the bride and bridegroom could have been added to the hymn.<sup>113</sup>

Many hymns of the Holy Week bring out indirectly a kind of 'anti-Jewish attitude'. The hymn sung during the procession in the church on Good Friday can be taken as an example. The scene is that Joseph from Arimathea requests Pilate to hand over the body of Jesus to be buried. The last line is thus: "...Allow me to bury the body of Jesus whom the Jews crucified."<sup>114</sup> Another instance can be taken from the hymn of Easter: "...The Church and her children rejoice on your day of resurrection, the Jews are gloomy, the disciples are happy."<sup>115</sup> These two examples make a sense that the Jews as a whole are responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. This may cause another interpretation that the Jews are against Jesus and the Church. Though such instances have not much influence on the worshippers who sing them, in 20<sup>th</sup> century it is not at all proper to have such references in the liturgy. However it is appreciable that from the prose-version of the hymn the reference to the Jews is removed.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Reference: *Kudashakal* (The Sacraments of the Malankara Catholic Church), Printed at St. Joseph's Press Thiruvananthapuram- 695 014. P. 75

<sup>114</sup> *The Feast Days of the Malankara Catholic Church*, Printed at San Jose Process, Thiruvananthapuram-695014, P. 209 (Personal translation from the Malayalam Text).

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. P. 222

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. P. 223

**c. In the tradition of ‘seniority in leading the hymns’**

As the bishops and priests are the leaders of the liturgy they are supposed to lead the worshipping congregation. When there are more than one priest the one who is senior by office or by age is supposed to lead the singing also. This practice comes in touch with the oral tradition in which the seniors have a position of ‘guru’ because they are closer to the origin of tradition and they are supposed to be people with experience. The seniors are the ones who transmit the musicality to the young generation. This is very strictly observed in the monasteries and seminaries of the Malankara Church. But very often the liturgical singing led by very old priests ends up in chaos. One of the reasons is that many of the seniors have had not enough training in the basics of music and the other is physiological inability of old age. This problem can be solved by a little bit of correction in the tradition. In order to keep the tradition let the seniors lead the prayers and let somebody who is trained in music or at least a younger one lead the singing.

**d. Preparation in liturgical singing.**

Spontaneity and creativity are the inherited qualities of Malankarites. However it does not mean that preparation and training are against spontaneity and creativity. The common liturgical functions such as ordination, marriages etc. require preparation. The master of ceremonies, the choirmaster and the clergy who preside over the ceremony must come to an agreement in selecting the texts, hymns etc. Unfortunately in the Malankara Church this preparation is very often neglected.<sup>117</sup> Traditions are the

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<sup>117</sup> Once I was conducting the choir in an ordination ceremony. All the members of the choir and the congregation were following a text that was regularly used in all the dioceses of Malankara Catholic Church. The

heritage of the Church but the traditions that are against the well being of the congregation must be changed or reformed. For this, preparation and training are necessary. In the parishes the people can be trained in liturgical music periodically.

Choir. For the usual liturgical function in the churches and communities choir is not an unavoidable factor. However, in the extraordinary liturgical functions especially when many people from different communities come together, a choir is necessary. This choir must lead the whole congregation. Special attention must be taken that the selection of certain tunes and hymns must not destroy the mystical nature of the whole liturgical function.

## **4.5.2 The reformation of Malankara musicality based on Indian music system**

The theme reformation of the Malankara musicality based on Indian music system is already explained theoretically in the above title 4.4.1.2. This chapter will be dealing with the practical side of it.

### **4.5.2.1 Conscientization and preparation of the community**

In the practical side of the reformation of the liturgy the first and foremost aspect is to conscientize the faithful of the Malankara Church that even if they are known as Syro-Malankarites they are

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bishop also came to know that the congregation was following a text (which he could have also used) that is a little bit modified form of the old text he had brought. The stanzas of the hymns were sung in two groups, firstly by the bishop and the small group in the 'Madbaho' (sanctuary) and secondly by the choir and the faithful. The bishop and the small group sang the stanzas from the old book and the congregation followed the words from the new version. The Master of Ceremony could not do any thing there.



truly the sons and daughters of India. The 'colonial traits' of subgrading the cultures and music of India must be fully removed from their blood. Thus the dichotomy in the liturgical life and the day-to-day life can be removed. For this in catechism, sermons and other spiritual instructions the symbols and spirituality of India can be properly used. The non-Christian brethren must realize that the Christians in India are their own brothers.<sup>118</sup> Even if the Malankara musicality is based on the fundamental principles of Oriental music especially of Indian music, many of the Malankarites do not know that the Malankara liturgical musicality is related to Indian music.<sup>119</sup> The liturgy commission can do a lot in conscientizing the people of the Malankara Church.

The second important thing is the preparation of the community, a preparation to accept and acknowledge Indian music as their own music. For this the community must become accustomed with the Indian music especially in singing. The music services conducted before and during Bible conventions and retreats are good opportunities to take the people into Indian music, provided the hymns are composed in Indian *ragas*. The '*Christiya Kirthanangal*' (Christian Hymns), used by the Christians of Kerala, especially, by the people of Malankara tradition both in the Catholic and non-Catholic circle, are good examples in this respect. Many of

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<sup>118</sup> There are certain Christian denominations whose pastors appear themselves in western suit and tie for convention speeches and other services and proclaim the Gospel of the Lord with the help of music that is fully westernised. This creates total alienation of the Christians from others.

<sup>119</sup> The author of this paper has written an article in one of the official magazines of the Malankara Catholic Church that deals with the theme, 'Indian music system and the Malankara musicality' that was a new information for the Malankarites (please refer '*Aikyadeepam*', September 2002.).



too new hymns can be composed in Indian *ragas* and used for music ministries. Classical music concerts can be conducted in churches as part of the feast celebrations. Since the classical music concerts are part of the temple festivals, the concert in churches will be a symbol of merging into the regional culture.<sup>121</sup> Above all, a classical music concert preserves the character of worship in which the audience or worshippers are taken to a celestial sphere.

#### **4.5.2.2 Restructuring of hymns and selection of proper *raga* and *laya***

Restructuring of the hymns is dealt with in the subchapter 4.5.1.1, a. The second important thing is composing these hymns in proper *ragas*. Before working on the hymns of Holy Qurbano it would be better to reconstruct and compose the hymns of *S'himo* **سُفَا** (divine office). The reason is that it can be started on an experimental basis in monasteries and seminaries where the *S'himo* is used regularly. Above all they are the proper places where the reformation of the liturgy should start. After the musicality of the divine office is formed in proper *ragas*, the musicality of the Holy Qurbano can be gradually brought in *ragas*. The *ragas* can be selected according to the time factor.

##### **a. Formation of the musicality of the divine office**

The hymns of the divine office can be brought under three divisions, namely the morning, the midday and the evening. All the

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<sup>121</sup> The author has conducted more than forty classical music concerts in different churches both in India and abroad. It was a surprise to the author that the major part of the audience in India was Hindus. Even if the theme of hymns were Christian the Hindu brethren did not have any problem because for them the culture is more important than creeds.



hymns to be sung in the forenoon can be composed in a morning *raga*. The hymns to be used in the midday and in the afternoon can be composed in a midday *raga* and those to be sung in the evening and in the night can be composed in an evening *raga* (the principle of selecting *ragas* for each time is dealt with in 3.2.3). *Ragas* like *Blupalam* or *Malayamarutam* can be taken for the morning hymns.<sup>122</sup> As midday *ragas*, *Sriragam* or *Madhyamavati* can be used and for evening and night *ragas* such as *Kalyani*, *Sankarabharanam*, *Kharaharapriya* will be befitting. These *ragas* can be again divided according to the context.

For the morning hymns that create a pleasant and happy atmosphere *Malayamarutam* is the most fitting *raga*. On the other hand, if the morning hymns are of a penitential or sorrowful theme *Blupalam* can be used. In both instances the *ragas* will be morning *ragas* but the moods will be different. Because of their penitential nature the morning hymns of Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday can be composed in *Blupalam* that has a meditative mood. On Sundays and Wednesdays the morning hymns can be taken into *Malayamarutam* that has a joyful nature.

For the midday hymns<sup>123</sup> both 6<sup>th</sup> hour and 9<sup>th</sup> hour<sup>124</sup> can be taken together. Without the difference of days, 6<sup>th</sup> hour hymns are in honour of Our Lady and the Apostles/martyrs. Here there is a hymn with two stanzas in which the first is dedicated to Our Lady and the second to Apostles/martyrs. For these hymns *Madhyamavati* can be used because this *raga* can create both meditative and festive atmosphere. The hymns of 9<sup>th</sup> hour are in remembrance of all the

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<sup>122</sup> Morning hymns include the hymns sung till the midday.

<sup>123</sup> Midday hymns include the hymns sung till evening.

