

Tyagaraja's Nava vidha Bhakti

The ultimate goal of any devout Hindu is to attain the Supreme. Bhagavad Gita says there are three ways to attain the Supreme.

1. Karma Yoga: *the path of Selfless Action*
2. Bhakti Yoga: *the path of Devotion*
3. Jnana Yoga: *the path of Self Transcending Knowledge*

Out of the three, Bhakti Marga, the path of devotion is most appealing to the masses and easily attainable path to reach the Supreme. True Bhakti or Devotion is a state of unconditional love and intense emotional surrender to the Lord.

Legend goes that Sri Poonthaanam, a great devotee of Lord Guruvayurappan takes his work to Sri Narayana Battadiri composer of The great Narayaneeyam, a poetical work in Sanskrit. Poonthanam wants Sri Battadiri to check his work in Malayalam. Battadiri scorns at him for his poor grammatical mistakes. I believe Lord Guruvayurappan tells Sri Narayana Battadiri he cares more for Bhakti than Vibhakti (a Grammatical term for Case of a noun in Sanskrit).

Like Purandaradasa says in his song “Keleno Hari Taleno “ – Oh Lord I cant listen to this music which is perfect in pitch and rhythm but devoid of love or Bhakti.

Saint Tyagaraja chose this path of bhakti to reach his dear Lord Rama. He says music without bhakti is futile in the kriti Sangeeta jnanamu bhakti vina. He has composed thousands of kritis in various languages out of which about 700 are in usage. Although he has composed kritis on various Gods, his devotion to Lord Rama is no secret. It is also said the Saint hero-worshipped Sage Narada who is known for his immense bhakti to Lord Narayana. Tyagaraja through his Kritis , describes the Lord's stature and divine looks, his demeanor, he pleads with him to appear before him, cajoles him, praises him, his deeds and his victory of good over evil. In all of this one thing most common factor that you can see his outpour of devotion to Lord Rama.

In Srimad Bhagavatam 7.5.23 the various forms of Bhakti are mentioned thus. The Great Demon king Hiranjakashipu frustrated with his Devout son Prahlada asks him thus

[\(22\)](#) Hiranyakas'ipu said. 'Now tell me Prahlâda, my son, what you, well taught as you are, oh love of my life, consider the best of all that you all this time have learned from your teachers.'

[\(23-24\)](#) S'rî Prahlâda said: 'To listen, to sing, to remember Vishnu, to attend to the feet, to offer worship and prayers, to become a servant, to be a friend and to surrender one's heart and soul. These are the nine characteristics of the devotional service to Vishnu delivered by the devotee. This is the way one should relate to the Supreme Personality. That I consider the best that one can learn.'

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā tan manye 'dhītam uttamam*

Below are some examples of Nava vidha bhakti as told by the saint.

Shravana Bhakti : Attaining the Lord by Listening to his glory. This can be done by listening to bhajans, Keerthanams, Harikatha or discourses etc. Some examples of Tyagaraja's kritis that talk about Shravana Bhakti are

Sudha Madurya - Sinduramakriya , Ramakatha Sudha Rasa - Madhyamavati

Kirthana Bhakti : Attaining the Lord by singing his glory. This can be done by singing the bhajans, chanting, singing kritis etc. Some examples of Saint Tyagaraja's Kirthana bhakti are

Elavataram – Mukhari, Ni bhakti bhagya – Jayamanohari, Inta Sowkhyamani – Kapi,
Intakannananda – Bilahari

The saint says that there is no greater joy than singing the Lord's glory. The saint's entire compositions can be attributed to this bhakti alone through which other bhaktis are exemplified.

Smarana bhakti : Attaining the Lord by thinking of him always.

Shripate – Nagaswarali, Rama Kodanda Rama – Karaharapriya , Smarane Sukhamu –
Janaranjani, Tanalone dhyaninchi – Devagandhari

Padasevana bhakti : Attaining the Lord by worshipping his feet. Two classic examples of Padasevana are Bharatha's intense devotion to his brother Lord Rama and he keeps his Padukas on the throne as the ruler until Rama returns from his vanavasam. The other one is Ahalya who turns into stone because of a curse and just by the touch of his lotus feet gets back to life. Some examples of Padasevana bhakti by the Saint are –

Sri Rama Padama – Amritavahini, Raghunayaka – Hamsadwani, Ni Pada pankajamula – Begada,
Korina Vara – Ramapriya, Andundakane - Pantuvarali

Archana bhakti : Attaining the Lord by Worshipping the Lord and Archana to the Lord's idol.

