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FOCALISATION IN VEDIC & MODERN-DAY DHRUPAD VOCAL MUSIC STORIES

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Abstract. Narratives that we hear, connect dots to complete a civilizational story. Narrative strategies on Indian heritage of about 1000 years need to be revisited as newer counter-narratives need to be factored in. Globalized narratives during which become foundational to newer ones are ordered in such a manner that the stories within them often lead to Indians feeling estranged/demoralized/misunderstood. The problem becomes more serious to the local culture when local storytellers follow these narratives misunderstanding narrators for the source of knowledge. This may involve focalization leading to misunderstandings being communicated about a culture - India in this case. After examining Sām Veda (ancient Veda singing - date not known) and Dhrupad (probably from around 300 BC and still extant) as a case as represented in their newer globalized narratives, focalization is encountered and are reported in the present article.

Keywords: *Narrative Strategies, Focalisation, Khayāl, Dhrupad, Sāma Gāna*

INTRODUCTION

Narratives that we hear connect dots to complete a civilizational story. The cultural communication of the Indian civilizational story is ridden with misunderstandings thanks to focalization and disintegrative agenda, so much so that stories within the narrative sound strange and demoralizing to Indians. It may often not be a clash of historical method and tradition. Narrative strategies on Indian heritage of about 1000 years need to be revisited as there are newer counter narratives that need to be factored in.

We examine here the case of the story of continuity from *Sām Veda* and Dhrupad through a natively ordered narrative framework to identify disintegrative elements and focalization.

Says Genette (1980), it ,focalization, refers to the degree of the narrator's awareness and the extent to which his knowledge is restricted.' But the narrator may not represent knowledge of what he is narrating. For instance, a person trained in the Khayāl tradition telling the story of Dhrupad or even *Sāma Gāna* .

We will see instances of story tellers telling a story different from what their collective memory has stored. This phenomenon poses a greater challenge. For instance, a Sanskritist giving erroneous or misappropriated meanings of Sanskrit terms and concepts. In such cases a large population which does not know Sanskrit and regard such Sanskritists as knowledgeable gets a completely false

story delivering a body blow to a worldview that they had held in high esteem.

In the case of concern here, many a narrative is very often off the mark, thanks to focalization, especially amongst scholars with disciplinary blinders.

Take the case of *Sāma Gāna* - the oldest form of mantra singing. It analyses with Dhrupad Gāna as specific interdisciplinary models can expose unmistakable links of Veda with Indic thoughts and practices. However, the Veda-s are considered as books and an artificial chronology is imposed, but accepted by senior scholars. They refuse to accept the traditional view that Veda-s are revelations, later compiled into books. chronology of the Veda-s is irrelevant. The chronology of the Veda-s is irrelevant to Vedin-s. It is to my mind a narrative with disintegrative potential.

METHOD

We examine our case of *Sāma Veda* and Dhrupad through a natively ordered narrative framework. The present is a textual analysis of various Indian and foreign authors who have written on the subject of Dhrupad from various standpoints. However, I give inputs of *Sāma Gāna* as a native *Sāma* and Dhrupad singer and scholar. In addition, other native scholars are also cited. This is library research and does not afford any data analyses.

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analyses with *Dhrupad Gāna* as specific interdisciplinary models are expected to expose unmistakable links of Veda with Indic thoughts and practices establishing a continuous civilizational story. This is a rational approach to the problem.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Veda surprises the beholder by perennially re-appearing! It pulsates with unfathomable musical momentum. No disruption or change could fully dislodge or deeply modify its rich, highly complex, and codified manifestations, including its most valuable attendant, nay, essence, music. Music has been, since time immemorial, the carrier of meaning in Vedic communication instantiated in a variety of rhythmic accentuations as well as pitches, among many other elements. The rich data embedded in Veda-s and their exegeses were communicated effectively for ages and transmission losses have been controlled through sophisticated systems of memorization and communication from Guru to student/s. Despite this, modern scholars have reordered the Vedic narrative, employed foreign value systems to pass judgments, etc. Natives of India now believe that Veda-s did not originate in India.

Rājārām (Dec 3, 2019) forwarded a strong case that the Indus civilization was Vedic and did not precede Veda and there was no invasion. Sanskrit scholars from various universities in a widely reported symposium held in Delhi University have stated, "Vedas date back to 6,000 BC […]."Due to this strong and high cultural context of the Indian civilization, there was no necessity for today's music and

literature to be mere derivatives of distant cultures. Deva (1976) cites other authors regarding a likely spread of 'Sindhu' or Indus civilization to far-off places like Mesopotamia (Dev, 1976:6). He refers to the name *Meluhhā* that Mesopotamians used for the Indus people. Indian *rāga Maluhā Kedār* is among the rare raaga-s now. Referring to the Indian teak wood found in Babylonia belonging to around 600 BC and the cultural relations with Greece up until 500 BC, Deva likes to believe that Indians did indeed establish settlements in many parts of the world and terms these areas as Greater India. Dev (1976:9) believes that by 600 BC, Indian music reached its pinnacle after undergoing usual changes.

