
Reflections of Art in the Sculptures of Sarasvati at Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebid

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Abstract: *Sarasvati in India is regarded as the Goddess of knowledge. She has a multi-dimensional representation in Indian literature and art. It is important and interesting to note that over time Sarasvati has undergone transformation from the mute river to the embodiment of sound. In the Hoysala sculptures she is depicted in dance mode as she is regarded as the goddess of Vak and music. The understanding of Sarasvati does not stop with the description of the four hands, however, has a deep symbolic communication of the embodiment of the concept 'Sarasvati'. In this paper an attempt has been made to understand Sarasvati sculptures at Hoysaleswara temple, Halebid, through different dimensions of knowledge. The media chosen for the analysis are Natyashastra and Naada yoga. The paper throws light on the interpretation of the dance aspects as she is seen with different technical aspects of dance. Sarasvati is also depicted as an adept in playing the veena. The concept of Naada that emerges from the instrument and its understanding through Naada yoga has been analyzed through these sculptural representations.*

Keywords: Sarasvati, Halebid, Natyashastra, Naada Yoga, Rasa, Aharya, Stanakhas

Introduction

Sarasvati, the Goddess of learning is variously named as Vagishvari, Sarasvati and Bharati etc. The Goddess figures in the present day Hindu tradition, primarily as the Goddess of learning. Its origins can be seen in the Rig Veda as a river Goddess, who over time came to be worshipped in almost all the major religious sects in India. This romantic history of the transformation of the Vedic river into the Goddess, may very well serve as an example of the way in which the mytho-poetic faculty of the early ancient Indians worked to increase the pantheon. As the holiest river and the Goddess of learning, Sarasvati was and is still is closely associated with prosperity and development of knowledge, conscience and learning.

The Transformation

It is interesting to note that the transformation of a river into a female deity was almost

an imperceptible process. It is regarded that the River Sarasvati from the Vedic times had a colourless husband by the name of Sarasvat and hence she was known as *Virapatni* (Shatapatha Brahmana V, 3, 4, 25). The Vedic tradition of being the wife of Sarasvat was added to the feminine ending of a *nadi*. An early identification with speech (Rig Veda VI, 49, 7) which in its Sanskrit form of *Vak* is a feminine term, helped the process still further “Sarasvati verily is speech” has been quoted in the Brahmanas (Shatapatha Brahmana II, 5,4,6; III I, 4,9,9,1,7; V, 3,4,3; V, 5,4,16; IV, 2, 5, 14; II, 5,1,11; Aitiriya Brahmana iii, 1; Yajur Veda III, 4, 3; Rig Veda I, 22, 10; Yajur Veda I, 6, 3). *Vak* is also atmospheric speech, attached to the gods of Indra and the Maruts, she roams about in seclusion (Rig Veda I 164, 37). The identification with speech explains her close association with the vocal region in later literature.

It is said she resides in the mouth of Brahma (Rig Veda 8, 59, 10). She is the speech attended by Brahma or Prajapati (Matsya Purana XIII, 52). She is regarded as the tongue of Vishnu and the tooth of the Buddhist deity Padmapani. She is also the speech of Vishvakarman. She was to be invoked near the lips and sometimes near the ear of the new born babe for wisdom (Sankhyayana-Gruhyasutra, 1,2,6,4, Hir, Grihyasutra, 1, 2, 6, and 4). Sarasvati as the presiding deity of learning is described as a goddess of important branches of learning such as art and music. In the Kamasutra of Vatsyayana, the wealthy citizens used to look every fortnight to the temple of the goddess to witness dramatic performances etc. Palikulavamsha (Palikulavamsha, LXXIII, 83) refers to the king Parakkambha building a palace called *Sarasootimandapa* devoted to the arts of music and was adorned with frescos. As a deity connected with music, Sarasvati is often delineated both in art and literature as holding a *veena*. Bhojadeva’s great work on rhetoric was named Sarasvati-kanthabharana, the necklace of Sarasvati.

