

**Appreciating Hindustani Music**  
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**Lecture- 11**  
**The World of Raga 3- Ornament**

We saw in the last video that though all swaras of a raga are critical their strengths in the raga are not the same. That is, some are stronger they have a greater presence whereas, the others have a more diminished presence . And so, it is very important that for the raga to bloom or to manifest itself that we use the swaras in the right proportion.

And this is, as you will see later, everything is ultimately what is the right proportion. There is no way to quantify it. It is ultimately an oral and oral tradition that is something that is received by listening to the raga by teacher teaching the raga and the student absorbing it. . There is no way of quantifying any of this, but these are some of the ways we talk about ragas right? That the ragas have swaras and among them some are strong and some of them should not be emphasized and so on. We also saw in the last video that there are considerations of swaras on which from which phrases may start- raga phrases may start or may end. Now, in this video so, we are basically going beyond the scale right? Raga is at a basic level we talk about a raga in terms of its scale the what else can we say about the raga. So, those are the strengths of swaras, that is one of the aspects.

Now, in this video we will look at another very important aspect of ragas and that is ornament. ornament or the general category- the word for it is Gamaka. Now, Gamaka is an ancient category found in very ancient texts in the context of music, but in today's contemporary usage of the word in Hindustani music it has come to acquire a very specific meaning and Gamaka denotes a very specific ornament which is a heavy kind of oscillation.

So, when you say Gamaka taan or you know Gamak yukta presentation it means a particular kind of ornament and it is as I said, it is a heavy oscillation, but Gamaka has a more general sense of any ornament.

Now, what is an ornament? Ornament, we think of it as a beautifying device right? something to beautify an object that is otherwise maybe you know plain and always with a view to adding something- the object that is beautified, the object that is ornamented is thereby beautified. Now, which is all fine as applied to this music except that the Gamaka the ornament is not regarded as an extraneous something that you have the plain note and then you apply to it it is more integral to the music itself.

Now, Gamak as an ancient category I said has been described as the shadow of a previous note that passes over the succeeding note; it is like the point of meeting of the shade and the bright sun. So, there is a blurring- it is not sharp and abrupt. So, the idea is that one does not the idea of

the metaphor is that one does not move from one swara to another abruptly in a staccato fashion. But you know you move into the next pitch or the next swara or the next phrase through various movements of continuity, that maintains the melodic continuity. So, you may glide into it or you may just drop into it or you may even land with a thud or you may oscillate towards it. So, these are the various- some of the ways in which Gamaka can manifest itself. Some musicians as I said I have- since Gamaka has a more specific usage in Hindustani music to denote a particular heavy oscillation- some musicians prefer to use the word alankara, which in fact, literally means ornament, but alankara is also a word that is used for melodic patterns you know, especially those that we give for exercises.

And so, there is some overlapping of terminology here and so on what follows in this video and later on throughout the course I use the word Gamaka in the more general sense of ornament any ornament at all. So, what is a Gamaka? Gamaka is a way of bringing notes together as a movement from one note to another.

You know, the two or more notes come together as an integral whole because of this ornament. And we do not as I said think of Gamaka as an external appendage as suggested by the word ornament, but it is integral to the way swaras are used in ragas. Now, in a Hindustani music we use a variety of Gamakas and we use them extensively. As I said this music is heavily extensively ornamented.

But the ornaments are very specific. they have to be used with great understanding and control, it is integral to the raga. Ragas depend on the- on correct ornaments for their expression- for the ragas to be expressed, the ornament is very critical. and it is not a matter of beautifying according to one's whim you know; however, refined sensibility a musician may have it is not up to her whim to say that let me apply this ornament here.

There are ragas identity depends very much on correct and artistic execution of specific Gamakas at the right places. that said, there is divergence in terms of stylistic preferences. So, some musicians, some schools of music, would prefer one kind of Gamaka and some others may prefer another kind of Gamaka, but that is in terms of the overall texture of the music.

But when you come to individual ragas there are some specific expectations which are respected. Now, one of the most important Gamakas is the meend. Meend. Which I believe might translate into the glissando- the glide [Music]. So, the very texture of Hindustani music rests on meend To demonstrate, let us take the simple raag bhoop- bhoopali- the major pentatonic scale. Now, if I were to sing without the meend in staccato fashion, it will be like this [Music], but this is not how we perform this, it goes like this [music] it could go like this [Music]. So, [Music] instead of that [Music]. So, everywhere we have the meend [Music] the glide from [Music].