However, he too falls into the trap of the Arya-n Dravidia-n divide, a narrative propagated by colonial scholars. He believes that the Sindhu civilization was pre-Vedic and music at that time was *anārya* (non-Ārya-n) (Dev, 1976:103-109). Ruckert (2009-2010) terms Indian art music as Indo-European music based on flimsy grounds such as the presence of Harmonium on stage, and the use of steel wires in Tanpura-s, etc. This is a clear instance of either focalization in terms of lack of knowledge of the subject or a strategic narrative to alter the story.

The one sound that has, without doubt, originated in the Veda-s and forms part of Indian world view even today is the *Onkār* (often referred to as the syllable OM) which may be considered as a core cultural symbol that has not changed over millennia. It is Udgītha in Sāma Veda which (Upaniśad, 2010:59) considered pivotal,

notwithstanding that G. U. Thitte; (Personal Consultations, 2009) terms Upaniśada-s as 'useless'. During my interactions with Thitte, he came through to be a grammarian and would not accept anything that does not fit his worldview. Therefore, without doubt, his is a case of focalization in terms of his strict disciplinary interests almost discounting the value that exists in Upaniṣadic philosophy. Mukhopādhyāy's (1929) reference to the esoteric view of Pranava (OM) in Nādabindu Upaniśad is illustrative of coherence of spirituality and Indian music (p.2).
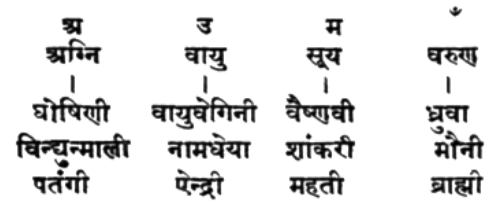
(Plate I)

'Om' is at once an unchangeable high-context core cultural symbol, concept, and essence of Sāma Gāna and Dhrupad. It has interesting implications in grammar, semantics, semeiotics, and ādhyātma (akin to spirituality) among other areas.

Cauhān's (1985) inclusion of present-day Afghānistān in the Vedic discourse is geographically unifying, but adherent to the Ārya-n invasion/migration conjecture as is usual (p.44). He goes on to establish with the help of Persian etymology to say that "ēr" is a source of the word ārya and means "a man possessed with[…]manliness, bravery" which he says are the qualities of the "Āryan race in general". This is laughable. These qualities

cannot be ascribed to a single race. Also the connection of a race with these qualities is incredulous. This instantiates that aspect of focalization as in the limitation of knowledge of the narrator. This is a logical outcome of the misappropriation of indigenous culture by many colonial scholars including Max Mueller and William Jones who propounded the Proto-Indo-European languages after they realized that all European languages had clear roots in Sanskrit. Here we see a clear case of altering strategy to affect the overall story of Sanskrit which is a cultural force of this area.

This is about the music of *Sāma Veda* and its derivative viz., Dhrupad. Note that Brahmā instantiates in various contexts. For instance, Sāman-s were perhaps seen holding the potential to apprehend the quality of Brahmā and attain the corresponding qualia. This is clear even in the Vedic context as (Taittiriya Sanhitā, 2.5.7) "*deva vai narci nayajumsyasrayanta te sāmanneva srayana - the gods do not resort to the rcā or the yajus; they resort to Sāman only.*"(Bhise,1986) Interestingly, Vedic etymologist Unādi (In J. Pathak's edition, 2014) who is believed to have lived earlier than Yāskacārya (700 BC) does not declare Sāma as a derivative of Rg Veda, in his definitions of Sāma, (Sastry, 2014:488-489). This puts to rest the doubt over the autonomy of Sāma as an apauruṣeya Veda, rather than a derivative of the Rig Veda. This is significant because, today, a chronology is in vogue amongst learned circles of Veda which tends to diminish the importance of the two Veda-s viz; Yajur &

Sāma and attempts at establishing a superiority of Rg which is uncalled for and dubious. The reasons for this are not known to the author, but this narrative is strategically disruptive because the source of the three Veda-s is single and to look at it as three different bodies of knowledge is disintegrative. Vyās Riṣi is known to have trifurcated Veda for ease of cultural communication.