The chanting of Vedic hymns by *Udgatri* priests gradually developed into a system of music (Mahabharatha, Vana Parva, XCI, 14) and the sounds of nature and brute creation were imitated and organized into a system of vocal and instrumental music which, in spite of the ban on *tauyatrika*, survived in religious cults and popular diversions, and gods and sages came to be equipped with special instruments of music in course of time. Music was supposed to form the fifth Veda. According to Bharata the author of *Natyashastra*, music, drama, song and painting were equal to Vedic mantra (Ghosh, Manmohan 1995, Vol. 2: XXXVI). With the gradual fixing of outlines and the assignment of definite functions to the different gods of the pantheon the miscellaneous powers ascribed to Sarasvati from Vedic times gradually fell off, leaving only the superintendence of bearing the fine arts (Ghosh, Niranjana, 1984: 1, 8, 9, 20, 21).

One of the finest examples depicting Sarasvati (Figures 1-5) in Indian sculptures is seen at Hoysaleswara temple, Halebid; built under the Hoysala patronage. The Goddess Sarasvati here is depicted playing the divine *veena* (Figures 1, 2 and 5) and in a pure dance sequence (*nritya*) (Figures 3 and 5). She is also seen depicted with accompanying artists playing the drums, cymbals, vocalists etc.



Figure 1: Sarasvati in
Upavishtha sthanaka



Figure 2: Sarasvati in *Nritya* sequence
accompanied by vocalist and a *ghanavadya* artist

Natyashastra - the Text

Natyashastra is the oldest Indian text on the theory of *nrutyanataka* (dance drama). It contains about six thousand verses spread over 36 chapters as per the south Indian Tradition and 37 chapters as per north Indian tradition. As the name implies it deals mainly with the theory of *natya* or dramaturgy that has its own constituents such as dance, drama, music and aesthetics. It deals with the rules relating to theatrical performances and in short can be regarded as the science of stage. Like most ancient Indian texts, it claims a divine origin which secures it a greater sanctity and as it covers a wide range of knowledge, art, craft design and activity it is also referred to as *Natyaveda* and *Gandharvaveda*.

As per tradition, Brahma created it as per the request of the Gods. He created the fifth *Veda* that was open to all irrespective of caste and creed. He entered into a yogic trance and recalled the four Vedas and drew the recitative (*pathya*) from the Rig Veda, songs (*gita*) from the Sama Veda, histrionic representations (*abhinaya*) from the Yajur Veda and sentiments (*rasa*) from Atharva Veda and passed it on to Bharata. The text has been subjected to various debates regarding its antiquity. To be on the safer side its latest date may be fixed at 300 BC (Ghosh, Manmohan 1995, Vol. 1: xxxix). Difference of opinion also prevails over whether Bharata was a single author. De (1961: 36) opines that a work of this magnitude demands an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of many



Figure 3: Sarasvati in *Nritta* sequence accompanied by *ghana* and *avanaddha* artists



Figure 4: Sarasvati in *Nritta* sequence with attributes accompanied by *ghana* and *avanaddha* artists

arts and hence it was not possible for a single scholar to compose such a work. He suggests that the word 'Bharata' originally meant an actor, and it was composed by several authors who followed the Bharata system of *natya*. The text is in the form of a dialogue between the sages and Bharata in the mode of the presenter. It has been variously interpreted in the past. The author himself allows for varied interpretations and modifications of his own injunctions. However, from the time of its composition, it has been held in high regard and all later writers and commentators on the theories of literature, dramaturgy, arts and aesthetics owe their allegiance to *Natyashastra*. The *Natyashastra* deals with both the interpretative and non-interpretative aspects of dance, which can be identified, in the dance sculptures. The non-interpretative aspect deals with the aspects devoid of sentiments and the interpretative aspect deals with the elements of sentiments in detail. The *Natyashastra* seems to be the first in recognizing the two-fold importance of psychology about the production of a play. Its classification of heroes and heroines according to their psychological nature proves its admission of the importance of the subject on the creative side of the dramatic art, for; with a sufficient knowledge of all possible reactions of environments and incidents upon the different characters, the greatest possible success in characterization can be achieved (Ghosh, Manmohan 1995, Vol. 1: xlv). The *Natyashastra* also reveals the understanding of anatomical structure and even the physiological and psychological processes involved in dramatic presentation.