<sup>124</sup> The divine office is mainly divided into seven *yama* (periods) namely, evening, suthoro, night (I, II, III, IV Kaumo), morning, 3<sup>rd</sup> hour, 6<sup>th</sup> hour and 9<sup>th</sup> hour.

dead. It is also a time to meditate on the end of each one. Regarding this context *Sriragam* that has both a refreshing and mystical nature will be apt for these hymns.<sup>125</sup>

The evening hymns of Monday, Tuesday and Saturday can be composed in *Kharaharapriya* that can create a penitential atmosphere. The hymns on Wednesday and Sunday evening can be tuned in *Kalyani* that is festive in nature and the hymns on Thursday and Friday evening can be composed in *Sankarabharanam* that is also meditative and festive.

The above-mentioned plan of *ragas* can be shown in a chart as the following:

Week Days	*Evening - period (evening and night vigil)	Morning - period (morning and 3 <sup>rd</sup> hour)	Midday - period (6 <sup>th</sup> hour and 9 <sup>th</sup> hour)
Sunday	<i>Kalyani</i>	<i>Malayamarutam</i>	<i>Madhyamavati Sriragam</i>
Monday	<i>Kharaharapriya</i>	<i>Bhupalam</i>	<i>Madhyamavati Sriragam</i>
Tuesday	<i>Kharaharapriya</i>	<i>Bhupalam</i>	<i>Madhyamavati Sriragam</i>
Wednesday	<i>Kalyani</i>	<i>Malayamarutam</i>	<i>Madhyamavati</i>

<sup>125</sup> *Sriragam* is used in the music therapy for digestive problems. In monasteries and seminaries the lunch will be immediately after 12<sup>th</sup> hour. In this context singing the hymn in *Sriragam* before the meals will be a remote help for digestion too!

\* According to the Malankara liturgy the day starts with the evening: e.g. the 'liturgical Wednesday' starts at 6 p. m. on Tuesday.

			<i>Sriragam</i>
Thursday	<i>Sankarabharanam</i>	<i>Bhupalam</i>	<i>Madhyamavati</i> <i>Sriragam</i>
Friday	<i>Sankarabharanam</i>	<i>Bhupalam</i>	<i>Madhyamavati</i> <i>Sriragam</i>
Saturday	<i>Kharaharapriya</i>	<i>Bhupalam</i>	<i>Madhyamavati</i> <i>Sriragam</i>

The same principle in selecting *ragas* for the days can be applied to Feast days too. However, the theme of the 'hours' must be taken into consideration. According to the theme of the hymn only, one could decide in which *raga* one should compose the hymn. Because most of the feast days bring out the theme of praise and joy, the evening hymns of these days can be sung in *Kalyani*. In the morning *Malayamarutam* and in the midday *Madhyamavati/Sriragam* will be befitting. In all the cases particular care must be taken to compose the hymns with few *svaras* so that the tune of the hymn will be simple.

As a hymn is composed in *raga*, it should be constructed in proper *laya*. The rhythmic construction of festive hymns and meditative or penitential hymns must be different. As already stated in 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter fast rhythm is recommended for festive hymns and slow rhythm is befitting for meditative or penitential hymns.

## **b. Formation of the musicality of the Holy Qurbono**

Along with the introduction of Indian *ragas* for the divine office, the musicality of the Holy Qurbono can also be taken into the Indian music system. Here also the same principle of the selection of *ragas* for the divine office is applicable. According to the Malankara Orthodox tradition the Holy Qurbono is celebrated in the morning or forenoon. The Malankara Catholics celebrate the Holy



Qurbono sometimes in the afternoon and evening also. Taking these differences into consideration four *ragas* can be used to sing the Holy Qurbono. If it is celebrated in the morning or forenoon, it can be sung in *Bhupalam* or *Malayamarutam*. When it is celebrated in the afternoon or evening *Kalyani* or *Sankarabharanam* can be used. The advantage of taking these *ragas* is that, for example, when the Holy Qurbono is celebrated on a happy occasion such as Jubilee or birthday *Malayamarutam* and *Kalyani* will be fitting to this context. [*Malayamarutam* and *Kalyani* is for forenoon and afternoon respectively.] If it is on the occasion of a death anniversary the atmosphere is not that cheerful as the former. Here one can use either *Bhupalam* or *Sankarabharanam*. [*Bhupalam* is for forenoon and *Sankarabharanam* is for afternoon.]

Considering the flow of the *raga* throughout H. Qurbono, the whole unit of the H. Qurbono must be in a *raga*.<sup>126</sup> The reading, singing, chanting etc. must take the same *raga*. The whole singing of the H. Qurbono can be accompanied by a *Sruti* instrument like tamburu. This will help the *uninterrupted flow of music*, which will lead the whole community to the focal point of the worship. This plan of *raga* in the H. Qurbono can be shown in the following chart.

	<b>Cheerful occasion</b>	<b>Not so cheerful occasion</b>
<b>HOLY QURBONO</b>	(Feast, Jubilee, Birthday etc.)	(Death anniversary etc.)

<sup>126</sup> There were attempts in introducing the singing of H. Qurbono in Indian *raga*. These attempts were without any proper preparation of the community and because of this very reason they were not accepted.

Early morning till noon	<i>Malayamarutam</i>	<i>Bhupalam</i>
Afternoon till late night	<i>Kalyani</i>	<i>Sankarabharanam</i>

### c. Selection of *ragas* based on their ‘healing power’

Selecting *ragas* for each occasion can also be based on the ‘healing power of the *raga*’ (please refer 3.2.3). The ‘Sacrament of anointing the sick’ is a sacrament of healing. The traditional liturgical hymns used in this service are of penitential character. However, if the hymns are composed in *ragas* like *Sankarabharanam*, *Anandabhairavi*, *Mayamalavagaula* etc. the musicality of these *ragas*, which has a therapeutic character, can calm down the patient or they can reduce the pain. The hymns of burial service also can be composed in these *ragas* because these *ragas* create a very meditative mode and above all they will have a ‘healing touch’ on the dear and near ones of the dead, who are in deep sorrow, pain and mental stress. On a ‘non-cheerful occasion’ when the Holy Qurbano is sung in the *Sankarabharanam*, the *raga* can cool down the agitated minds and it helps to regain the balance of ‘disturbed minds’.

## 4.6 Summary

The whole chapter is an attempt to research into the themes, ‘the evolution of Syrian hymns’, their ‘theological and mystical motives’. From these analyses one can ‘interpret the hymns in the context of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue’. The Malankara hymns that are the translation of the original Syrian hymns originated and evolved in a polemic and apologetic context. The

Antiochian liturgy from which the Malankara liturgy has originated has a monastic nature. Some of the liturgical hymns and prayers used in certain divine offices directly pertained to the monastic ascetical life. The hymns and tunes are the expression of the mystical experience and ascetical lives of saints such as Mar Ephrem, Mar Balai Mar Jacob and Semaon Quqoyo. Though many of them spent their ascetic lives in loneliness, they were open to the external world. They really defended their faith and interpreted their time through their compositions. The then existing problems, schisms, persecutions, crisis in the Church, anxiety, longing for God etc. are portrayed in their hymns and they are revealed through the popular melodies of that time. So naturally some of these hymns are catechetical and others are exhortations or apologetics. In short one can state that the evolution of Syrian hymns was obviously influenced by the '*sitz im Leben*' of the composers.

The theology of the Malankara Church is soaked in the liturgy. Theology and mysticism cannot be separated in eastern spirituality. The theology of the East is called mystical theology also. Most of the hymns are rich in the Trinitarian, Christological, Mariological and Ecclesiological motives. One who sings the hymns in the liturgy celebrates its theology. The poetry and the music are like two wings of the Liturgy. They are the two wings that take up the worshipper to the peak of the mountain of mystical experience in the liturgy. In the Malankara hymns music and poetry are intermingled. This leads the worshipper to a mystical experience in the liturgy. The motive of *Bhakti yoga* (path of devotion or love) and *Jnana yoga* (path of knowledge) can be traced out from the hymns. The *Bhakti yoga* is scattered in *vatsalya bhakti model*, *bridal model*, *Guru-Sishya model*, and *penitential model*. The *Jnana Yoga* approach is especially expressed in the '*Creator-creature model*' and '*Light analogy*'.