So, as I said, the meend is responsible for the melodic continuity that is so typical and so important to the sound of Hindustani music and it is the opposite of staccato. Now, this apart from it is, you know, very pervasive presence in Hindustani music whether it is khayal or dhrupad or instrumental music. Some ragas have a very specific requirement of the meend in some places because unless you have that it is not that raga.

Now, even now when I sang, even just now when I demonstrated bhoop [Music] no [Music].

Now, this Re Pa Pa Re Pa Ga these combinations are there in many ragas and it will be subtly different the way that meend is negotiated, the way the meend is executed . So, now, I will just take this example of Pa Re right.

And you have a raag called chayanat. Chayanat is a raag in which this meend is very important in a particular place [Music]. Now, this [Music] this particular way of moving from Pa to Re it is a meend, but it is a there are different ways you can do the meend you know because it basically depends on between Pa and Re, there are so many swaras- there are so many pitches pitch of them do you touch in the slightest- just a flicker.

[Music] Here you cannot do any make out any particular swara that getting lit up, but; obviously, you are travels in the distance between Pa and Re [Music] now the same Pa Re in a raga like, for instance, [Music] this is the way for instance you use the Pa Re- the way the Pa Re is executed in raga like gaud Sarang you know. [Music] That is chayanat. Now, [Music] this is a different raga because you are touching the Ma and the Ga just the slightest of flickers [Music]. Or if we have [Music].

Now, this is different it is a the Sarang family [Music]. So, it is a; it is a meend between Pa and Re. But there are different ways that it has to be executed depending on the raga. Or again [Music]. Shuddha Sarang. [Music]. Now, Pa Re is a downward meend you can also have upward meend as in raag like Kamod [Music] that our upward glide from Re to Pa .

I will just play a short clip here of Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan Sahab who is one of the leading lights of khayal vocalism in the last century. He has sung raag Kamod and the link to the Youtube video is given below which you can listen to when you have more time, but here I am playing a very short clip to show you how this Re Pa glide and the Ga Ma Dha Pa glide happenedx.

[Music]. So, another important ornament is kampana or which is just similar to the South Indian kampita. it is also called andolita swara, andholan; andholan is oscillation. And this according to a definition given by Doctor Ashok Ranade, I quote him “It is an important class of melodic embellishment in which a note is produced in such a manner that the entire range between the preceding and the succeeding notes is suggested.”

Now, typical examples of this kampita, kampana is in ragas like malhar miya malhar or darbari Kanada where the Gandhar the Ga is oscillated . So, here you have [Music]. So, [Music] that is a Ga [Music] that is the you know basic position of the komal Gandhar which is what is used in this raga ha, [Music] but when you sing it in malhar that pitch is almost not heard. the Gandhar itself exists between the Ma and the Re in a certain way you oscillate, that is, oscillate between those two pitches.

[Music]. This is the Gandhar [Music] or you have the andolan, the kampana of Rishabh, the Re, the komal Re in say raga like bhairav [Music]. So, the actual Ga Ma, the bhairav is [Music] this is the Rishabh the [Music] the phrase is [Music], but in bhairav that is a very typical way of singing the Re [Music].

Now, also dha- the dhaivat [Music]. So, this is kampana. Another ornament or Gamaka is Jhatka. Meend. After that you have kampana- oscillation. Then you have Jhatka. Now, what is Jhatka? Again it is a fast movement from one note to another with the emphasis on the second note

[Music]. So, this is a typical, this is the way you can go [Music] this is meend [Music]. .

Now, there are some ragas in which this Jhatka is integral to its phrases like the raga sawani like [Music] you know [Music]. So, you move from the one note to another with a force when you are actually highlighting the second- the note that with which you end the phrase. So that is Jhatka.

Now, you see in all this there may be some amount of divergence in the names of the Gamakas the ,and I said, as I said extent of usag across by musicians or and especially by schools of music, we call gharana.

Even identifying the Gamakas and naming them there may be some divergence because you see the world of Hindustani music is not completely homogenized and standardized. There is of course, order and discipline, but you know it is mostly at the level of individual teaching lineages or schools.