Brahmā also plays a causative role in the arts in the ancient Indian worldview. Bharat Muni (500 BCE-600 CE) also begins his Nātyaśāstra by a chapter on how Brahma created dramaturgy (Chaturvedi,2005). Dhrupad is mentioned in Nātyaśāstra in the form of Dhruva (V/59-62 in Sastri,1984), connecting it to Prabandha. However, the peculiarities of Dhruva-s are based on the number of syllables, stanza-s, and tāl. Even today, Dhamār is a tāl and is part of the Dhrupad singing milieu.

Denials of the existence of cultural communication of Sāma Gāna with later Sūdprabandha or Sālag Prabandha to today's Dhrupad warrant serious interdisciplinary attention. Lāth's (1978) comparison based on mōkṣa-potential of *Mārgi* and *Rāga* music of Dattilam is an unnecessary dichotomy (p.23). This is because Indian practices cannot be divorced from dharma, artha, kāma, & mōkṣa (Śādangdev 1.1.30 as cited in Dīkṣitār,1984)

यथाविधानेन पठन् सामगेयविच्युतम् ।
सावधानस्तदभ्यासात् परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥
इति याज्ञवल्क्य. स्मृति प्राय-११२

(Plate III)

(p. ii) also (Kapūr, 2019, Diksitar,1984). The gist of this Sikśā is that if Sāma is read as per rules and sung carefully, then the practitioner will transcend to eternal bliss (Param Brahma). My conjecture is that the so-called Dhrupad of Mānkutuhala (Man Singh Tomar (1486-1516) became an umbrella term for Vishnu-pada (praising or related to deity Vishnu), Dhruva-pada, and Hori and Dhamār types of Mārgi and Deśi sangīt which populate Prabandha.

Although the world changes, narratives that are entrenched stick fast despite their demerits if any. Thielmann's (1995) view separating Carnatic and *Hindustāni* music say inter alia, "The comparison of musical forms represents[…]most problematic areas[…] Samgitaratnākara[…]as evidence[…]show similarities[…]only at the surface; […]differences[…]cannot be easily ignored."(Thielmann,1995:1).

Take the case of the two old musical forms, *Hindustāni & Canātic*, of music rooted in Vedic singing and concept. Mere musicological analyses are superficial as is evident in Thielmann's narrative (1995:4) where she admits to no "information" preserved in *kīrtana* from 14-15th Century. On this basis, she argues that it is baseless to compare Prabandha and *kīrtana* which is a one-sided statement that attempted to support her theory. Unfortunately, her analysis is based again on Western concepts like form and style. Her narrative adds fuel to the *Ārya-n - Dravid-ian* division narrative. Śarmā (1990), on the other hand, locates a strong possibility of Prabandha being employed by an 8th C song compiler

of Tamil Nadu, named Nāthmuni (pp.55-56). He reportedly compiled songs belonging to the 5th-6th century. This *Śarmā* sees as a possible link between Mātanga's Brihaddeśi and Nāthmuni's work (both 8th C). She wonders if Brihaddeśi gets a historical background of a few centuries because we otherwise know that 'Prabandh' as a song is first time mentioned in Brihaddeśi.

But Lāth's (1987:28-29) views are disintegrative and instantiate focalization. He says 'music is merely[…] structure' and does not need words to sustain. As early as the 10th Century Abhinavagupta describes the same as 'sāmyamātrāphalan-naśakyamvaktum'; 'the association of tāl and *svara* in *gāndharva* is beyond description'. Sānyāl (1995:113) declares that *ālāp* is the inseparable *sthāyi bhāva of pada*.

Coudhari (1986:21) also treats them as integral. She quotes a *Maharṣi* as declaring*"yasyādakśarsambadhdhantatsarva mpadasangyitam".* It states "whatever is related to akśara is pada" She (1986:20) quotes Bharata as declaring *"gāndharvam yanmayā prokatansvaratālapadātmakam padantasya bhaved vāstu svaratālānubhāvakam"*.

Again, Lāth (1987) opines that words are "not essential" to "sustain" music, potentiating a dichotomy between music and literature (p.29). It must be noted that Sanskrit dominates Indian Literature from early medieval to ancient times. If Sanskrit and later Brij Bhāśā have militated in the context of Dhrupad (Indian art music) then a major cultural dismemberment is affected. Moreover, are we talking of music per se or vocal music?

This may be strategic. It does not instantiate focalization because of the sheer erudition he is known for. What does Lāth mean by words since the concept of the word is not the same as *śabda*. Also, when we refer to Dhrupada, the pada part refers to the lyrical aspect. How can one undermine either śabda and/or pada in vocal music; especially in a situation of singing for an audience or her/his deity? This is nothing but a reductionist approach almost bent upon dismantling the cultural contexts within which a song evolves hand in hand with music not as its carrier but as its soul? /he comes from a tradition of Khayāl singing which in many song-texts are mutilated due to the failure of cultural communication. The argument he puts forth against the need for song-text helps this deficiency he had inherited.