Liturgy is the celebration of the *flesh-becoming Word*. Apart from history there is no *flesh-becoming Word*. Since liturgy is the participation and celebration of this *flesh-becoming Word*, apart from history and culture there is no liturgy. As the liturgy is rooted in history and culture, in the liturgical celebration not only the faithful are bound together in this culture but also they are related to all others who are even outside the community of the faithful. The bridge that connects the community of faithful with the outside is the cultures of the region. The hymns are the interpretation of the faith and theology. They must be able to 'interpret the signs of the time'. 'Interpreting the signs of the time' includes acknowledging the regional cultures too. Through the hymns the Syrian composers have interpreted the faith in their own context and that was the need of that time. As the liturgical celebration is the participation in the 'flesh-becoming logos', participation in human history, the liturgical hymns must be able to interpret theology in the context of today. Thus every liturgical celebration becomes not only the commemoration of the salvation event but also the reinterpretation of it in the living context. All the hymns that are used in the Malankara liturgy are very rich in their mystical nature and theological thinking. However, they are determined by the context of the polemics and apologetics. Most of these hymns were composed in between 300 A.D and 700 A.D and they cannot directly speak to the faithful of the 21<sup>st</sup> century until they are interpreted. Here comes the importance of new hymns because they can directly speak to the faithful of 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially in the context of religious pluralism and ecumenism. The Malankara Church must search for and accept the mystical compositions that 'interpret the signs of the time'. As Mar Jacob of Serugh encouraged and acknowledged the compositions of the 'simple potter' Simeon Quqoyo the Malankara Church must be open to the dynamism of the Holy Spirit that renews the Church and inspires even the so called 'simple faithful' of the Church.

The musicality of the Malankara Liturgy means both its music and poetry. They merge into one another. The fundamental principles of both Indian music and the musical nature of the Malankara hymns are the same. However, the musicality of the Malankara liturgy is not based on a systematised music system. This makes it exhaustive and weak. Indian music that manifests fully the mystical nature of Oriental music is the apt system of music for the Malankara Liturgy. The 'merging' into this system of music will be the expansion of the horizon of the Malankara liturgy, a horizon that can comprehend the culture and mysticism of India.



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

*“God and Lord, make me worthy to sing you praises with your angels who sing praises and glory uninterruptedly.”<sup>1</sup>*

This above-quoted hymn sung by the Malankarites on Wednesday morning shows the unquenchable thirst of every believer and worshipper to be in the *samipyra* of God (nearness to God) and sing Him praises and glory eternally. This *eternal worship* is beyond the earthly existence. However, in human history there are people who in their lifetime experienced the presence of God, an experience that is unfathomable, incomprehensible and indescribable owing to its acuteness, depth and directness.<sup>2</sup> They are called mystics. The whole life of a mystic becomes the worship of God because he or she is always in the *samipyra* of God. The Christians as a worshipping community can experience the *samipyra* of God in the liturgical celebration. This can be called a mystical experience. Most of the oriental liturgies are mystical. The prayers, music, the architecture of the churches etc. create this mystical atmosphere in the oriental liturgies, among which music plays the vital role because the oriental music itself is mystical.

The Malankara Liturgy is one of the oriental liturgies in which the mystical nature of the oriental liturgies is being revealed in its full sense. The musicality and the liturgy merge into one another. The music and the poetry together constitute the musicality. What takes the worshipper to the zenith of a mystical experience in the Malankara liturgy is its musicality. In other words one can say that *musicality makes the Malankara liturgy mystical*. The theology of the Malankara Church is in its liturgy. The liturgical hymns are the interpretation of the faith through the mystical experience of the

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<sup>1</sup> *S'himo, Shubaho*: (The Divine office of the Malankara Catholic Church), printed at St. Joseph's printing house, Thiruvalla, 1996. P. 172. (Personal translation from the Malayalam text).

<sup>2</sup> Reference: Mahesh M. Mehta, *Foundations and types of Indian Mysticism*, Indian Philosophical Annual, Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: Avvai Achukkoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 104.



composers. This experience is not something pertaining only to the old time; rather it is a dynamic experience that comprehends the world of today because the Holy Spirit makes every thing new and dynamic. Therefore the musicality of the Malankara liturgy must be able 'to interpret the signs of the time.'<sup>3</sup> This interpretation of the signs of the time demands reformation of the musicality of the Malankara Church.

The first chapter has dealt with the theme, 'the Christian life is essentially a liturgical life', a participation in the flesh-becoming Logos. In the incarnation God has participated in history. He has brought down heaven to man so that man can experience 'the glory of heaven'. Every liturgical celebration is the celebration of this flesh-becoming logos because it brings down heaven on earth and elevates earth to heaven. The participation of God in human history remains a mystery. So too in the liturgical celebration the worshipper is ultimately led to the mystery- the mystery of the *logos becoming flesh*. In this sense the liturgy is a vessel of mysteries. Mystery can be revealed only through symbols. Here comes the importance of artistic media because art uses symbols to expose itself to the world. Among all arts music is the finest one because it symbolises either the aspects of transcendent and immanent or the divine and human nature. Music can speak to human beings and thus it becomes the speechless speech of the heart. It is a speechless speech through which one can speak to God and to the fellow being. Because of this unique nature music is part and parcel of worship. The Malankara liturgy is deeply mystical and the music through which it 'communicates' is also mystical. Before one goes further into the mystical nature of music and liturgy it is reasonable to explain the main notions of mysticism and mystical experiences.

The second chapter is concerned with the two channels of mysticism both in the east and west. In the eastern terminology these are called *Bhakti marga* or *Bhakti yoga* and *Jnana marga* or *Jnana yoga*. In the *Bhakti yoga* the mystical experience is through the path of devotion or path of love. In *Bhakti yoga* the attributes of God or the visible form of God is important. Here the devotee or the mystic looks at the Lord with great love, devotion and a sense of

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<sup>3</sup> Reference: Mt. 16:3b

surrender, listens to Him, surrenders to Him totally and becomes one with Him.<sup>4</sup> From this experience hymns of praises of God emerge. Ramanuja is one of the main proponents of *Bhakti yoga*. *Jnana yoga* is the approach through Knowledge. The *Jnana Marga* comes in the process of realisation of *atman* and *Brahman* as not different (*aham brahma asmi* – I am Brahman). Sankara, Patanjali, Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu come in the stream of *Jnana Marga*. It is an intellectual and contemplative approach to the Ultimate Reality. This realisation as '*aham brahma asmi*' itself is the *Moksha/Mukti* (liberation). It is a meditative realisation. "*Moksha* does not have its root in a special ability or capability of man. It is the abiding *Atman* who reveals itself to the searching soul and illumines it with its ineffable light."<sup>5</sup>

The two major authors of mystical writings in western mysticism especially in the medieval period were Bonaventure and Eckhart. Bonaventure comes in the *path of love (Bhakti)* and Eckhart in the *path of knowledge (Jnana)*. For Bonaventure the devotion to the humanity of Christ is the vehicle of the passage from contemplative to ecstatic consciousness. He calls this stage as a *passing over from intellect to devotion*. On the other hand Eckhart focuses on the transpersonal aspects of God. "By penetrating intellectual analysis he attempts to liberate his hearers from attachment to creatures, even from 'God' himself."<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that his method is negation rather than affirmation. It does not mean that he rejects the way of affirmation but he affirms that God is reflected or manifested in creatures. He speaks of 'the desert of the Godhead' rather than the ever-flowing fountain of divine fecundity.

In both eastern and western tradition mysticism is not the end of the spiritual life but it is an unbroken unity with the Supreme Reality. In the field of mysticism and mystical experience the aesthetic feelings have a prominent place. The arts especially music and dance are forms of aesthetic realities and constitute the

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<sup>4</sup> V. F. Vineeth, *Meditation*, Vidya Vanam Publications, Bangalore, India; first published 2003. P. 72

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. P. 71

<sup>6</sup> Indian Philosophical Annual; Vol. 17; University of Madras, 1985; Printers: M/s. Avvai Achukoodam, 17, P. V. Koil Street, Madras-600 013. P. 13



potentiality to lead the human being to a deep mystical level. In the Indian concept music is the manifestation of *Brahma* and through music one can reach God. The third chapter has dealt with the theme 'mystical nature of Indian music' and 'the musicality of the Malankara liturgy.'

The third chapter exposes the mystical nature of Oriental music that is revealed fully in the Indian music system. Its mystical nature is manifested through various concepts of *nada* that is the basis of *svaras*. The *svaras* are not merely written form but each *svara* has a special nature that is handed over to the generations through oral tradition. From *svaras* *ragas* are emerged. The *raga* system is the soul of Indian music. The mystical nature of the music is totally comprehended in the *ragas*. *Raga* can be compared to an ocean and each musical composition in the *raga* is compared to a tiny drop of water taken from this ocean. Because of their modal nature *ragas* have an influence on the 'total being' of man. Therefore *ragas* are used to cure both mental and physical sicknesses. The Indian music system is manifested through two channels: *manodharma sangita* and *kalpita sangita*. *Manodharma sangita* is the spontaneous creation of the musician. The proficiency and the spiritual energy of the musician are the determining factor of *manodharma sangita*. *Kalpita sangita* is the music already composed. All the musical compositions come under *kalpita sangita*. Studying the nature of Indian music one can observe that the fundamental nature of the musicality proper of the Malankara Liturgy is similar to that of Indian music. The similarities lie in the concepts of *sruti*, *laya*, *raga*, *manodharma sangita*, *kalpita sangita* and the *gurukula sambradaya* that is related to the oral tradition. Even though the fundamental principles are the same the Malankara musicality is not based on a systematic music system. Therefore the existing musicality of the Malankara liturgy is weak and exhaustive. Because of the similarity in the fundamental principles, the most befitting system of music for the Malankara liturgy is the Indian music system. The merging of the Malankara musicality into the Indian music system is also a merging into one's own culture. Accepting and involving into the native cultures and tradition is the starting point of inter-religious dialogue that is the need of the time, especially in India.