Figure 5: Sarasvati in *Nritta* sequence accompanied by *avanaddna* and *ghanavadya* artists

Natyashastra and Its Contents for Investigation

The text Natyashastra as observed has variations through the passage of time. It is imperative to follow a universally accepted text to analyse the dance sculptures with reference to Natyashastra. Hence, the universally accepted Sanskrit texts with translations of Manomohan Ghosh and Adya Rangacharya of Natyashastra have been used (Ghosh, Manmohan 1995, 2003; Adya 2003 a, b). The above select works of Bharata's Natyashastra contains thirty-six chapters. Only selective chapters play a major role and are the key tools for the investigation, resulting in a selection of the required chapters. Though there are many other aspects enumerated, only limited selected text is preferred which comes in the purview to analyse the dancing sculptures (Eswer et al. 2014).

Sarasvati Sculptures

The following is the analysis of the depiction of the deity Sarasvati at the Hoysaleswara temple, Halebid. Figure 1 depicts Sarasvati in a seated posture. This is considered to be in *upavishtha sthanaka* and the rest of the sculptures are in the *nrutta* mode, dancing to the rhythmic tune played by the accompanying artists. Except for Figure 1, the rest of the sculptures of Sarasvati have accompanying artists. Considering these sculptures to be of the *nrutta* type these sculptures are devoid of *rasa* or *bhava*. These sculptures are treated as individual dancing sculptures. They do not have any *kathasancara* (puranic story outline) or any emotions portrayed in them.

Gestures of Minor and Major Limbs

Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 are seen in different *nrutta* postures. The depiction of the head gesture is *ancita* in all of them. The neck is slightly bent towards the side and the head is in that position. In Figure 1, the position of the head seems to be attaining *parivahita shiras*. In this, the head is bent along with the position of the face in the same direction. This position is used to indicate joy as seen in the sculpture. In the former the head is bent towards the side, however, there is no shrinkage seen in the position of the neck. The neck remains in *sama*. In the latter the head is tilted, however, there is shrinkage in the position of the neck indicating *kuncita*.

In Figure 1, the deity is playing the *veena* seated and is looking forward. The eyeball (*tara*) position that may have been attained is *prakruta*. In Figure 2, the ornaments are swinging in air indicating a movement. This can be taken as a posture attained while coming to *sama* after a movement. The position of the eyeballs seems to be in *prakruta* (*sama*). In Figure 3, Sarasvati seems to have attained a frontal posture either after performing a turning movement (*brahmari*) or any other movement. Though she has attained a still posture, her ornaments are still in motion indicating her previous movement. The position of the eyeball seems to be in *vivartana* (sidelong glance). This seems to indicate her enjoyment of her performance and she may be depicted interacting with the *natuva* regarding the preciseness in accordance with the *tala*. In Figure 4, Sarasvati is seen dancing to the tune of the accompanying artists. She has

attained an end posture, probably of a particular sequence. The position of the ornaments in comparison with the previous sculptures is not static but has come to rest. The position of the eyeball is natural in *prakruta*. Figure 5 is mutilated. The position of the hands and the attributes indicates her to be Sarasvati. The position of the two hands visible is that of holding the *veena*. In this sculpture, Sarasvati seems to have attained a *sthana* after completing a movement. The ornaments that are still in situ indicate that they are not in motion, but in rest. The position of the neck, head, and the posture attained indicate that the position of the eyeball might be *vivartana* (a sidelong glance). The gesture of the nose is natural *svabhavika* of all the sculptures. In order to understand the mood of Sarasvati deeply engrossed in playing her music and dancing, it is imperative to analyze the position of the eyelids. The position of the eyelids of all the sculptures (*puta*) are said to be in *prasruta* (expanding of the eyelids). The eyelids are not raising up, not closing, not opening in anger, not contracted, not in level, not throbbing, not resting, not driven, however, is expanded indicating the joy of playing music and dancing. This suggests that she is in *ananda* involving her in *Gandharva kala*.