Lāth agrees that *Sāma Gāna*, *Gītikā-s*, and *Jāti-s* are relatives, yet in his interpretation of Dattilam, Rāga-s have lesser mokṣa-potential than that of jāti-s. He (1987) says there is no literary description of *gamaka* in *Prabandha* (p.30). And since Prabandha was in practice in Śādangdev's time (13th C), does Lāth create elbow-room to push a theory of import of *gamaka* in Dhrupad from non-Sanskrit sources? Does this typify the disintegrative cultural narrative strategy, since *gamaka* is present in the *Sāma Gāna* tradition even today? I am inclined to believe in the affirmative because Lāth's discussion about Dhrupad and Khayāl, hint at his zeal to show the superiority of the latter over the former which was avoidable. My belief gains strength when his above statement is read with the

popular narrative that Khayāl was a hybrid and derivative form, highly influenced by Qoul, Qulbānā, and Quavvāli brought by the invading Islāmic rulers. Lāth appears to further misrepresent the essentially Indic art of Dhrupad by applying self-imposed foreign values of "form" and "style" and goes on to show that Dhrupad was a "closed form" (1987) and that it did not have style before Khayāl (Lath, 1987:28-29). This is begging a question. He rather clearly gives preferential treatment to Khayāl in this article. Lāth concludes that the genesis of Dhrupad needs to be revised - a strategy which reflects an intention of pushing a narrative, without being a practitioner of Dhrupad, but a student of Khayāl of the Mevāti Gharānā.

Francoise Delvouye (1987) & (1992), denies mention or definition of Dhrupad in Sanskrit Texts before the 'end of 17th century' in Bhāvabhatta's Anup Sangīt Ratnakar and Sangīt Pārijāt by Ahobala (1665) (p.36) & (p.2). However, she (1986) in her bibliography (including Persian Sources) of Dhrupad contradicts herself by mentioning Mādhava's (who died around 1554-1555) work Vīrbhānuday Kāvyam in Sanskrit which mentions Dhrupadp (Delvuoye, 1986:103). She (Sarma,1994) refers to Sāhab Śarmadī's Persian interpretations and translations of Rājā Mānsingh Tomar's (1486-1516) Mān Kutuhala. Śarmadī writes 'ever since Dhrupad came to be recognized, Marag (*Mārgi sangeet* as opposed to *Deśi*; *Mātanga Muni's* Brihaddeśi 8th Century) lost its foothold. This is a belief in disruptive change rather than change with continuity, notwithstanding that it refutes Delvouye's

above observations germane to the mention of 'Dhrupad' in Sanskrit texts. This points at an established older term and tradition of Dhrupad which Śarmā fully (1994:85) agrees. Widess (1992:68) partially agrees. It remains a matter of research whether characteristic features of today's Dhrupad were extant at *Mādhava-'s* time or not. But Warmadee's reference to Dhrupad must have come from some Sanskrit text dated between 1486-1516, which challenges Francoise's surmise that there was no mention of Dhrupad before the end of the 17th century.

But Prem Latā Śarmā (1987, 116-118) makes the antiquity of Dhrupad clear and takes it back to the period of *Natyaśāstra* by highlighting the definitions of *Dhruva & Dhruvā*, if not explicitly. But Sarma (1992), for the first time, makes explicit the difference between Jāti, Mūrcanā, and Rāga as given by Mātanga Muni (p.5.). Interestingly, she draws from as diverse sources as *Brihadārnyakaopaniṣada, Gobhīla (Sāma Vedic Ṛiṣi) Smriti, Mārkandeya Purāna, Mahābhārata, Pānini's and Nāradīya's Śikṣā-s, and Bharatrihari's Vākyapadīya, Nātyaśāstra, and Dattilam*. This indicates an integrated approach and regard to continuity despite the change. It is implausible that all these thoughts that enrich Dhrupad were derived from some unknown nomadic warriors.

In modern times according to (Coudhari,1986:26),Dhrupad comprehends singing in the various idioms in which the pada can be prosodic or prosaic, but meaningful. She reminds us of *Prem Lata Śarma's* surmise that since *vāggeyakār*

(extempore composer-singer) *Nāyak Bakśū's pada-s* use the terms *'grām-mūrchanā'* profusely, he must have lived not very long after Śādangdev (13th C). The above discussion establishes a continuity of very old concepts of Dhrupad.