The fourth chapter was a study on the evolution of Syrian hymns, their theological and mystical motives and an attempt to interpret the hymns in the context of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. The origin and evolution of the Syrian hymns/Malankara hymns point out the fact that the composers have interpreted the faith of the Church in their context. The polemic situation and the then existing problems are portrayed through their hymns. The hymns were used to defend and teach the faith of the Church. The teaching of the Church on 'Trinity' and 'Christology' are the predominant motives in their theological approach. At the same time they are very mystical. In the analysis of the hymns one can categorise them under *Bhakti yoga* and *Jnana yoga*. The attributes of God and the saving nature of the love of God are very beautifully and descriptively portrayed in the hymns that come under *Bhakti yoga*. Both the thirst of the worshipper to be in union with God and the searching of God for the devotee is the unique nature of these hymns. Since both the worshipper and God are in search of one another, the so-called 'passivity' in Indian mysticism is not traceable in the *Bhakti yoga* motive of the Syrian/Malankara hymns. That is precisely the nature of Christian mysticism. The *Bhakti yoga* is scattered in *vatsalya bhakti model*, *bridal model*, *Guru-Sishya model*, and *penitential model*. The *Jnana Yoga* approach is especially expressed in the '*Creator-creature model*' and '*Light analogy*'. The *Jnana yoga* approach in the hymns can be explained as the realisation of one's existence in God. God is the ground of 'being'. Apart from this unity there is no 'existence'. God is the eternal Light and this light is radiated through the creatures. To find out the real Light and to be united with 'It' is the aim of *Jnana yoga* motive in the hymns.

There is a double saturation process in the musicality of the Malankara liturgy. The motive of the hymns is mystical and the musical nature of the hymns is also mystical. The nature of the musicality proper is mystical because it belongs to the oriental music that is mystical. However the weakness of the musicality of the Malankara liturgy lies in the fact that it is not based on a systematised music system. By integrating the musicality into the Indian music system this problem can be solved. The Syrian hymns are the interpretation of the faith and the mystical experience of the composers, which are expressed through the symbols and linguistic pattern of their context. Therefore they cannot speak directly to the

faithful of the 21<sup>st</sup> century until they are interpreted in the present context. The hymns are the symbol of the living faith. They must be the interpretation of the 'signs of the time' in an inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism, which are the need of the time. Reformation of the musicality of the Malankara liturgy does not mean 'deformation' of the musicality; it fully depends on the revitalising act of the Holy Spirit. The Church must be ready to accept the dynamism of the Holy Spirit that renews the Church and inspires even the so-called 'simple faithful' of the Church. She must be ready to add to the treasury of the musicality the mystical compositions that are in conformity with the faith of the Church.

The Church is a worshipping community. This community is not alienated from the society or culture but the worship is in the culture and tradition of the region. In the culture of India, music is one of the unifying factors in the diversities. It is an agent of communal harmony. Therefore a liturgical music based on the regional music indirectly involves in the service of communal harmony. A mystic is the one who is in harmony with oneself, with the cosmos and in harmony with God. In the Holy Qurbano the worshipper undergoes a mystical experience. Even if this mystical experience is not permanent it has a vital influence in the life of the worshipper. The musicality of the Malankara liturgy elevates the worshipper to a mystical experience so that he or she may live in harmony with oneself, with the cosmos, with the people and ultimately with God.



## GLOSSARY

*Achala*. Immovable. The musical notes, 'Sa' and 'Pa' are *achala svaras* (notes). These notes have no variation.

*Adhara Shadjam*. The Music note 'Sa' as the basic note or as the basic pitch.

*Adhara*. Basic.

*Advaita Vedanta*. One of the branches of Indian Philosophy. God and 'I' are not two. However, it does not mean that they are one!

*Ahata nada*. The musical sound produced by man.

*Aitareya Brahmanas*. One of the Sacred books of Hindus.

*Alapana*. Description.

*Anahata nada*. The musical sound that is not produced by man; Uncreated sound. It is ultimately God.

*Anide*. انيد The commemoration day of all the faithful who are dead. [The following Sunday of *Kohno* كوهنو]

*Aprani Sambhava*. Inanimate source. *Nada* produced by inanimate object.

*Athana*. Name of a *raga*.

*Atman*. Soul.

*Avartana*. Repetitive singing or chanting. For example, some of the prayers are sung three times.



*Avikrta*. That cannot be changed or altered. The music notes, 'Sa' and 'Pa' are *avikrta svaras* i.e. they cannot be changed.

*Bandha*. Relation; bond.

*Bhakta*. Devotee.

*Bhakti marga*. In the Indian mysticism it is the 'path of devotion'.

*Bhakti*. Devotion, love

*Bhava*. Expression. In Indian music each note has its own bhava that can be learnt only by hearing.

*Bhupalam*. One of the morning ragas.

*Brahma*. God. [one among the Hindu Trinity]

*Brahmachari*. Student. [One who is always moving in or with Brahman]

*Brahmanas*. Sacred book of Hindus.

*Chandogya Upanishad*. One of the *Upanishads*.

*Chaturdasa murchana*. A scalar principle of Indian music.

*Chikitsa*. Treatment.

*Cholth*. The style or mode of singing the Holy Qurbano or other liturgical prayers.

*Denho*. دنو, Baptism of Christ.

*Deshi*. *Tala* (rhythm) classification.

*Gamaka*. The life giving shakes of notes or the connection between two notes.

*Gandharva tatva*. Musicology.

*Gandharva Veda.* Science or knowledge of deities.

*Gayatri mantra.* Sacred chant of Hindus, which is sung at the rising Sun.

*Gita.* Sacred Scripture of Hindus. It is called *Bhagavd Gita*.

*Guru kula sambradaya.* The system of teaching in which the students must live with the master for many years and learn from him.

*Guru.* Master; teacher.

Huthommo. *الحَمْدُ* *The concluding hymn in the Holy Qurbono.*

*Hyklo.* *سُجُودًا* The place of the faithful in the oriental churches.

*Ishwar.* God.

*Japa.* Utterance ; a repetative prayer

*Jivan mukta.* One who is liberated (even when one who is alive).

*Jivan mukti.* Liberation, even in the lifetime.

*Jivatman.* Soul.

*Jnana marga.* In the Indian mysticism it is the 'path of knowledge'.

*Jnana.* Knowledge, wisdom

*Kalidasa.* the name of the great poet.

*Kalpita.* That which is already created. The music already composed is called *Kalpita sangita*.

*Kalyani.* One of the Indian *ragas*.

*Karma marga*. One of the spiritual ways in which the importance is given to 'duties'. One must do his or her duty without desiring the fruit of it.

*Karuna*. Mercy.

*Kharaharapriya*. One of the Indian ragas.

*Kirtana*. Music composition.

*Kohno*. كهنون Priest. *Kohno* Sunday is the commemoration day of all the priests who are dead.

*Kothine*. كوثينا The first Sunday of lent season. On this Sunday the miracle of changing water to wine is remembered.

*Krti*. Music composition

*Kula*. Cast; family.

*Laya*( *Tala*) = system of rhythm.

*Lilyo*. ليلون Night vigil.

*Madbaho*. مذبحة Sanctuary; Holy of holies.

*Madhya stayi*. Middle octave.

*Madhya*. Middle.

*Madhyamavati*. One of the Indian ragas.

*Maheswara*. God, *Shiva*. [one among the Hindu Trinity]

*Malankara*. The land of hills. It is one of the southern states in India; 'Kerala.'

*Malankarites*. People of Malankara Church or those who belong to the Malankara tradition.

*Malayamarutam*. One of the Indian ragas.



*Mandra stayi*. Base octave.

*Mandra*. Base.

*Manodharma*. According to the mind; creative; The music that is created 'on the spot' is called *manodharma sangita*.

*Mantra*. Sacrificial formula or chanting.

*Marga*. Way, path

*Margi*. *Tala* (rhythm) classification.

*Mela*. Another name for basic *raga*. There are 72 basic ragas in the Indian music. They are also called 72 *melas*.

*Moksha*. Translated approximately as 'heaven.' The concept of heaven in Hindu spirituality is different from that of Christian spirituality. *Moksha* is the last stage of liberation where there remains no more desire. Heaven is the place of gods. Even the gods have also desires. One who is in *Moksha* will not be reborn.

*Mrdangam*. Percussion instrument of South India.

*Mukti*. Liberation. Translated approximately as 'salvation.'