In Figure 1, while being engrossed in her music, the eyebrows of Sarasvati are raised in a pleasing manner in *caturashra* indicating joy. In Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 the eyebrows are raised in *caturashra* indicating joy. All these four sculptures are said to be in the dancing mode and the ecstasy attained du

e to the dance has been denoted in representing *catura bruha*. The position of the cheeks (*ganda*) in all the sculptures is in *phulla*, cheeks are expanded indicating joy. The position of the neck (*griva*) of sculpture 1 is in *sama*. There is no movement; it has not bent downwards, upwards or sideways. In rest of the sculptures, the neck is with the face turned sideways indicating *trayashra griva karma*. Sarasvati holds her *veena* in her left as well as her right hand. In the left L1, she seems to be supporting as well as playing on the strings of the *veena* in *ardhacandra*, L2 holds a *bija phala* in *katakamukha*, and R3 holds a *pasha* in *suci*. In her right hand R1, she is plucking the strings in *sarpashirsha*, in R2 she holds an *akshamala* in *hamsasya* and holds a lotus stalk in her R3 in *suci hasta*. In Figure 2, in her L1, she holds as well as plays, the *veena* in *ardhacandra hasta*, in L2 she holds the palm leaves or scriptures, L3 is mutilated and in L4, she holds *pasha* in *suci hasta*. All the hands on the right side are mutilated. In Figure 3, she is depicted with four hands. In her left L1, she holds the scriptures in *katakamukha hasta* and L2 depicts a dance movement and is held in *ardhacandra hasta* (the complete posture of the hand is popularly known as *danda hasta* in the iconography terminology). In right R1 she holds the *kshamala* in *hamsasya*. R2 is corresponding with L2. R2 *hasta* denotes *alapadma hasta*. In Figure 4, Sarasvati holds *alapadma hasta* used while performing *nrutta* in her left L1, the scriptures in her left L2 hand in *katakamukha hasta*, in L3 she holds *bijaphala* in *katakamukha*, in L4 she holds *pasha* in *mushti hasta* and in L5 she seems to be holding a *shakti ayudha* in *suci hasta*. In her right R1 she seems to extend her hand while doing *nrutta* in *ardhacandra* (the position seems to be held in a creative or artistic manner), R2 is mutilated, in R3 she holds an *akshamala* in *hamsasya*, in R4 she holds a mirror (?) or *cakra* (?) in *katakamukha*, and in R5 she holds an *ankusha* in *suci hasta*. In Figure 5, the deity in her left L1 holds a *veena* and plays the string in

ardhacandra hasta, L2 and L3 are mutilated and in L4 she holds *pasha* in *katakamuka hasta*. R1, R2 and R3 are mutilated, and in her R4 she holds a *cakra* in *suci hasta*.

In Figure 1, all the four hands indicate *kuncita*, with their elbows bent. In Figure 2, L2 denotes *adhomukha* and the rest *kuncita*. In Figure 3, L1 and R1 indicate *kuncita*, L2 *tiryak*, and R2 *urdhvagata*. In Figure 4, L2, L3, L4 denotes *kuncita*, L1 and L5 indicates *urdhvagata*, to its right, R1 is in *tiryak*, R2 is mutilated, and R3 denotes *kuncita*, R4 and R5 indicates *urdhvagata*. In Figure 5, L1 indicates *kuncita* and L3 *urdhvagata*, L2 is mutilated. With regards its right side, R3 denotes *urdhvagata* while the rest are mutilated. The position of the chest (*urah*) in Figure 1 is said to be *sama* in the seated stance. In the rest of the sculptures while dancing the deity is represented attaining *nirbhugna*, ie., the chest is stiff and the back depressed. In Figure 1, the position of the sides (*parshva*) is said to be in *sama* (not mentioned) in the text. In the rest of the sculptures the waist is slightly bent, the side is also bent slightly on the same side indicating *nata parshva karma*. The position of the belly is *kshama*, slender as seen in the previous sculptures. The position of the *kati* (waist) in Figure 1 is said to be in *sama* without any variation. In Figure 2, the *kati* is raised to the right said indicating *udvahita*. In Figure 3, the body weight is completely shifted to the left, and the leg-giving rise to *udvahita* on the left. In Figures 4 and 5, the same principle is applied and thus the waist shows the variation of *udvahita*.