It is history that my Dhrupad master's father Ustād Husseinuddin Dāgar had returned to his original faith and renamed himself as Tānsen Pande which is the original name of the famous and legendary court musician of Akbar - Tānsen. His son's name was Vilas and his daughter's Sarasvati. Yet, Zelazko (2019) enters birth and death details as "born c. 1500, Behata or Gwalior, India—buried 1586/89, Gwalior" filtering off the fact that Tānsen was born a Brāhmana - there is a specific reason why the term 'buried' is used by this author.

G. U. Thitte (2009) fully rejects the Sāma Vedic connection of today's art music saying that the intonations of Sāma Gāna were not musical at all. This he says although *Nāradiya Śikśā* clearly states that the Śruti (or keynote) of Sama is *"venormadhyama"*— the fourth note of the flute. However, some knowledgeable authors suspect coherence and authenticity of parts of Nāradiya Śikṣā. which may have been added centuries later (Bhise, 1986:2; Kṣīrsāgar, 2010:246).
Again, it must be admitted that the Sāma Gāna of Kauthuma recension of Kāśi , as it is sung today (e.g. Bhāskarnāth Bhattācārya, MSRVVP Ujjain), does not sound like the sophisticated rāga in Dhrupad although he (personal telephonic interview, 2013) strongly claims otherwise. But recordings of say, Dravid Śāstri of

Rānāyaniya recension (Deccan College, Pune) with tānpura, sound like Rāga.

Rāmamūrthy Śroutigal of Śārada Muth, Śringeri (Personal Consultation: 2013) says that the South Indian Kauthuma śākhā renditions were painstakingly revived by Satyavrata Sāmaśrami of Bengal. Kumbakonam pundits used the harmonium to establish the *svara-s* and remove errors. This poses to be a challenge in terms of the idea and accuracy of *svara*. The author (in press) points out specific issues that have crept in due to the printed version of Sāman songs, but not due to a fault in the tradition. He stresses the strengths of the oral tradition. He also observes different singing of the Sāman-s by people of the same Śākhā (recension) of different geographies and is justified as *deś-bheda*. Note that *Rāga-s* also have place names, e.g., Multani, Kambhoji, Gurjari, etc. Rāga-s like Sārang have bheda like variations, e.g. Lankadahan Sārang, Gaud Sārang, etc. This parallel between Sāma and Rāg needs to be deeply examined.

Vināyaka Rāmacandra Ratāte (1991:62-64) while tracing the seeds of Dhrupad in Sāma Veda places the Mārgi sangīt in the stotra, stoma, and srauta categories. He terms Dēśi as Praghāta which comprise the Uttarārcika, Pūrvārcika, and rik-s. I have technical reservations regarding this categorization, but it lies outside the scope of this paper. His premises will need a deeper examination to verify my reservations regarding his mārgi-deśi categories although I do not see his narrative to be disintegrative or fraught with focalization. I

practically unearth the real mūrchanā-s (not in practice) that led to *Rāga*, and locate them in Sāma Gāna in my future work/s. Lāth's 'form' and 'style' arguments can easily be refuted in the light of deeper Vedic values such as *chanda, vritti, prabandha, stōbha, vikriti, pada, mantra, mātrā, gamaka*, and the corpus of Indian theories of meaning-making and their derivative Western ideas of Semiotics. Śarmā (1992;119) asserts that the 'pad' aspect of Dhrupad is related to '*bandh*' of form. I conjecture that the term 'bandiś' may have come from 'bandh' which separates on *parvan* of a *Sāman* from the other. Bāndh is a dam that binds in a way and 'bandiś' also binds.

Stōbha-s in *Sāma Veda* is very special, but have been underestimated by Suryakāntā (1970:13) calling it Da-Da by some. The seeds of disintegration can be diagnosed in discourses on Indian music and its historicity. *Sāma Gāna* is considered a musical composition of Rg Vedic mantra-s and has become a mainstream assumption. But the Rg *Veda Sanhitā* mentions *Sāmgāna* (2.12.16-17;2.43.1-2; 2.5.3; etc) which shows that it is not later than Rg Veda. Also, (Pāndeya, 2005:5-6) Gritsamad and other Riṣi-s are considered extremely ancient Rg Vedin-s who knew Sāma mantra-s like the 'Prajāpatayehārdyam' a category known as Chinnagāna. There is a school of thought that believes based on strong literary evidence that Sāma has an independent existence irrespective of Rg Veda and it is not later than Rg Veda. However, the narrative on Vedic chronology today itself is disintegrative with deep consequences

not only on music but also on the Vedic community.

