

**Appreciating Carnatic Music**  
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**Lecture – 60**  
**Neraval and Swaraprastara**

Neraval is an aspect of manodharma that brings raga, tala and sahithya together. That is melody, rhythm and text. The text of the song, improvisation involves all the three in neraval. Neraval is a tamil word “Neravarathu” means to fill.

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In neraval, what happens is that, one line of this composition, typically it is a kriti. Any one line of the kriti is taken and there is the improvisation of that line. And there is a certain way of building up that improvisation. I will demonstrate. Now the line selected obviously as to be appropriate in various ways. First, that word should not be difficult to pronounce. Some of our kritis do have difficult words, so a line containing the difficult word is, essential we usually avoid that in neraval.

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So, how do we pick the line for neraval? That is itself something, that thought behind that. But for most big great compositions, the nereval line is more or less established. So, of course that nothing to say that some other line from kriti cannot be picked for neraval. But, by and large most people would do neraval, on one line of the kriti, that has already been attempted earlier.

So, this is the composition of Thyagaraja in mayamalavagowle, rupaka talam, it is a very simple talam, here Thyagaraja is talking about doing pooja to Rama, and this line, charanam line this is (Singing Starts: 02:39) (Singing Ends: 02:53). So, here it is, he suggests names of flowers which is offering to worship to Rama, so it's a good line to take up for neraval.

(Singing Starts: 03:12) (Singing Ends: 03:37). This is the sangathi, this is established, this is already there, part of the compositions, where melodic variations, is part of the compositions as taught. (Singing Starts: 03:51) (Singing Ends: 03:57) This is the first sangathi. (Singing Starts: 03:59) (Singing Ends: 05:32)

So, using the line, the words, in the particular distribution itself, so (Singing Starts: 05:41) (Singing Ends: 06:03), so just using those same words, at same line, in the setting, more or less with the same setting, there is improvisation. (Singing Starts: 06:16) (Singing Ends: 06:46)

So, the neerval begins in the first speed. (Singing Starts: 06:53) (Singing Ends: 07:26). So, this is what is called the first speed or kizh kalam neraval. Then (Singing Starts: 07:34) (Singing Ends: 07:52) and it can go, (Singing Starts: 07:58) (Singing Ends: 08:40) so, this is the way, the neerval is expected to be built up.

Now, one of the most important things, here to be maintained is what is the “Edduppu”. So here the song the line begins at ahrai edam half (Singing Starts: 08:59) (Singing Ends: 09:01) half into the first beat. Now, that has to be maintained (Singing Starts: 09:04) (Singing Ends: 09:08) and also, the overall distribution of the words through, there are four avarthanas here in this line, words have to be more or less in those places. So, (Singing Starts: 09:20) (Singing Ends: 09:32).

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So, the sarasiruha the edduppu to be maintained every time, that is the very important technical consideration in the presentation.

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The next aspect, of mano dharma is, what is called, Swara prastara or Kalpana swaram in which the “Sulpha” syllables, swaras themselves are uttered and improvisation happens using them. And this also, is attached to the anchor, for this is a, line the compositions.

If a particular line is picked up for naraval, usually swara prastara is done, with same line as anchor. Now, to demonstrate same line (Singing Starts: 10:23) (Singing Ends: 10:33). This is a very simple one avarthna swara. Sometimes, if it is a bigger composition, we do also first speed, lower speed swara prastara (Singing Starts: 10:50) (Singing Ends: 11:23). So, this is call kizh kala swaram and we usually go from shorter swara sequences to longer swaras sequences always maintain the edduppu.

So, here (Singing Starts: 11:38) (Singing Ends: 11:39) that is the panchama. (Singing Starts: 11:42) (Singing Ends: 11:48). So, the swara sequences, have to end either at “ma” or at “da” (Singing Starts: 11:53) (Singing Ends: 11:56) you can’t sing (Singing Starts: 11:57) (Singing Ends: 12:01) that we see as very shoddy, you cannot do that, it has to meet seamlessly into the edduppu.

(Singing Starts: 12:10) (Singing Ends: 12:15) this is ok, this is acceptable. In some context, going to the higher note sounds good actually. And in some context, it would not, necessarily, (Singing Starts: 12:28) (Singing Ends: 12:32) this is ok (Singing Starts: 12:34) (Singing Ends: 13:13). So, these kinds of small patterns are also created all the time. (Singing Starts: 13:19) (Singing Ends: 13:25). Here there is dense clustering around panchama, (Singing Starts: 13:28) (Singing Ends: 13:43) these are small patterns created, all spontaneously created.

When typically, when you end, a swara prastara, quite often you find, big pattern, slightly complex pattern. Now, if you look at this pattern, (Singing Starts: 14:05) (Singing Ends: 14:13) this is very simple pattern this is what is called “Korvai”.

A Korvai, is a is a rhythmic pattern, of considerable complexities it can get very-very complex actually. What I just sang is very simple pattern, this is five into three (Singing Starts: 14:40) (Singing Ends: 14:43) “one two three four five” “one two three four five” “one two three four five” and you know exactly, how many the beats pattern will take, this set of three, will take, accordingly you adjusted the place where you pick the pattern are from.

In this case (Singing Starts: 15:08) (Singing Ends: 15:15) it is a pattern, when repeated thrice time fifteen aksharas. So here the edduppu is two into the first beat. If you do the math, the place where you want to pick up the pattern of five into three would be, three fourth into the last “Veechu”, “one two three” “one two three” (Singing Starts: 15:37) (Singing Ends: 15:44) this as is said, it is basic elementary pattern.

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There can be much more complex pattern and this is called korvai . And each pattern can run into sixty beats or one twenty beats. And that will be repeated thrice. So, korvai's can get very complex and they had a kind of a rounding of finally to the entire performance.

But there are many musicians who completely, who have a very-very reduced use for korvais. The korvai is something that you learn, you practice and you deliver. There are some very rare musicians, who can even create korvai on the spur of the movement. But by and large musicians, if they want to perform a korvai, it is they are practiced and have to deliver on stage.

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So, again swara prastara is different from Chittaswara. Chittaswaram as I have mentioned before, is part of the kriti itself, is just the sangathi is a part of the kriti. But neravel, is improvisation using the line of the kriti. So, also the chittaswaram, is part of the compositions, that is swara prasthara is improvised. It is possible to make it out.

For instance, in this very famous, there are very famous chittaswaram (Singing Starts: 17:27) (Singing Ends: 18:49). Now, this is a chittaswaram is part of the composition. Quite often chittaswarams, are composed by latter musicians, not necessarily by the composer, the veggayakara himself.

But, then these are some famous, chittaswarams are part of some compositions. Chittaswaram is sung, after the anupallavi and then it goes back to the pallavi. This chittaswaram, again sung after the charanam and that leads into the pallavi, that is how the chittaswaram occurs in the compositions.

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Now charanam of this composition is (Singing Starts: 19:28) (Singing Ends: 19:36). This is famous line for taking up swara prastara because (Singing Starts: 19:45) (Singing Ends: 19:48). So, the “ma mamava maragatha” is actually what is called as “Swarakshara”, the swara and akshara are the same. It is (Singing Starts: 19:55) (Singing Ends: 19:56) the word is also “ma” (Singing Starts: 19:59) (Singing Ends: 20:14) the edduppu is, three into the first beat, (Singing Starts: 20:17) (Singing Ends: 20:37) and so on.