It is interesting to note the position of the thigh while Sarasvati is identified as a dancing deity. In Figure 1, the deity is seated on a pedestal. Her thigh remains static, and is identified as *sthambana uru karma*. In Figure 2, the right leg is motionless and in general, it can be identified as *sthambahna*, however, the sculptor seems to be depicting the deity in movement as the ornaments have still not come to rest even after the completion of the movement and is in freezing *sthanaka*. Based on this evidence the movement of thigh can be considered as *udvartana* i.e, position of the thigh when turned quickly or in a movement. In Figure 3, considering the position of the hands and the movement of the ornaments given, the position of the thigh has transformed from *urdvartana* to *sthambana*. Figures 4 and 5 also have been given the same treatment. In Figure 1, the position of the shank (*jangha*) is *nata*, with the knee bent. The position of the knee of the deity is bent while in seated posture. In Figure 2, the deity as mentioned is in a dance mode and therefore, the right knee is bent indicating *nata*. If it is considered that she is about to give a movement, then the position of the *jangha* indicates *kshipta jangha*. Figures 3, 4 and 5 also can be classified under the same category of *jangha*. Considering the position of the feet (*pada*) in the Figure 1, the deity is seated, while her right leg is placed on the ground in *sama*. In Figure 2, the right leg is placed in *sama*, and the left has been lifted from *kuncita* position. In Figure 3, the left leg is placed in *sama* and the right leg lifted in *kuncita*, while in Figures 4 and 5, the position remains the same as the previous but for the change in the sides of the legs (Ghosh, Manmohan 1995, Vol. 1. Ch. VIII, V: 17-35, 38-115, 99-102, 108-111, 103-107, 116-125, 126-128, 132-137, 143-149, 166-173; Ch. IX, V:100, 208-209, Ch. X, V :1-916-17, 19-20, 21-24, 27-33, 41-51).

Sthanakas

Figure 1 is classified under *upavishtha sthanaka*. In this figure, the deity's thighs are spread out with the left feet in *kuncita* indicating the attainment of *vishkambha upavishtha sthanaka*. Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 surprisingly do not depict either *stri sthanaka* or *deshi sthanaka*. In turn they indicate that they are about to assume the *sthana* while completing the movement. In order to give a true *nrutta* appearance these sculptures seem to be frozen in-between movements ie, after starting and before ending the sequence (Devirappa et al. 1966: 403-407).

Aharya

The treatment of ornaments in *aharya* are in four modes namely, *avedhya*, *bandhaniya*, *prakshepya* and *aropya* types. Figures 1 and 4 have *shirshajala* and the same is not visible in the rest of the sculptures due to the presence of *kiriti*. The representation of ear ornaments like those of *kundala* is seen in Figures 3 and 4, and is not visible in rest of the sculptures due to the heavy headgear and its ornamentations. The deity is decorated with the neck ornaments (*kanthabharanam*) like *muktavali ratnamalika* and *ratnavali*. It is interesting to note that all Sarasvati sculptures have a single row *muktavali* on the throat in common. This seems to be a treatment given for female deities in general. The ornaments of the upper arm depicted are *angada* and *valaya* in all the above said sculptures. The ornament of the forearm (*bahunali vibhushanam*) is *uccitika*. In Figures 1, 3, 4 and 5, the finger ornaments (*anguli vibhushanam*) depicted are *puraka* and *mudranguliyaka*. In Figure 2, the right hand is mutilated and from the evidence of the left hand, there is only the depiction of *mudranguliyakas*. The hip (*kati*) has an elaborate depiction of ornaments. All the four classes of hip ornaments like *kanci*, *mekhala*, *rashana* and *kalapa* are seen in all the above said sculptures. However, they depict all the five elements, and there is slight difference in the treatment of design from one another. The deity has *kinkini* string with small bells and *kataka*, the bangle like ornament as *gulphopari vibhushanam* (anklets). The toe is decorated with *angulyaka*, in all the five sculptures of the deity. The representation of living creatures (*sanjiva*) along with the deity is in the *dvipada* type of classification. Among the four classes of crowns (*kiriti*) used all the sculptures have the depiction of *parshvagata* type of crown. There is a *hamsa* (swan) being depicted as her *vahana*. In Figures 3 and 4, there is the representation of the *hamsa* and in the rest, the *hamsa* is absent. Figure 2 is mutilated; therefore, it is not possible to recognize its presence. In Figure 1, the weapon held by the deity is *pasha* (not mentioned in the text). Figure 2 is mutilated. The only weapon seen is *pasha* held in the upper left hand. In Figure 3, there are no weapons held in the hand. In Figure 4, she holds an *ankusha*, *pasha* and *cakra* in its hands. In Figure 5, the weapons held are *pasha* and *cakra* (Ghosh, Manomohan 1995. Vol. 1, Ch. XXIII, V: 4, 11-14, 21-22, 23-26, 30-31, 33-34, 35, 35-38, 38-39, 39-40, 135-145, 155-159, 159-182).