Koluvamaragada – Thodi, Tulasi bilva – Kedara Gowla, Ennaga Manasuku – Neelambari,
Aragimpave – Thodi, Chetulara Shringaramu – Kharaharapriya,
Teerunaloni – Saveri, Vidamu Seyave – Kharaharapriya

The Saint has two facets to his worship – Nitya Karma or daily pooja for Lord Rama’s idol that includes the 16 upacharas and Sri Rama pooja where he has composed 26 Utsava Sampradaya kritis for each of the aspect of the festival.

The 16 upacharas are – Dhyana (Meditation), Avahana (Invoking), Asana (offering seat), Paadya (washing Lord’s feet), Arghya(offering water to rinse hands and mouth), Achamana(offering Lord water to drink), snana(bathing), vastra (offering clothes) , yagnopaveetha (offering sacred thread) , gandha (applying sandalwood paste), pushpa (offering flowers), dhoopa (showing incense smoke), deepa (showing lamp to ward off darkness), Naivedya (offering food), tambula (offering betal leaves and nuts) and pradakshina namaskara (prostrating after pradakshina)

Ref (lotussculpture.com)

The 26 Utsava Sampradaya kritis talk about performing a Seva

Routine	Meaning	Utsava Sampradaya kritis
Churnika	Invocation	Jayatu jayatu – Arabhi/Yadukula Kamboji
Hechcharika	Welcom	1.Hechcharikaga
Koluvu	Holding Audience	2. Koluvaivunnade
Kalyanam	Wedding	3. Pavanaja stuti
Nalangu	Ceremonial bath	4. Na pali Sri Rama 5. Nagumomu galavani
Nalangu Mangalam	Blessings after ceremonial bath	6. Jaya Mangalam- Ghanta 7. Jaya Mangalam- Nadanamakriya
Nalangu Arathi	Arathi after ceremonial bath	8. Pathiki harati
Shobanam	Salutations	9. Shobane
Pavvalimpu	Putting the Lord to sleep	10. Pulapanpu 11. Badalikadira
Lali or Oonjal	Swing	12. Uyyala loogavayya 13. Lali laliyani 14. Lali lalayya 15. Rama Sri Rama lali 16. Lali yugave 17. Sri Rama Rama 18. Rama Rama Rama lali 19. Kshirasagara
Jola	Lullaby	20. Jo jo Rama
Melu kolupu/Tirupalli Ezuchi	Waking the Lord	21. Melukovayya 22. Meluko Dayanidhi
Raksha	Protection	23. Raksha Bettare
Mangalam	Final blessings	24. Janaki Nayakunaku 25. Ma Ramachandrunaku
Mangalarathi	Final Arathi	26. Patiki Mangala

Vandana Bhakti : Showing reverence and devotion by Prostrating to the Lord.

The songs composed that show Vandana Bhakti are Vandanamu – Sahana
Dandamu bettedanura – Balahamsa

Dasya Bhakti : Becoming subservient and completely surrendering to the Lord.

The 2 main Dasyas or Servants as you may call them of Lord Rama are Hanuman and Lakshmana. The Saint has in many of his kritis explained the devotion of Hanuman and Lakshmana. The saint pleads with the Lord to take him as one of his servants just like these two. The kritis are Tava dasoham – Punnavagarali, Upacharamulanu – Bhairavi, Enta papinaiti – Gowlipantu, Kaluguna pada- Purnalalitha, Koluvaivunnade – Devagandhari. Bantureethi kolu – Hamsanadam
Pahi Ramadutha – Vasantavarali , shadvidamargini

Sakhya Bhakti : Devoted to the Lord By becoming a friend of the Lord . The great friendship the Lord has Sugriva and Vibhishana has been explored. In the kritis below the Saint calls himself as the Lord's friend. The kritis are Dayarani dayarani – Mohana, Chelimini Jalajakshu – Yadukulakamboji, Samiki Sari – Begada

Atmanivedana bhakti : Ultimate surrender to the Lord as Lord's one's own. Atma nivedana bhakti is the final and ultimate form of devotion. The Saint pleads in the kritis below and tells Lord that everything that belongs to him including himself now belongs to the Lord. Some famous compositions by the Saint are -
Nannu vidachi – Reethigowla, Kalaharana – Shuddha Saveri, Enati Nomu phalamu – Bhairavi, Makelara vicharamu – Ravichandrika

These are a few examples of Navavidha Bhakti as told by the Saint. The saint has touched all aspects of bhakti with one main goal of seeing Lord Rama.