*Nada Brahma*. God, as the embodiment of *nada*. It is an important concept in the Indian philosophy.

*Nada*. Musical sound.

*Nadopasana*. Meditation through music.

*Nagasvaram*. A wind instrument that can reveal all the nuances of *raga*.

*Nataraja*. The dancing Shiva. Everything is created by the vibration of his dancing.

*Om*. Shortened form of 'aum'. They are the beginning, middle and end of the vowel sounds in Sanskrit. 'Aum'

is therefore, the beginning, middle and end of everything. This is similar to 'Alpha' and 'Omega' in the Greek alphabet.

*Om kara*. The sound of 'Om'. God is 'Om kara', i.e. God is without beginning or end. Or God is everything.

*Pancharatna*. The five famous music compositions of Thyagaraja, the mystic composer. They are called *Pancharatna Kritis*.

*Paramatman*. Ultimate Reality.

*Prani Sambhava*. Animate source. Nada emanated from animate source.

*Prarthana*. Translated as 'prayer'.

*Promion-sedro*. **ܦܪܡܝܘܢܫܝܕܪܘܐ** A special prayer. *Promion* = preface; *Sedro* = a row of prayers with different themes.

*Qaestrumo*. **ܩܥܫܪܘܡܘܐ** The place of choir in the oriental churches. It is a place between *Madbaho* and *Hyklo*.

*Qintho*. **ܩܝܢܬܘܐ** The eight melodies or colours used in the Syrian music.

*Qudosho*. **ܩܘܕܫܘܫܘܐ** Mystery; sacrament.

*Quqlion*. **ܩܘܩܠܝܘܢܐ** A form of Syrian hymns in honour of Our Lady, saints etc.

*Raga alapana*. Description of a *raga*. *Raga alapana* comes in the creative music. It is the spontaneous creation of the musician.

*Raga Chikitsa*. Treatment of illness by *raga* in the music therapy.

*Raga*. It is the determining factor of Indian music system. A *raga* is not a tune, but it is an ocean of tunes. In a *raga* many tunes can be composed. It can be called a scalar principle.

*Ragalapana*. Musical description of a *raga*. It comes under creative music.

*Rasa*. Passion; mood.

*Rish qolo*. ريش قولا; Sample melody; tune.

*Rshi*. Sage; ascetic.

*Sadhana*. Dedication.

*Sahasra nama*. Thousand names. *Sahasra* = thousand; *nama* = name. It is a type of prayer in the Indian tradition in which thousand attributes of God are uttered.

*Sambradaya*. System.

*Samipya*. Nearness; one of the stages of Indian mysticism. It is the nearness of the 'soul' to the Ultimate Being

*Sangita marga*. Through music one can attain God.  
[*sangita* = music; *marga* = way]

*Sangita Vidwan*. Master of music.

*Sankarabharanam*. One of the Indian *ragas*.

*Sankirna jatis*. A musical form of Indian music.

*Sankya Yoga*. One of the branches of Indian Philosophy.

*Sanyasi*. The literal meaning is: one who gives up everything; Sanyasi means normally ascetic.

*Shabda*, (*shabdham*). Word; the 'Word of God'.



*Shivist philosophy.* Philosophy of the *shivists* for whom Shiva is the Supreme God.

*Shunoyo.* شونو. Assumption of Our Lady.

*Sishya.* Student; disciple.

*Sloka.* A kind of poem to be chanted.

*Sringara.* Romance.

*Sriragam.* One of the Indian ragas.

*Srshti.* Creation.

*Sruti.* Translated, approximately, as ‘pitch.’

*Stayi.* Octave.

*Suddha madhyamam.* One of the derivations of the music note, ‘Ma’.

*Suloqo.* سولوقو. Ascension of Our Lord.

*Svara sanchara.* Narration of *svaras* (notes) in a *raga*. Normally the *sanchara* begins from the middle octave passes through base octave and then reaches to the high octave and ends up in the middle octave. *Sanchara* = journey, wandering. It is a wandering through the *svaras*.

*Svara.* Musical note.

*Tabla.* Percussion instrument of North India.

*Tala dasa pranas.* The principles of ‘*tala*’ (Rhythm).

*Tala.* System of rhythm.

*Tamburu.* A four-stringed drone instrument that is an obligatory instrument in all the classical concerts.

*Tapas*. Deep meditation; the intense form of burning ardour.  
[*Tapam* = heat]

*Tapasya*. Perseverance.

*Tara stayi*. High octave.

*Tara*. High.

*Ubhaya Sambhava*. Animate and inanimate source.

*Upa Veda*. Secondary *Veda*.

*Upanishad*. Sacred scripture of Hindus.

*Vatsalya*. Affection, especially towards the offspring.

*Veda*. Science; knowledge; Sacred Scripture.

*Videha mukti*. Liberation after death. [*videha* = without body]

*Vidya*. Knowledge, education, training. What is handed over from *Guru* to *sishtya* is called *vidya*.

*Vidya*. Knowledge; skill; education.

*Vishnu*. The Supreme god as *Vishnu*. [one among the Hindu Trinity]

*Yaldo*. ܝܠܕܘܫܝܡ Christmas.

*Yogi*. Ascetic; One who is united with God. This word is related to *yoga* that is meant by 'the state of union or harmony'.

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**ECR:** Eastern Churches Review (London).

**GOF:** Göttingen Orientforschungen (Wiesbaden).

**GOFS:** Göttingen Orientforschungen, Reihe I, Syriac (Wiesbaden).

**GOTR:** Greek Orthodox Theological Review (Brookline).

**JNES:** Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago).

**LM:** Le Museon (Louvain).

**OC:** Oriens Christianus (Wiesbaden).

**OCA:** Orientalia Christiana Analecta (Rome).

**OCP:** Orientalia Christiana Periodica (Rome).

**OLP:** Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica (Leuven).

**OKS:** Ostkirchliche Studien (Würzburg).

**PdO:** Parole de l' Orient (Kaslik).

**SEERI :** St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (Kottayam, Kerala).

**ZDMG:** Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (Wiesbaden).

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**BEGUTACHTUNG DER DISSERTATION  
VON PHILIP M. VYSANETHU O.I.C.**

*MUSICALITY MAKES MALANKARA LITURGY MYSTICAL*

*A study on the mystical nature of the Malankara Liturgy and  
the formation of a liturgical musicality based on Indian Music  
System in the context of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue*

Philip M. Vysanethu legt mit dieser Disseration eine wissenschaftliche Arbeit vor, die in mehrfacher Weise grenzüberschreitend ist. Zum einen widmet sie sich der Liturgie der malankara katholischen Kirche, die ihre Tradition aus der westsyrischen antiochenischen Liturgiefamilie herleitet und ihre Heimat im indischen Kontext hat. Zum zweiten wird diese Grenzüberschreitung im Bereich der Mystik und Spiritualität anhand der liturgischen Musik mit dem Brückenschlag zum indischen Musiksystem gewagt. Die Arbeit hat somit Bedeutung für den innerchristlichen Dialog zwischen östlicher und westlicher Tradition, wie auch für den interreligiösen Dialog, in der sich diese Kirche als Minderheit in einem hinduistischen Umfeld existenziell befindet.

Die Vorgaben, die der Titel der Dissertation andeutet, sind hoch gesteckt und Vysanethu stellt sich der Darstellung der Thematik, die die Kenntnis beider religiöser und musikalischer

Traditionen, wie auch die Kenntnis östlicher und westlicher Kultur voraussetzen, mit Geschick.

## I. AUFBAU UND STRUKTUR

Die Arbeit ist in vier grössere Arbeits-Kapitel und einem die wesentlichen Ergebnisse Zusammenfassenden Schlusskapitel gegliedert. Eine Einleitung ist vorangestellt; ein Glossar wichtiger Fachtermini am Ende erweist sich als äußerst hilfreich, Abkürzungsverzeichnis und Bibliographie mit den Angaben zu den Quellen und zur Sekundärliteratur beschließen die Arbeit.

### *Einleitung (8-13)*

In der Einleitung weist Vysanethu auf die Bedeutung der Musik in der Liturgie der Malankara Katholischen Kirche hin, ein Wesenszug den sie mit anderen ostkirchlichen Liturgien gemeinsam hat. Allerdings möchte Vysanethu die Musikalität und den mystischen Charakter der Liturgie untersuchen und erschliesst deshalb eingangs einige Schlüsselbegriffe seiner Dissertation, wie etwa Mysterium, Musikalität, ununterbrochene Musikalität versus ununterbrochener Musik. Der hierbei wichtigste Begriff ist „Musikalität“ mit der Vysanethu *“the real intrinsic nature of Music“* (10) meint.