Representation of Mind

Considering the sequence to be a representation of a dramatic sequence on stage by an

actor, then the *manas* is acting according to its own wish and it is *ishta* and as it is a voluntary action the mode of personal is *atmastha* (Ghosh, Manmohan 2003, Vol. 1, Ch. XXIV, V: 80-93).

Representation of Instruments

Sarasvati is considered the deity of knowledge. One of the most important attribute seen with her is her musical instrument. In these sculptures, the deity is seen in various dance modes and also playing an instrument. Instrumentalists and vocalists accompany her to support her act. In these sculptural representations, we find Sarasvati playing the *tat vadya* and her accompanying artists playing the *ghana* and the *avannaddha vadyas*. In Figure 1, Sarasvati is playing the *veena*. It seems to be of a non-plectrum type and is playing with her fingers. Therefore, the instrument might be of the *citra* type of seven strings. In Figure 2, Sarasvati's *veena* is mutilated. She has two accompanying artists to her left, one being engrossed in singing and the other in playing the *ghana vadya*, the cymbals. In Figure 3, Sarasvati is not playing a *veena* but in a dance mode. Two artists accompany her. The artist to her left is playing the *cymbals* (a *ghana vadya*) and the artist to her right is playing an *alingya* of the *avannadha* type. Both the artists are supporting the main artist by providing her the rhythm. Figure 4 is also depicted as the previous representation. The deity is not playing the instrument. The instrumentalist to her left is playing the *ghana vadya* (the cymbals), and to her right are two artists playing the *avanaddha vadya*. One is playing the *mridanga* and the other is playing the *alingya*. The artist playing the *mridanga* is depicted using *ardhapani* in the left and *ardhardha pani* in the right. Figure 5 is mutilated. The position of the arms indicates that Sarasvati is dancing and playing the *veena*. She is accompanied by two accompanying artist to her left. One is playing the *alingya avannadha vadya* and the other is playing the *ghana vadya*, the cymbals. This artist may also be singing along. The nature of work of these accompanying artists is to provide rhythmic support to the main artist. In most of the sculptures, the accompanying artists provided to Sarasvati are of the *avanaddha* and *ghana vadya* specialists. This representation in turn reflects Sarasvati depicting a rhythmic sequence, an indication of *nrutta* aspect of dance. (Ghosh, Manmohan 2003, Vol. 1, Ch. XXIII, V: 4, 11-14, 21-22, 23-26, 30-31, 33-34, 35, 35-38, 38-39, 39-40, 135-145, 155-159, 159-182).

Naada Yoga

According to Rao (2009) the forty-two bracket figures (*Apsaras*) at Belur and Halebid are dominated by *rajo guna* and *sattva guna*. They project two phases of activity. Firstly, *rajoguna*, where even though one is physically and mentally active, but is not enjoying a state of harmony or peace within. Second phase is *sattvguna* where one gets into a process of learning and self –introspection. Here one gets to know the fundamental knowledge of a right, *satvika*, peaceful living and the process of elevating oneself from the mundane to the knowledge of the supreme self, within. This theme of the logic of spirituality is depicted in sculptures, through the path of *naada yoga*, a path of music, where one has chosen enlightenment. Sound be it from instruments or voice or in any

other natural form is the principle means of communication and expression. In human society, there is an intricate relation with sound, as man's daily life is studded with different rhythmic phenomena like music, singing, rituals festivals etc. (Malik ed. 1999: 3).