Every guru will impart the Gamakas and the ragas as he has learned them from his own guru and this is how the ragas and their textures, their identity, their swarupa, their basic personality; that is how this is the ragas are perpetuated through the guru shishya; the teacher student lineage.

But there may be some divergence between schools and which, you know, which makes for a vibrant maybe a mildly chaotic world as opposed to a streamlined and homogenized world of performance. So, my source for the various categories of Gamakas is, as I said, Doctor Ashok Ranade's work .

But even he himself is for instance here giving a very guarded definition of another pretty important Gamaka called zamzama. It is called zamzama and he says it is “Reportedly a musical embellishment that uses pairs of notes in perceptibly fast tempo repeatedly and successively.” [Music] With gamak you have to do [Music]. So, this In fact, zamzama is Gamaka which may be defined slightly differently across schools .

Now, Khatka is another Gamaka which is a cluster of notes that is produced fast and forcefully prior to the note projected as important, this is Khatka. Now, I might demonstrate this with for instance gaud Sarang. Let us see. [Music]. So, that is a Khatka [Music]. So, [Music] that is a cluster of notes before [Music] and this is quite important for the raga this particular phrase delivered this way.

Now, just as ornament or Gamaka is extensive, so is microtonal nuancing- shruti . No, as I said Shruti microtonal variations are pervasive through the music and how we talk about it as I said is you know a slightly raised rishabh or a slightly lower Ga and so on. But in some ragas we actually specify this microtonal nuancing like for instance raga like shri or marwa which have a komal rishabh but they are raised- chada hua rishabh.

So, this kind of microtonal variation may not be easy to discern. So, I will try to render the rishabh of marwa [Music] That re is a little raised. Again, the raag shri. It has a chada hua rishabh [Music]. So, these are ragas in which we actually talk about the Shruti considerations, but in every raga there is so much that is happening in terms of micro microtonal nuancing that we simply absorb by, you know, given our exposure to the music, the training and the listening to masters.

We also have the ragas that are described in terms of their prakriti, their nature. So, you have ragas which are gambheer you know they are dignified sober ragas which you know demand very systematic and very slow and deliberate treatment. And you have what is called chanchal that is which demand, ragas that cannot tolerate that kind of a very elaborate presentation, but its in their nature that they be rendered in a much quicker way, quick light footed, you know, fast paced.

For instance, we have a raga called deshkar which actually has the same scale as bhoopali or bhoop which which we have seen earlier in the course. So, it has the same scale, the same set of notes, but one of the distinguishing features of of deshkar is that it is a chanchal raga. It is quick. Okay so bhoop is usually explored in a very very slow and deliberate manner.[Music]. So, deshkar is a much quicker it has a chanchal prakriti that it just moves and keeps moving quickly. [Music]. So, this is the rough movement of deshkar which is called, which is a chanchal raag. you cannot give it a very slow treatment without you know destroying it . Typically, we also see that these chanchal ragas are what we call uttarang pradhaan. that is, they remain confined to the upper ranges; we do not explore them much in the lower ranges. So, this as I said, another way of describing ragas, another aspect of the raga lakshana or how you can talk about raga is whether they are uttarang or purwang pradhan ragas. that is whether they have to be explored in the higher ranges mostly or mostly in the lower ranges or they are, you know, they have to be explored in all the throughout the melodic range. So, that is another way of another characteristic of ragas now a raga revolves around phrases though of course, you know it is constituted of swaras and we have seen various considerations about the swaras in a raga , but it is, you know, the phrases that really bring out a raga notes that are brought together in specific formations specific phrases basically with various considerations of you know vadi samvadi of ornament and so on.

So, for instance in Yaman though Yaman has a scale of - like it is a sampurna raga right, it is complete- it has all the seven swaras. So, Yaman has a scale of [Music] right we we never sing [Music] you know that is not Yaman at all. So, these phrases, that is really the life of every Raag Yaman the phrase always is [Music] almost by default very rarely can we find Sa Re Ga [Music]. And almost not in contemporary music Yaman is- Yaman does not use the phrase Sa Re Ga it is always [Music], this is another important phrase [Music] very rarely [Music]. Again, [Music] this is another important phrase of Yaman. [Music] this Pa Sa phrase is again very raga vachaka, that is something that is important for Yaman [Music], again [Music] that vakrata, that [Music].