The Kalātattvakoś (Baumer, B., Cattopādhyāya, S., Pānda, N.C., Ghośāl, P., Tripāthy, K.eds., et.al.1996 onwards) helps immensely in this. Bhāvabhatta (17th C) has connected Dhrupad to Prabandha. Sangītratnākara (in M. R. Dīkṣitār, 1984) states just the same as given below (p.ii).

सामवेदादिदं गीतं संजग्राह पितामहः । सं-र. १-१-२५
श्रुतिभ्यस्तु स्वारा: षड्जर्षभगान्धारमध्यमाः । सं-र. ३-१-२३
तस्यगीतस्यमाहात्म्यं के प्रशंसितुमीशते ।
धर्मार्थिकाममोक्षाणां इदमेवैकसाधनम् ॥ सं-र. १-१-३०

(See Plate II).

This integrative quality is due not to the narrative of an *'Āryan'* or *"Brāhminical"* (artificial) integrative effort with the "Dravid", much as Suniti Kumār Catterjē (1967:12-14) likes to forward, but to cultural coherence of the entire in Veda. We can see focalization in narratives that come from insiders as well. For instance, Bhise (1986) credits the two "notes" (udatta & anudātta) of Rg Veda to a hypothetical Indo-European language (p. 78). Note that these speech intonations are believed to have implications for Sāman music. She goes on to add her narrative here and instructs us that these two 'notes' increased in number (two, three, four, five, and then six) due to the enculturation of Indo-European music in India. Thus it is out of this enculturation that two more Svara-s were added to the Rk mantra-s according to her which led to *Sāman-s*. This means *Sāman-s* are born after the injection of the two said *svara-s* which are of Indo-European roots. This presupposes a lack of music in a culture (India) that did not

possess the Rg Veda - it had to wait allegedly for Rg Vedin-s to attack Indus and give music. This insinuates that people who ostensibly brought this Veda into this new cultural area were, in some way, responsible for bringing music into this land. One wonders how a culture without music could add two musical "notes" borrowing from another culture. It is unacceptable that an ancient culture that was singing four musical notes would not be able to discover the rest of the two and would need an invasion/mixing with another culture to do it.

The counter is simple - it is not necessary that this happened to a practice (Rg Veda) that was not music in the first place? Sam is believed by many scholars as having its independent Vedic identity. These facts need to be addressed before accepting that Rg Vedic accentuation was the precursor to music and hence to Sāma Veda. Also, even in M.A (music) theory classes, it is taught that the accents led to musical *svara-s* which is unacceptable if Sāma and Rg were contemporaries. All those who can speak with various intonations cannot extrapolate these intonations practically into *svara-s*. How do we explain the entire (complex) Sāma Veda to have bloomed given this human limitation from speaking with accentuation? Then, how does one accept that the spoken intonations developed into musical svara-mantra system (*Sāma Gāna*) of such great complexity? These questions challenge the whole idea of development of musical svara-s of *Sāma* from Rg Vedic accents and automatically challenges the narrative that Sāma Gāna is a derivative of

the Rg Veda. We encounter a focalization on the part of scholars who have perhaps been easily able to get primary Rg Vedic resources and not able to get primary Sāma Vedic resources due to the fast diminishing number of Sāma Vedin-s. To complicate this further few sing the Sāman-s and also know the philosophy of Sāma Veda. This also is a case of focalization in itself, because such people also add to the narrative with conjectures and guesswork.

Civilisational Concerns & Correlations

A little digression from our intangible heritage story to more concrete examples in focalization. Now, culture deepens and becomes more complex and sophisticated during long periods of peace and stability of a community. In the context of the Indian civilizational story, the Arya-n invasion/migration conjecture stands contested due to recent archaeology, paleobotany, genetics, and other scientific evidence. Various ways of taking away the credit of civilizational efficacy of native Indians have been strategically entrenched into the mainstream scholarship. But the recent Rakhigarhi excavations leading to findings on Harrapan ancestry (Śinde, et al., 2019: 179 &729-735) have led inter alia to the following conclusion:

"[…]population has no detectable ancestry from Steppe pastoralists or from Anatolian and Iranian farmers, suggesting farming in South Asia arose from local foragers rather than from large-scale migration from the West."
Parallel studies countering that the Indian is indigenous and not a derivative

civilization, have been debunked by Śinde as 'political' and 'without adequate sample size' (Personal Consultations, 2018, Pune). The Antiquity of Indian civilization was always referred to with reference only to Indus archaeology. Now, there is evidence to show the greater antiquity of this civilization. For instance, about 24000 m (24 km) long, 2.7 m high, and around 2.5 m wide under-water wall-like construction was discovered along the Konkan in 2011 built-in around 6,000 BC leading experts to surmise that it may be as old and civilized as the Indus Valley civilization. Evidence of art and artifacts found show ancient trade links with various civilizations. Also, recent Archaeology conducted in Konkan has unearthed human life more than 52,000 years ago.