The sculptures at Hoysaleswara temple, Halebid indicate that *yoga* with *naada* is not an instantaneous process, the immediate pleasures of enjoying a song; *preyas* as it is called, is different from meditating on *naada* and does not happen overnight. One has to be engaged in constant practice to achieve to strike the right note as in the sculpture. It calls for a transformation of thought process in the beginning. Further, the body and mind have to be tuned, for a steady focus on *naada*, efforts should be given to meditate on *naada* and finally harmonize both physically and mentally, to become one with it (Rao 2009: 79, 80, 81, 97).

The Sarasvati sculptures (Figures 1, 2 and 5) are a perfect example to understand the nuances of *naada yoga*. *Naada yoga* is a composite word, comprising *Naada* and *Yoga*. *Yoga* is derived from the root word *yuj*, which means to unite with the self. When the power of actions are united and are in harmony, it is *yoga*. In other words, the union of body, mind and spirit, in absolute harmony, resulting in oneness with the self is *yoga*. According to Maharshi Patanjali, "*yoga chitta vrutti nirodaha*", *yoga* is that which locks the movement of mind and thought. In the bracket figures of Sarasvati at Hoysaleswara temple, Halebid, the core theme is based on the philosophy of *jnana yoga* and *kriya yoga* (*naada yoga*). Austerities, study of scriptures and self-surrender constitute the *yoga* of purification action, which is *kriya yoga*. By constantly engaging oneself in the practice of *yoga*, the self-controlled *yogi* disentangles from all material contemplation and achieves the highest stage of transient happiness. To be aware of one's position in relation to God, that is, known that soul is part and parcel of the supreme god, is called realization and that is the goal of *jnana yoga*. By an enquiry into what is real and unreal, eternal or ephemeral one can control the wandering mind and get rid of the *rajasik* and *tamasic* tendencies. *Naada yoga* is one such path of *kriya yoga* where sound and its manifestations lead a man to destiny of supreme bliss. *Naada* means the cosmic sound, the deep humming sound like the drone.

It is a force of nature and an instrument of god. Etymologically, *naada* is the sound that is produced by the vibrations of anything. Sound or *shabda* is a form of energy and the source of knowledge. It is elevated as the divine sound or the *shabda brahman*. The compact mass of energy that resides in *shabda* is called *bindu* and that which resides in *naada* is called *naada bindu*. *Naada yoga* is the union of human soul to the supreme soul through the path of *naada*. It may be an outward expression of *aahata naada yoga* where the mind gets involved with music herald by the ears or may be an inward journey of *anahata naada yoga*, where *naada* is experienced in isolation of sensory organs. The science of sound involves not only becoming aware of audible frequencies, but also frequencies that are inaudible to the ears. Ancient Indian texts refer to the metaphysics of the science of sound. *Shabda* or sound is classified into *sphota*, the

bursting sound; *naada*, the movement, the drone and the force that makes the sound blossom; *anaahata*, the sound when struck or the unbeaten origin, which is in a latent form within, it is explained as one's own sound vibrations close to self, and heard by *yogis* and seers; *aahata*, the audible sound that is created by the striking of two surfaces, heard by all humans and animals that is within the decibel and frequency range. *Naada* is a classification of sound. It is the pleasant flow of sound which is perceived by the auditory apparatus, and interpreted by the brain. Sound is the source of all knowledge, for which reason it is called *shabda brahma*. The music of both *ahata* and *anahata* uplifts the soul, to unite with the supreme bliss. The process involved in focusing the mind and channelizing it to the world of music is called *naada yoga*. The *veena* of Sarasvati (Figure 1, 2 and 5), flute of Krishna, and the *damaru naada* of Shiva are the symbolic sounds which are source of revelation to *naada yogis*.

There are ten inner sounds a *naada yogi* experiences with *anahat naada* before merging with the *naada* of *Om*. These stages are compared to natural sounds like twittering of insects, sparrows, humming of a bee, flow of running water, whistle of the wind, the roaring of the sea, (waves have a rhythm in their sound vibration) and finally the sound of thunder. The manifestation of sound is four, from the highest to the lowest sound frequencies. When the four physical manifestations of sound/*naada* are correlated with the psyche of awareness levels, indicating oneness with *naada* it is elevated as *naada yoga*.

