

Appreciating Hindustani Music
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Lecture 20
Extending the Raga Corpus- Jod ragas

There is a category of ragas that is quite astonishing, this is the category of Jod Ragas. Jod means to fuse, to combine, to connect, jodna in Hindi means to join together. So, a jod raga is a raga which is the result of 2 or more already prevalent ragas coming together, being brought together, infused together.

Sometimes these constituent ragas may be completely different from each other, in the sense the swaras that are used in the two ragas maybe a different sets. So, it is it is miraculous that what results from their coming together is another raga, very viable and sometimes very beautiful raga instead of cacophony.

And historically jod ragas is also one way that the repertoire of ragas has grown in Hindustani music and I might also mention that this phenomenon is not found in Carnatic music. Perhaps the most famous jod raga is Basant Bahar this raga has in fact been immortalized in a Hindi movie of the 1950s. And, the one of the most iconic songs in this film which is in Basant Bahar, and in fact, that whole scene tells a possible story of how Basant Bahar the raga came to be. So, there is a music competition in royal court and one musician is performing raga Basant and our hero comes in singing another composition taking off from that Basant composition, but in Basant Bahar.

Now, we do not know who created Basant Bahar and in fact we do not know who created many jod ragas, but they are certainly, they seem to be the result of a musician thinking of the possibility of bringing two disparate ragas, combining them and making a viable raga out of it . In fact, jod ragas challenge many aspects of our conception of raga, but yet there they are a very very interesting set of ragas and they, these have a validity and interest value that for instance, new scales do not have.

See, the jod raga jod raga might offer a seamless experience of a new raga you know with personality drawn from two different ragas so that there is no clashing as it were. There is one part of the raga draws from one part of the jod raga, let us say the Purvanga the Sa to Pa that is drawn from one of the constituent ragas and the Uttaranga Pa to Sa that moves the way of another raga. So, here there is a clear separation.

And yet you know in the jod raga of course, they come together and we have this seamless experience of a new raga, jod raga but with personalities of these two constituent ragas manifesting in different parts of the Saptak. We also have jod ragas as I said which are the coming together of completely different raga so that there is no integration of the two or more

constituent ragas into one seamless experience, but the constituent ragas move in and out of each other, crisscrossing dazzling the listener with the myriad ways in which one can transition from one raga to another. So, in the two the constituent ragas retain their personalities or retain their presence in the new jod raga so that you can clearly make out ok when the jod raga has been performed and ok, here you can hear Basant, you can there you can hear Bahar, that sort of thing.

In fact, Basant Bahar is one such raga where the two ragas Basant and Bahar are this one, can be heard separately in different parts of the performance of the raga. So, Basant Bahar brings together the ragas Basant and Bahar. Both of them are associated with spring and therefore, Basant Bahar is doubly associated with spring. And as I said both are very unlike each other. If you were to talk about mela, because that gives you the idea of the note setter employed in the ragas. Basant belongs to the Purvi thaat whereas, Bahar belongs to the Kafi that. If you must speak in terms of swaras, Basant uses Re Dha komal, Bahar uses Re Dha shuddha. Basant uses Ma teevra, Bahar uses Ma shuddha, Basant uses Ga Ni shuddha, Bahar uses Ga Ni komal, it is another matter that Bahar also uses the shuddha Ni, Basant also uses the shuddha Ma, but they between the two ragas the essentially all the 12 swaras are there, all the 12 you know the the 7 plus 5 variants, all of them are there in this jod raga. In this case one of the points of transition or moving from one raga to the other is the phrase Sa Ma, the Sa and shuddha Ma that phrase is common to both Basant and Bahar I will demonstrate. So, Basant is, so Basant is [Music] this is Basant, Bahar [Music] completely different set of notes.

But this [Music], this is common to both, in Basant it goes like this [Music]. So, for Ma you go to shuddha Ga, which is the Gandhar of Basant; Bahar [Music], this is the way Sa Ma occurs, this is a phrase in which it occurs. So, when you yoke Basant and Bahar together this is a very obvious place to transition from the from one raag to another. So, it will be like this [Music] we have gone to Bahar.

[Music], but of course, that is not the only point of transition from one raag to another there are and it is up to the musician really and that is the beauty of jod ragas, that it is really there is a great deal left to the performer to the musician to figure out how to bring the two together two or more ragas, but usually its two jod raga is a typically, two sometimes we have more than two. And just demonstrate a few ways in which Basant Bahar, Basant and Bahar we move in and out [Music]. So, already I have gone to Bahar, [Music] Basant again, [Music] Bahar, [Music] Bahar and Basant again. So, this is the way Basant Bahar works.