The aforesaid cases point out to a narrative habit that invariably attempts at all Indic knowledge, practice, and heritage being imported which casts its shadow on other stories even that of the continuity of Dhrupad from ancient times and its origins in *Sāma*. Nothing Indic seems to belong to the people of India. Strategic narratives have entrenched the fact that all those who built this important civilization themselves did not belong to this cultural area. This kind of scholarship does not help the indigenous people at all and breaks their self-esteem.

Coming back to the case in question, the *Sāman-s, Stobha-s* constitute a core cultural symbolism that needs to be separately studied, but which have been brushed aside as exclamations, etc, by modern scholars. I conjecture that the letters used in ālāpa of Dhrupad are also

akin to stōbha-s (unprecedented approach) concerning *Mātanga Muni's* (in Śarmā, 1992:87-89) Brihaddeśi. For instance, the Himkāra as Udgītha (Brihaddeśi 101, in Śarmā) which appears in Dhrupad as well as in *Sāma Gāna* (as *stobha* e.g in the Sāma Gayatri) (Sarma, 1992:103).

Richard Widess (1992) also talks of non-semantic words used in Caryā music of Nepāl but contextualizes it in Buddhism instead of in *Sāma Veda* (p.97). Widess's attempts at separating Buddha's and *Sanātan* worldviews are rather deep. But he admits that his Nepali Dhrupad was a rather complex project for which (at that point of time) (1992) he didn't substantiate (apparently and perhaps due to other preoccupations).

The very fact by his submission, *Caryā* is a Prabandha (1992:85), actually substantiates a genealogical relationship with *Sāma Gāna*, but what Widess proposes as *Vajrayāna* music, is very likely a form that follows an older Vedic musical form. This possibility he does not, however, record. This also needs research to confirm. It is well known that these are called *stobha-s* in the context of Sāma Gāna which Widess fails to mention. Instead, he places this music in Vajrayāna Buddhism and calls it Caryā Dhrupad. He also tries to separate the so-called Talvāndi "gharānā" of Dhrupad extant in Pākistān from Indian Dhrupad based on a few varna-s like *'ya la ri'* etc they use. It can be easily shown that *lri* could have easily changed to *la-ri* due to local pronunciation. Sanskrit vowels, *la-ri* being a break up of *lri* - difficult for some to pronounce. This could be a result of focalisation. This is why perhaps he (1986)

believes that the "ghārānā" which "claims" the Kandahār Bāni (Vāni) originated in Mughal Courts (of Akbar) without giving any reference or reason (p.9).

Although Śādangdev in his Sangīt Ratnākar [5th section 231 to 236), differentiates between Sāma and Vedic Sāma, he says that the *Stobhākṣara-s* used in Sāma should be the same as the Vedic ones which hint clearly at an older common musical practical legal framework that we also see in Dhrupad today - and in Carya. Probably, the *Dhrupad ālāp* in the form of *ā, ra, ra, nā, ra*.. etc. of today is a derivative of Sāma stobha framework.

Stōbha-s cannot be brushed aside which according to Śabdakalpadrum (1961) is *"sāmavayavaviśeṣaha"* - they're special limbs of Sāma (p.274). It goes on to give meanings of *stobha-s* in great detail. Revisiting the popular sound *'Om'*, *Dixitā*r (1984) in his explanation of *Stobhabhaśyam or Akṣartantram* (exegeses of *Sāma Veda*) writes that it is the ultimate cause of the fire, of life force, the light in the Sun, and all things that possess their light (p.33). Again, this is reflected in the very definition of *svar* which on the one hand refers to the sun and also to the musical tone. Mātang (Brihaddeśi, 53 in Śarmā, 1992) and (8 C) musicologist derives this word from *sva + rajari* = self enlightened (p.29). This underscores the criticality of musical *svara-s* in *Sāma* and its cultural communication. Translations of Sama mantra-s without reference to *stobha-s* propagates misunderstandings.