Vusanethu weist auch darauf hin, dass die mystische Theologie und Musikalität der Liturgie eng mit dem indischen mystischen Denken verbunden ist. Um dies nachzuweisen unternimmt er einen methodischen Drei-Schritt:

- Zunächst und als Ausgangspunkt soll die Liturgie als teilhabende Feier am inkarnierten Logos dargestellt (Kapitel I). Da der Betende in der liturgischen Feier ein *“mystical experience“* (13) erfährt, bietet Vysanethu in Kapitel II grundlegende Anmerkungen zu *“Mysticism in the East and in the West“*.

- Solcherart vorbereitet wird-mit einem zweiten Schritt – die Erarbeitung des indischen Musiksystems im Kontext der Malankara Liturgie vorgenommen (Kapitel III).

- Im letzten Kapitel schlägt Vysanethu – mit einem dritten Schritt-die Brücke von der ältesten syrischen und malankara



Hymen-tradition zum gegenwärtigen ökumenischen und interreligiösen Kontext seiner Kirche.

### *Kapitel I (14-31)*

Die Darstellung der Liturgie als Teilhabe am inkarnierenden Logos erfolgt in einem ganzheitlichen Sinn. Vysanethu erfasst Kirche als betenden Gemeinschaft die im Geist und der Taufe Zusammengerufen ist und Eucharistie feiert. Das versammelte Volk Gottes erfährt hat paulinische „schon jetzt und noch nicht“ und drückt dies in der Feier durch Sprache, Musik, Gebet, und Zeichenhandlungen aus. Vysaneths Fokus in diesem holistischen Konzept von Liturgie gilt der Musik, näherhin der „Musikalität“ des Gottesdienstes, gemäss seiner eingangs formulierten Definition. Hierbei hebt er die hervorragende Stellung der Musik in Kult und Ritual hervor, als Möglichkeit das Unerklärbar und das Unsagbare sagbar zu machen. Bereits hier unternimmt Vysanethu eine Verbindung zum hinduistischen Kontext Keralas z.B. Shabarimala pilgrims, 24f) und der Erfahrung des „uninterrupted flow of music“, Musik als Medium um zu Gott und zu den Menschen zu sprechen.

### *Kapitel II (32-48)*

In einem Überblick zu „Mysticism in the East and the West“ erschließt Vysanethu sowohl die indische (Bhakti/Jana Yoga) als auch christliche Spiritualität und streift u.a. diverse Kirchenväter, Bernhard von Clairvaux, Bonaventura und Eckhard. Interessant ist dabei die Schlussfolgerung, die zeigt, dass das mystische Erlebnis sowohl in Ost als auch West, sei es im christlichen oder nicht-christlichen Kontext, letztlich das selbe Ziel hat: „the union with the Ultimate... Mysticism is not the end of the spiritual life but it is an unbroken unity with the Supreme Reality“ (47).

### *Kapitel III (49-114)*

Dieses Kapitel spürt der Frage nach, ob eine Verbindung zwischen der Malankara Musik und der indischen Musik herstellbar ist. Es erweist sich, dass die Musik ein integraler Bestandteil der indischen Kultur ist, und damit die Grenzen der einzelnen Religion und Konfession überschreitet: „The goal of all the religions of India

is to lead the human being along with the whole cosmos to the Supreme Being and help the human beings to experience the eternal bliss in the union with the Ultimate reality“ (51).

Vysanethu führt in das indische Musiksystem ein (Karnatic/Hindushani), erläutert Nada (musical sound), Savra (vergleichbar westlicher Solmisation: Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni.), und Raga. Der letzte Begriff ist die Seele des indischen Musiksystems, beschreibt also den tonalen Charakter eines Musikstückes, hat aber auch die Fähigkeit eine Vielzahl emotionaler Regungen (rasa) hervorzurufen. Schließlich werden noch Sruti (kleinster hörbarer Laut/Ton) und Laya (Tempi, Rhythmus) erläutert. Diesem enorm komplexen System, das die Tonalität und Grenzen westlicher Musik überschreitet, wird ebenso Heilkraft zugeschrieben (74ff).

Um nun die Musikalität der Malankara Liturgie zu erarbeiten und darzustellen, stellt Vysanethu deren mystische Natur in den Kontext des liturgischen Raumes, der liturgischen Kleidung und des Aufbaus des Gottesdienstes. Hierbei greift er auf die antiochenischen Wurzeln der indischen westsyrischen Liturgie zurück, erläutert deren (syrische) Terminologie und erklärt das liturgische Jahr. Schließlich gelangt er zu einer komparativen Darstellung des indischen Musiksystems mit der Musikalität der malankara Liturgie. Die Schlussfolgerung ist, dass die „basic principles“ gleich sind (113): Auch wenn die malankara Musik nicht als systematische „Musikalität“ aufgefasst werden kann, so hat sie nicht nur den Charakter orientalischer Musik bewahrt – was v.a. am Oktoechos deutlich wird – sondern sie weist auch eine „Blutsverwandschaft“ mit der indischen Musik auf.

#### *Kapitel IV (115-192)*

In diesem umfassenden Abschnitt untersucht Vysanethu die Entwicklung syrischer Hymnen, deren Formen und theologischen Ansatz im Kontext der malankara Liturgie, und interpretiert diese im Rahmen der interreligiösen und ökumenischen Beziehungen in Indien. Die syrischen Hymnen transportieren zugleich die Theologie des jeweiligen Autors. Auch wenn die Aussage Vysanethus „The theology was not a speculative theology but practical theology“



zumindest kritisch zu diskutieren ist, so ist die Analyse, dass die syrischen Autoren „die Zeichen der Zeit“ erkannten und im jeweiligen konkreten Kontext den Glauben verkündeten und verteidigten, zutreffend. Deshalb sind diese Hymnen auch aus ihrem Kontext heraus zu interpretieren. Vysanethu zieht Texte prominenter Dichtertheologen heran (Ephrem, Balai und Jakob von Sarugh), wie auch Severus von Antiochien, Simeon Quqaya und Jakob von Edessa. Danach wird in die Poetik syrischer Hymnen eingeführt (memre, madrashe etc.) und ihre trinitarischen, christologischen, mariologischen und ekklesiologischen Motive dargestellt.

Die interreligiösen Zusammenhänge auf Basis der gemeinsamen indischen Kultur stellt Vysanethu in den folgenden Abschnitten dar und zeigt auf, dass es auf der Ebene der Mystik in der indischen und syrischen Tradition gemeinsame Denkstrukturen gibt. Eine der wichtigen Schlussfolgerungen ist demnach: „Since the fundamental principles of the musicality of Malankara hymns and the Indian music system are the same, the Malankara hymnology can be merged into the Indian music system“ (167).

Eine weitere Schlussfolgerung ist die Komposition neuer Hymnen, die die Zeichen der gegenwärtigen Zeit erkennen (z.B. Jnanadas), wie auch die frühen syrischen Dichter die Zeichen ihrer Zeit erkannten: „The traditional hymns composed by the fathers are the patrimony of the Church and the new hymns will be the treasure of the growing Church“ (173).

Indem die Hymnen aus der gemeinsamen indischen Kultur wachsen, haben sie auch ökumenische Relevanz. Das indische Christentum ist seit der Ankunft der Europäer/Portugiesen in eine Vielfalt von Kirchen gespalten; westkirchliche Missionare des 19. Jhs. Aus der evangelischen und anglikanischen Tradition, wie auch die wachsende Pfingstkirche im 20. Jh. Tragen zur Vermehrung der Denominationen bei. In diesem Zusammenhang sieht Vysanethu in auf dem gemeinsamen indischen Erbe beruhenden Hymnen „a remote help for the unity of all Christian denominations“ (176).



Allerdings hat die malankara Liturgie kein eigenes Musiksistem. Deshalb schlägt Vysanethu vor, das indische Musiksistem als das geeignete musikalische System anzunehmen. Damit würde der Horizont der malankara Liturgie um die genuine indische Kultur und Mystik erweitert.

## II. KRISTSICHE WÜRDIGUNG

Die dargestellte Struktur der Arbeit und deren Aufbau ist logisch stringend und gut nachvollziehbar. Allerdings ist die Disseration nicht leicht lesbar und stellt hohe Anforderungen. Dies liegt etwa nicht an einer unverständlichen Ausdrucksweise von Vysanethu, sondern an der grenzüberschreitenden Thematik. Tatsächlich bedarf es wohl des umfassenden persönlichen Erfahrungsschatzes, den der Autor selbst mit-und einbringt. Philip Vysanethu ist Mönch und gehört seit 27 Jahren dem Orden der *Imitatio Christi* (OIC, genannt „Bethany Fathers“) an. Er studierte Philosophie (B.Ph.) und Theologie (B.Th.) am Päpstlichen Institut für Religiöse Studien in Pune (Indien), wurde 1986 zum Priester geweiht. Hinzu kommt ein Studium der klassischen indischen Musik in Madras, das er als *Sangeeta Vidwan* (vergleichbar einem Mag.art.) abschloss. Er war Lehrbeauftragter für geistliche Musik in Pune und arbeitete zugleich pastoral in Bombay. Weitere pastorale Erfahrung bringt er als Superior des Bethany Ashram, Pfarrer in Tiruvalla (Südindien) und Mitglied des Pastoralrates und *Priest-Senate* der Diözese ein. Zugleich verfeinert er seine musikalischen Kenntnisse und kommt einer intensiven Konzerttätigkeit nach. Als Ordenspriester der syro-malankrischen katholischen Kirche bedient sich Philip Vysanethu seiner Kunstform für christliche Feiern und Gottesdienste. Darüber hinaus spielte er als bisher einziger christlicher Priester auch bei Festen in Hindu –und Jain-Tempeln und versteht seine Musik als Weg der Verständigung und des interreligiösen Dialogs. Mit diesem Hintergrund kam er nach Europa, wo er nunmehr seit sechs Jahren den westlichen christlichen und pastoralen Kontext erfährt, und zugleich mit dem westlichen System theologischer Ausbildung konfrontiert ist, in dem er den Mag. theol. An der Grazer Katholische-Theologischen Fakultät erwirbt.