Para is the transcendent sound beyond the comprehension of senses. It is the pure energy and un-manifest sound. *Para* stage is indicative of the mind listening to the distant divine sound of *paravani* to which one's mind is attracted. This indicates the stage of concentration to hear the *paravani* as focus is always cultivated. *Pashyanti* stage is followed by concentration on *paravani*, a visualization of sound like hearing music in dreams. This occurs when all external sounds disappear and a ringing sound of cosmic origin is heard. *Madhyama* is the intermediate stage, a mental sound, where mind and intellect are in combined activity. The mind is first tuned to *naada* and it moves to explore the melody of music. This stage is depicted through the involvement with the stringed instrument as seen in the Sarasvati Sculptures (Figures 1, 2 and 5). The second stage is the involvement in rhythm, where the intellect guides. It is the stage absorbing the *laya* or rhythm as seen in Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5, which is expressed through the involvement with various types of percussion instruments. This is a stage of *anahata chakra*, through *ahata naada* (Sivananda 2000: 26-27). *Vaikhari* is the fourth stage where the sound frequencies are lower and hence audible, modified heard and felt through senses. It is an evolved stage of speech where one can observe artists engrossed in singing as represented in Figure 2 to the left of Sarasvati in the sculpture. It is a phase of *sangita* where they are involved with melody and rhythm (*tala*). Singing is evolved from speech in the stages of *naada yoga*. When the four stages of *naada yoga* are compared to the movement of *kundalini shakti* of awareness it can be viewed as *paravani* stage-muladhara and *svadhisthana chakra*, *pashyanti* stage-manipura *chakra*, *madhyama* stage-anahata *chakra* and *vaikhari* stage-vishudha *chakra*. The second stage is the

involvement in rhythm, where the intellect guides. It is the stage absorbing the *laya* or rhythm which is expressed through the involvement with various types of percussion instruments. This also is a stage of *anahata chakra*, through *ahata naada*. The graceful dancing postures of Sarasvati depicted in Figures 3 and 4, where in the grace of body movement unites with the rhythm (*tala*) and depicted as graceful rhythmic dance movements. The rhythm that is understood is shown in the foot tapping to the rhythm. *madhyama* is the third stage of *naada*, for which the heart is the seat. *Madhyama* means middle in Sanskrit, and according to the stages of *naada yoga* awareness, it can be compared to the gentle graceful movement of the sound emerging from the stringed instrument as in the *veena* of Sarasvati. Figures 1, 2 and 5, showing Sarasvati engrossed in playing the *veena* probably indicates the state of *madhyama*. It is an unexpressed state of sound (an expression of sound as voice occurs in the next stage), which is not totally involved and hence indicated as instrumental music where only melody is heard and not the words. The frequency of *madhyama* stage is in an audible stage to normal ears and hence categorized as the first stage of gross sound. *Vaikhari* is the fourth stage where the sound frequencies are lower and hence audible, modified heard and felt through senses. It is an evolved stage of speech where artists are seen singing as in Figure 2. It is a phase of *sangita* where they are involved with melody and rhythm (*tala*).

Conclusion

The Goddess Sarasvati once considered to be one of the divine rivers evolved into an iconic goddess, and celebrated as the Goddess of different branches of knowledge viz. scriptures, literature, music and dance etc. These transformations can be seen in their definitive expressions through sculptures at the Hoysaleswara temple, Halebid. Here Sarasvati is not only seen as a goddess of learning holding scriptures, but is also seen as the Goddess of music while playing her *veena* and as *Natya* Sarasvati popularly known for her dance mode. The analysis of the sculptures according to *Natyashastra* has given an in depth understanding of the nuances of dance like the gestures of minor and major Limbs comprising of the movement of the head, neck, thigh, waist, knee, shin, fingers, wrist, sides and chest etc, *Stanakas*, the static postures, *Aharya*, the complete representation of costumes and jewellery and representation of musical instruments. The analysis through the medium of *nanda yoga* leads us to understand the contemporary thought of the artists on the union of body, mind and spirit, in absolute harmony, resulting in oneness with the self. It also leads to a further understanding of the awareness of the concept to attain *Siddhi* through their art forms and their acquiring of knowledge of not only of their art, but also of deep Indian philosophy and spirituality. Therefore, these sculptures are not merely a work to embellish the temple or as a source of entertainment but as an embodiment of philosophy.

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