I posit that *stōbha-s* in *Sāma Gāna* represent ālāp in Dhrupad as *'svar'* which is

the building unit of *ālāp* is declared by (Chāndogya Upaniṣad) as *Stobha* in (p.118). Dīkṣitār (1984) cites Jaiminīya Nyāymālā (9-2-11) which says that *stōbha* should be included in discussions on *Śikṣā* and *Vyākarana* as per evidence (p.v). (see plate III)

It may also be noted that the integrating quality of Indian knowledge systems is evidenced further in the same idea of Śabda-Brahma in linguistics. Take the case of Vākyapadiya of Bharatrihari. Consider this in conjunction with the discussion on *Brahmā* earlier - *Akṣara* (different from word) is indeed akṣaya because it comes from this Brahma which is "*anādi'nidhanam brahmam śabdattattavam yadakṣaram vivartate rthabhāvena prakriyā jagat yataha*" (Vākyapadīya 1). This is translated as "Which Brahman, being beginningless, deathless, imperishable and *śabdatattva*, manifests into objects and by which the universe is created."[i]

Also interesting is the idea of Śabda-Rava (Parāñjapē, 2011). It is the phenomenon of reverberation in the human body, born out of holding a pitch for a suitable period of time. My first guru, personal training sessions in around 1978, Mumbai, the Late Pdt. Nēlkantha Miśra (*Gwālior* idiom of *rāga* vocal music) had trained me to ensure warmth in the voice is first achieved by singing a single *svara* for some time. This is seen as the cause of *svara* (musical tone and beyond). He also spoke of a rise in the temperature of the breath for a *svara* to achieve its maximum potential. As such, we see a reflection of Vedic concept of *Svara* carried forward by

Mātanga in his *Brihaddeśi* in the 8th C. Suffice to state for our limited purpose here, that the ideas of *Śabda* in the contexts of *Sañskrit Vyākaraṇa, Mimāmsā, Niruktam, and Nyāya*[ii] complete the story of meaning-making in *Sāma* & *Dhrupad*.

Despite the apparent incoherences, evidence from *Nātya Śāstra, Nāradiya Śikṣā, Gobhīla Grīhya Sūtra,* etc show that *Sāma Gāna* is indeed a musical activity intertwined with the 16 *sanskāra-s* of Vedic lives over and above the *Yajna-s*. Bharata (much before Mughal/British reached India) writes about Dhruvaka, while Data talks of Dhrupad. Widess (1992: 85) gives a reasoned argument for the continuity of Prabandh to modern-day Dhrupad through the instance of Carya Dhrupad of Nepal which is considered to be Prabandh with rāga names as well as refrains termed as *"dhruva-s"*. It is difficult to understand whether Widess agrees to Dhrupad as the precursor to Carya Dhrupad or not.

Research is needed to be conducted on the above premise to elucidate this point in the cases of the *Talwāndi/Khandar/Kandahār/Gandhār* and *other vāni-s* and of course their Vedic origins.

Strong pieces of evidence of links between Sāma Gāna, Prabandha, and bandiś have been elucidated, but more needs to be done. Howard (1986:106) exposes mnemonic devices in *Sāma Gāna* that show Vedic antiquity and continuity from pre-Pāninian times. He points out a continuity of the idea of centonisation (1986) found even in Western classical music and various countries use this in ancient liturgical music and points out that

this technique is used in most of the globe in classical secular music (p.220). Centonisation is foundational to the kinds of music of the world.

The long Sanskrit tradition expressed in *Nātya Śāstra, Dattilam, Brihaddeśi* (300 BC-800 AD), etc; which continues to *Śādangdeva's Ratnākar* (1175–1247), *Abhinavagupta's Abhinava Bhārati* (975 - 1025), *Kallinātha's Kalānidhi* (1430), *Sinhabhopāla's Sangīta Sudhākara* (1330), *Swāmi Rāmdās's* manuscripts on Indian music (1608 -1681), *Ahobala's Sangīt Pārijāta* (1665), *Bhāvabhatta's Anūpa Sangīta Ratnākara,* etc (1674-1709 and later) among numerous other works are instructive.

CONCLUSION

Strategic narratives either due to focalization or other reasons are shown, prima facie, to hit at the roots of civilization. Long-standing cultural communications that sustained centuries could be effectively displaced using this methodology. The case of the Indian civilization being radically attacked gains importance mainly due to its very long history and sustained cultural continuity. The fallibility of arguments that weaken the inherent unity of the Indian milieu from pre-historic to the historic periods are diagnosed here for remedial counters, often put on back burners.

Interdisciplinary models viz, Sāma Gāna and Dhrupad individually and together help diagnose such fallibilities. It is hoped that the diagnoses of disintegrative narratives will go a long way in facilitating an integral approach at mending bridges that have historically been casualties thanks to weakening

potentialities embedded as Trojan Horses strategically forwarded. In the above discussion pieces of evidence emerged to show that focalization has operated and many have mistaken narrators as the knowledgeable, notwithstanding their erudition.

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i The essence of sound/word.

ii Grammar, Critical Investigation, Etymology, and Logic, respectively.