All dies macht Vysanethu in einem außerordentlichem Maße competent, die vorliegende Arbeit zu schreiben. Er bearbeitet mit wissenschaftlichem Instrumentarium eine Thematik, die sich aber letztlich der Rationalität entzieht: Mystik und Musikalität. Der schwierig fassbare Zentralbegriff in Vysanethus These „Musikalität“ kann wohl am ehesten mit Substanz oder Essenz der Musik erfasst werden. Vielleicht könnte man, um einen Begriff der Christologie heranzuziehen, sogar von Hypostase (im Sinne der postchalzedonischen Interpretation des 6. Jhs.) der Musik sprechen.

Die permanente Grenzüberschreitung in den interreligiösen Kontext zeigt sich im Oszillieren zwischen der syro-malankara und der indischen Tradition, wobei der westliche Leser, bei aller Interpretationshilfe die Vysanethu (inclusive Glossar) anbietet, einiges an Lesearbeit zu bewältigen hat.

Die Auswahl aus der syrischen Hymnendichtung zeigt ökumenische Großzügigkeit, da, mit Ausnahme von Ephrem und Balai, alle anderen als non-Chalzedonier gelten; Severus ist darüber hinaus der theologische Genius der anti-Chalzedonischen Bewegung. Vysanethu ist aber an dieser Art dogmatischer Diskussion nicht interessiert, ja sie wird durch seine These geradezu abgelehnt. Die Autoren entstammen seiner westsyrischen Tradition, und allein der poetische Ansatz im Vergleich zur indischen Musikalität ist ihm wichtig. Auch werden die (ursprünglich syrischen) Texte der gegenwärtigen Gebetstradition entnommen, so etwa dem S'himo. Die Frage nach der Authentizität stellt Vysanethu nicht. So ist etwa keineswegs sichergestellt, dass der herangezogene Text Balais, auch tatsächlich von Balai ist. Auch hätte man gerne erfahren, welche die Quelle ist, die besagt, dass Severus von Antiochien, der selbst in Griechisch schrieb, dessen Werk aber auf Syrisch erhalten ist, die „acht Farben“ in die syrischen liturgischen Hymnen einführte. Auch die Quellen zu Simeon von Gesir schöpft Vysanethu aus seiner eigenen Tradition, ohne auf entsprechend kritische Textausgaben zu verweisen.

Dies beeinträchtigt den Gesamtduktus der Arbeit keineswegs, zeigt jedoch auf, mit welchem Interesse Vysanethu die Arbeit

schreibt. Schöpfend aus der eigenen Tradition soll die vertiefende mystischen Einbeziehung der indischen Kultur, die er der westlichen vorzieht, ermöglicht werden. Als adäquates und zugleich auch maßgebendes Mittel interreligiöser und ökumenischer Beziehung, wie auch der mystischen Erfahrung im heiligen Qurbana, bezeichnet Vysanethu die Musik. Damit saft Vysanethu sehr Vieles und Wichtiges auf, aber keineswegs Alles. Die Arbeit muss unbedingt publiziert werden. Als Publikationsorgan bietet sich die Moran Etho Reihe (Kottayam, Indien) an, damit die Ergebnisse im indischen Kontext kritisch zur Diskussion gestellt werden können, was zweifelloos notwendig ist.

### III. BEURTEILUNG

Philip Vysanethu leistet Pionierarbeit bei der Erschliessung einer kulturell und grenzüberschreitenden Thematik. Es wird kaum eine zweite Person geben, die in diesem Ausmass interdisziplinär ausgebildet und geeignet ist, eine solche Arbeit mit kenntnisreichem Erfahrungshintergrund und wissenschaftlicher Kompetenz zu schreiben.

Die Arbeit wird deshalb mit „**sehr gut**“ bewertet.

Prof. Dr. Dietmar W. Winkler

Boston, MA (USA), 14. November 2003





# Gutachten zur Dissertation von Mag. theol. Philip Mathew VYSANETHU O.I.C.

Father Philip VYSANETHU hat am *Institut für Liturgiewissenschaft, Christliche Kunst und Hymnologie* eine Dissertationsschrift zur Begutachtung vorgelegt. Sie trägt den Titel: "*The Musicality Makes the Malankara Liturgy Mystical. A study on the mystical nature of the Malankara Liturgy and the formation of a liturgical musicality based on the Indian Music System in the context of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue*". Nach dem Abschluß des Magisteriums (2001) an unserer Fakultät legt Philip VYSANETHU nun seine Dissertation vor. Sie umfaßt 210 Seiten, die Verzeichnisse eingeschlossen.

Father Philip gehört der Malankara Katholischen Kirche Indiens an. Diese Kirche ist aus der antiochenisch-westsyrischen Tradition herausgewachsen. Father Philip beschließt mit seiner Doktoratsarbeit einen sechsjährigen Studienaufenthalt in Graz. Er hatte nicht nur nach rigidem Beschluß die lateinische Sprache nachlernen müssen, sondern selbstverständlich auch Deutsch. Damit hat der bescheidene und tief spirituelle Theologe seine Polyglottie erneut erweitert. Father Philip hat seinen Aufenthalt auch dafür genutzt, die liturgische musikalische Tradition seiner Kirche bei uns erfahrbar zu machen. Hervorheben möchte ich hier lediglich eine für viele beeindruckende Darbietung im Rahmen eines PRO ORIENTE-Symposiums.

## 1. Aufbau und Inhalt der Arbeit

Die vorliegende *dissertatio* ist in vier größere Abschnitte gegliedert (14-192), welche von einer Einleitung (8-13) und einer "*General Conclusion*" (193-199) umschlossen werden. Ein Glossar von Fachbegriffen (200-203) sowie das bibliographische Verzeichnis (204-210) runden die Arbeit ab.

Bereits die Einleitung bringt zum Ausdruck, welch hohen Stellenwert der Verfasser der Musik innerhalb der malankarischen Liturgie zur mystischen Gotteserfahrung beimißt. Und es ist wie der rote Faden durch die Arbeit, wenn es bereits zum Anfang heißt, daß *die "Musikalität der Malankara Kirche die Zeichen der Zeit interpretieren"* (13 u.ö.) müsse.

In seinem ersten Kapitel (*"The christian life is essentially a liturgical life, a participation in the 'flesh-becoming' Logos"*, 14-31) wird die Liturgie als Anabasis (Erhebung) des Irdischen zum Himmel und als Katabasis (Herabkunft) des Himmlischen auf Erden grundgelegt. Liturgie ermöglicht die *"Erfahrung einer mystischen Vereinigung mit dem auferstandenen Herrn"* (19). Zur Liturgie aber gehört neben den vielen anderen Symbolen die alle Grenzen transzendierende Sprache der Musik, welche gewissermaßen privilegiert ist: *"But the divinity and the dignity of music is that it speaks itself to the object directly."* (22) Der Verfasser läßt aber auch die andere Dimension nicht außer Acht, jene der Kommunikation der Menschen miteinander im Medium der Musik (vgl. 26. 28-30). Freilich handelt es sich hierbei nicht um oberflächliche Musikalität, die sich mit dem nur Ästhetischen begnügt. Father Philip spricht von einer *"uninterrupted musicality"* (11 u.ö.) in der Liturgie, ein Kernbegriff: *"The uninterrupted musicality is to be understood by the unbroken flow of the musicality in a liturgical service."* (11)

