

# **The Human Voice**

## **A gift from God, beyond comparison**

Music is divine – be it Western or Eastern. The very concept of music dawned on man only when he was **awe** struck by the amazing sovereignty and greatness of God. The ‘love of God’ was so immeasurable that man was not satisfied by just saying “Thank you” to God for all the blessings he has received from Him. He wanted to have something more than mere words to express his gratitude. The result was the discovery or rather, the revelation of Music. Thus, man began praising God by singing His glory.

Man is unique and very special among the creations of God. God created the heaven and earth and everything in the universe by uttering His word. But He took very special care while creating human beings. He took some extra efforts when He created Adam. He took the clay from the earth and made an image of Himself and breathed His breath into the nostrils of the clay image. Immediately it became a living soul. God created man so that man would glorify Him, sing His praises.

Man is unique not only in creation. He is also the crown of God’s creation. God has bestowed on man some very special attributes to differentiate him from all other creations and has put him on a higher plane. One such special attribute is man’s ability to speak. He can express himself and communicate with his creator by speaking. Man can share his emotions with his fellow human being through speaking.

The ability to speak is the basic requirement in singing. If we cannot speak, we cannot sing also, because primarily, singing is only an extension

of speech. Since God created man to glorify Him, He also gave man the ability to speak and sing.

The voice of human beings is basically '**acoustic**'. In music, acoustic means the music produced without the use of either electric or electronic device. God has designed the entire system in human beings in such a way that the sound produced by the human voice is incomparable to any of man's inventions. Different faculties in human body work together in unison to produce this amazing "human voice". The voice of human beings is capable of producing the musical notes which even the most sophisticated instruments cannot.

In the Bible, we read in Genesis chapter 4 and verse 21 that Jubal was the father of all those who handle musical instruments. So, the history of music, according to the Bible, starts almost from the time of creation.

Initially man started to glorify God using his God-given instrument, "**the voice**" and gradually he started to praise God by inventing other musical instruments through the gifts he has received from God. Man was able to design and invent many musical instruments. God has provided all the raw materials necessary to produce these musical instruments. God has provided all the raw materials necessary to produce these musical instruments through nature. Nothing was created by man; he only invented many things using God's provisions. God has also given man the wisdom to discover "**the music**" in nature, to enhance man's creativity.

In the early days of human history, all the musical instruments created by human beings were only acoustic instruments. Later on when

technology developed, he switched on to electric and electronic instruments.

Indian classical music is primarily acoustic. Most of the instruments used in Indian classical music are acoustic instruments, like violin, veena, flute etc. The Indus Valley civilization has sculptures that show dance and old musical instruments, like the seven holed flute. Various types of stringed instruments and drums have also been recovered from Mohenjo Daro and Harrappa excavations.

India has one of the oldest musical traditions in the world. The earliest and largest collection of prehistoric musical instruments was found in China and it dates back to between 7000 and 6600 BC. And the Hurrian song, found on clay tablets that date back to around 1400 BC, is the oldest surviving notated work of music.

The basic difference between the Western and the Eastern music is the harmony. Indian classical music is '**monophonic**' in nature and is based on a single melody line called "**raga**" (Tune) which is rhythmically organized through "**talas**" (Rhythm/timing). The main reason for the monophonic music could be attributed to the fact that most of the sages who composed the Indian classical music were doing meditation alone in calm places like the hills or forests and they could not even think of harmony. But in Christian music there is harmony because Christians always have the corporate worship.

Another very important aspect of singing is "**a-cappella**" singing, meaning 'without any accompaniment'. In a-cappella singing the human voices alone play a major role and the harmony is produced by the different voices singing in different pitches together, which not only is pleasing to hear but also encourages living in harmony in the community / society and

in addition, we also learn the basic Christian virtues like, tolerance, humility, sharing etc.

We have to sing the glory of God with all our heart, soul and mind without harbouring any biased ideas whether it is Western or Eastern music. God has given different talents to different people. As Christian musicians it is our bonded duty to encourage all kinds of music, provided they are focusing on God.

Praise, honour and glory are to Him, Jesus my Saviour, alone!

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