Der zweite Abschnitt wendet sich übersichtsartig dem *"Mysticism in the East and in the West"* (32-48) zu. Aus der indischen Tradition werden die zwei wichtigsten Wege mystischer Spiritualität skizziert: *Bhakti marga/Bhakti yoga* und *Jnana marga/Jnana yoga*. Ersteres ist der eher devotionale Weg (vgl. 33f.), das zweite der eher contemplative (vgl. 39). Beide haben letztlich die unaufhörliche Einheit mit dem Absoluten oder dem *"Ultimate Being"* zum Ziel. Als zwei Vertreter der westlichen Tradition werden Bonaventura mit seinem *"path of love"* (Bhakti) und Eckhart mit seinem *"path of knowledge"* (Jnana) zur Darstellung ausgewählt. Der Vergleich bringt zutage, daß es



zwischen den östlichen und den westlichen Wegen der mystischen Erfahrung einen tiefen Grundkonsens gibt: *"one thing is basically the same the union with the Ultimate. The Bhakti marga/Bhakti yoga of the Indian mysticism comes closer to the 'path of love' of the western mysticism and the Jnana marga/Jnana yoga of the Indian mysticism goes parallel with the 'path of knowledge' of the west."* (47)

Kapitel 3 *"The Indian music system and the musicality of the Malankara Liturgy"* (49-114) stellt heraus, daß die malankarische liturgische Tradition aus einer zutiefst orientalischen Tradition hervorgeht, wenngleich sie über Antiochien und Syrien an die südwestindische Küste gekommen ist. Das zentrale Phänomen wird als Oktoechos beschrieben: *"Oktoechos are eight tunes. They are a group of eight adaptable melody types, which can be named in Syriac as rish qole. In their musical nature they are very much related to the raga system of Indian music"* (87), an anderer Stelle: *"The European tonic solfa notation owes its origin to the Indian system"* (98, vgl. auch 106, 112f.). Diese acht Modi heißen nach der syrischen Tradition auch "quinto" oder die "acht Farben", als deren Urheber vielfach Severus von Antiochien angesehen wird. Father Philip stellt weiters dar, wie diese acht Modi im liturgischen Kalender (im Kirchenjahr) angewandt werden.

Nun ist der Boden bereitet für den konkreten Vergleich des vierten Abschnittes: *"The evolution of Syrian hymns, their theological and mystical motives, the interpretation of the hymns in the context of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue"* (115-192). Die zugrundeliegende Hypothese wird gleich am Anfang des Kapitels ausdrücklich genannt, wenn es heißt, daß die meisten liturgischen Hymnen einem historisch bedingten (konfessions-)polemischen oder apolo-getischen Kontext entstammen. Im Folgenden wird eine Auswahl von hymnenprägenden Kirchenvätern der syrischen Tradition geboten (Ephräm, Balai, Jakob von Sarugh, Severus von Antiochien, Simen von Gesir, Jakob von Edesse alle aus der äußerst fruchtbaren Zeit zwischen dem 4. und dem 7. Jahrhundert). Der Verfasser nennt die



wichtigsten Gattungen von Hymnen, ganz entsprechend der syrischen Überlieferung (*B'outho, Enyono, Madrosho, Memro, Qolo, Sughito, u.a.*). Daraufhin werden motivisch einzelne Hymnen in Auszügen vorgestellt: trinitarisch geprägte, christologische, marianische und ekklesiologische. Dann wird der mystische Charakter der Hymnen mit Hinsicht auf *Bhakti yoga* und *Jnana yoga* aufgezeigt.

Ein entscheidender Punkt ist schließlich die Forderung nach der Herausbildung einer Hymnologie der malankarischen Kirche im Kontext des ökumenischen Dialoges und des Ökumenismus (159-192). Damit hat die Darstellung Philip VYSANETHUs ihren Höhepunkt erreicht. Er sieht darin ein wirkliches Desiderat: "*the Malankara Church has never tried to interpret the theology of the hymns in the living context of India especially in the context of religious pluralism.*" (160) Das Credo ist auch hierin Einheit in Vielfalt (vgl. 162). Weiters sind zeitgenössische moderne Neuschöpfungen vonnöten: "*Composition of new hymns demands the interpretation of the signs of the time.*" (161) Was fehlt, ist letztlich eine Inkulturation der liturgischen Hymnologie in die indische Tradition hinein. Die indische Tradition bietet hierfür besonders gute

Voraussetzungen: "*There is no other musical system in the orient other than the Indian music that is so systematised and so mystic.*" (167) Der Verfasser gibt dann selbst ein Beispiel, wie so ein inkultrierter Hymnus aussehen könnte (vgl. 170-173). Abschließend werden noch ganz konkrete Hinweise erarbeitet, wie die vom Autor vorgeschlagene Inkulturation in der pastoralen Praxis vor sich gehen oder zumindest beginnen könnte.

## 2. Die Themenstellung

Father Philip hat sich ein gewaltiges Thema vorgenommen. Die Voraussetzungen dafür sind mehr als schwierig, muß er doch selber mehrfach feststellen, daß es zu diesem Thema welches ein fundamentales Thema innerhalb der malankarischen Kirche sein

sollte kaum Vorarbeiten gibt: *"However, no studies have ever been made on the common patrimony of the Malankara liturgical music and the Indian music."* (49, vgl. auch 12, 131). Es handelt sich somit um den Anfang einer Arbeit, die jedenfalls noch Jahre wird dauern müssen.

Aufgrund dieser Sachlage ist es klar, daß es nur peripher tangierende Literatur zum Thema gibt. Es war denn auch eine der größten Schwierigkeiten dieser Arbeit, zu Literatur zu kommen, die die Ideen der vorliegenden Dissertation festigen können. Es fehlen noch allzu viele Grundlagen. Auch im syrischen nicht indischen Bereich ist eine Geschichte der liturgischen Hymnologie noch ausständig.

Bei alledem, die Thematik ist von äußerster Wichtigkeit, will die malankarische Kirche tatsächlich in die indische Kultur hineinwachsen und so auch mehr eine indische Kirche werden. Bislang steht das syrische Erbe noch im Vordergrund. Die Übersetzung der Hymnen und Gebete in die Landessprache (vgl. 160) ist wohl wichtig. Doch deren ferner Entstehungskontext muß in Kerala fremd bleiben, örtlich wie zeitlich.

Philip VYSANETHU hat aber nicht nur die nötige Inkulturation anhand der Hymnologie zu seinem (Lebens-)Thema gemacht. Seine Annäherung ist eine zutiefst spirituelle, mystische. Er betont eindringlich den Modus jeder liturgischer Feier als Einswerden mit dem Herrn, vorzüglicher-weise durch "musicality". Das ist ein Zugang, der der westlichen Liturgietradition vielfach nicht selbstverständlich ist.

Das gewählte Thema eignet sich auch vorzüglich dazu, die grenzüberschreitende Kraft musikalisch-mystisch geprägter Liturgie in ihrer ökumenischen Bedeutung zu erkennen, mehr noch, deren Interreligiosität und Interkulturalität.

### 3. Bewertung

Wie schwierig tatsächlich die Umsetzung des Anliegens von Philip Vysanethu tatsächlich ist, das macht gerade jenes angeführte Beispiel deutlich, mit dem gezeigt werden sollte, daß es möglich ist, die alten syrischen Hymnen in den neuen indischen Kontext überzuführen (vgl. 170f.). Es zeigt zugleich auf, daß mit der Neukontextierung vieles an anamnetischem Gut verlorengehen kann. Freilich, manches wird bei dem Prozeß der Inkulturation auf dem Wege liegen bleiben, das ist klar. Die Frage, die hier anzuschließen wäre, ist, könnte man Kriterien entwickeln, die allzu großen Verlust von hier wie mir scheint besonders anamnetischen Gegebenheiten verhindert? Allein das kleine ausgewählte Beispiel macht die ganze Schwierigkeit deutlich.

Die Darlegung der Gedanken ist klar und prägnant. Die Sprache ist sehr gut lesbar. Die Abfolge der Kapitel ist folgerichtig. Die Dissertationsschrift von Philip Vysanethu entspricht den Anforderungen an eine doctoral thesis in einem hohen Ausmaß. Die Arbeit wird mit **sehr gut** beurteilt. Die Drucklegung der Arbeit kann ich nur empfehlen.

Die Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz darf stolz und dankbar sein, einem solchen Doktoranden wie Father Philip für eine nicht unbedeutende Strecke seines Weges die Hand gereicht zu haben. Für diese Handreichung mögen zwei Namen genannt sein: em. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Philipp HARNONCOURT, der seinen Namensvetter ermutigt hat, nach Graz zu kommen und der die Arbeit in den ersten Jahren betreut hat; Prof. Dr. Dietmar W. WINKLER (jetzt Boston), der immer Hilfe und Ansprechpartner für Father Philip war. Zuletzt darf ich selber sagen, daß mich die Persönlichkeit von Father Philip, mit ihrer ruhigen und besonnenen Art und die große Disziplin tief beeindruckt hat.

Graz, 25.

November 2003.

ao. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Erich RENHART





## PUBLICATIONS OF THE SEERI

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Vols. 1 – IX have been published in 1987-96.

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Vols. XI and XII in 1999.

Vol. XIII in 2000.

Vol. IV in 2001

Vol. XV in 2002.

Vol. XVI in 2003.

### II. **'MORAN ETHO'** series: Monograph Series : occasional publication.

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