Now other jod ragas bring together ragas that are quite, let me share swaras you know that they are not completely desperate they do not use completely different sets of notes. Kaunsi Kanada is a very famous an ancient, it is an old jod raga. Here it is a coming together of Malkauns and Darbari Kanada and it goes like this. In fact, here the way Kanada Gandhar is used, in the way both of them have komal Gandhar, both Malkauns and their body have komal Gandhar, but the shruti is different. And it is interesting to try to retain those shruti identities. Shrimati Kishori Amonkar is particularly brilliant in handling this raga and if you get an opportunity please do listen to her Haunsi Kanada, it is there on YouTube, I mean I will demonstrate Kaunsi Kanada

for you as I said they do have the two ragas are not completely dissimilar in terms of the swaras, they both use komal Ga, they both use komal Dhaivat and komal Nishad.

So, there is a lot of overlap of the swaras at least not of course, their bit their shrutis or the phrases, there there is a lot of difference. So, [Music] this is a typical phrase of Malkauns [Music], it is darbari [Music]. So, when they two come together, you hear actually its more subtle because as I said the two ragas do share swara material.

So, with how they come together it is little more subtler than, its subtler than Basant Bahar. [Music] this is Darbari, only Darbari has the Re, Malkauns does not have a Re. [Music] here you go to Malkauns [Music] There are many many such ragas the Kafi Kanada Bageshree Bahar and so on which bring together.

And here what is interesting is to look for how the respective ragangas are handled, and presented and how the musician engages with them creatively. And then we have jod ragas in which, as I mentioned in the beginning, hm the two ragas that comprise the jod raga are confined to different parts of the octave as it were.

There is there is a typical example of this is puriya kalyan. With Puriya Kalyan, Puriya is [Music], so this is Puriya [Music] and this is retained in the jod raag called Puriya Kalyan. Whereas, the Kalyan that is Yaman is retained in the higher the upper part of the raag [Music], Puriya does not have Pancham, but whereas, Kalyan does right [Music]. So, Puriya Kalyan does not use the shuddha Rishabh that Kalyan uses. But it uses the Pancham that Puriya does not use. So, that is how the two ragas come together and [Music] this is almost Yamanish Kalyan, [Music] Puriya, [Music] Yaman, [Music] that is Kalyan, Yaman Kalyan are you know synonymous. [Music] Puriya again, [Music] Kalyan, [Music] Kalyan, [Music] Puriya, [Music] that is a bit of Puriya Kalyan.

We will now listen to a jod raag called Hindol Bahar. This is the coming together of Hindol and Bahar, typically most of the jod ragas especially when they involve only two, they have the names of the constituent ragas. There are other ragas where there are more than two in which case you know they have a different kind of name.

Unlike a new novel scale that you try to flesh a raga out of which may not be challenging at all because, it is you know you have a free hand there. There is there are no constraints. That makes it far less interesting than raga with the personality. So, jod ragas are not like that at all because unlike the you know trying to create a new raga out of a normal scale, Jod ragas are the coming together of two already established ragas with well defined personalities. And the challenge is really to bring them together artistically and convincingly. In some gharanas some styles of khayal are really more into presenting jod ragas than others.

For instance, Atrauli-Jaipur gharana is famous for handling jod ragas because perhaps you know there is something about the style, the way they developed the raga, the Badadh, the vistar of the raga which is more conducive to flitting in and out of ragas. Jod ragas you know they define mela, completely especially something like Basant Bahar, you cannot possibly classify it under any mela because as I said it seems to use all the 12, it does use between Bahar and Basant all 12 swaras of the Saptak are used. So, you cannot really classify it under any mela

which is not possible, but raganga does come in very useful here. And in fact, that is how jod ragas are handled through the ragangas of the constituent ragas. Now let us listen to an exposition of a jod raag called Hindol Bahar. Typically especially when there are only two constituent ragas, the jod raga is simply called after those two ragas like Hindol Bahar, Basant Bahar, Kaunsi Kanada, Kafi Bahar and so on Kafi Kanada and so on. now Hindol Bahar is again the two ragas are very different, Hindol and Bahar are very different ragas like Basant and Bahar and in this case in Hindol Bahar there is not even a point which is an obvious place of transition. Not that you really need it because as I said even in Basant Bahar, it is not as a transition happens only in that common phrase it is a transition can happen anywhere between the two ragas.

Hindol Bahar, I will demonstrate Hindol and Bahar and then you can try and follow how the raga presentation brings the two together. Now, Hindol is actually one of the very few ragas that you know for practical purposes there are only four dominant swaras, which is Sa Ga Ma Dha, these are the four notes. Ga and Dha, shuddha Ma is teevra, but the Ni is present in the meend from Sa to Dha. So, it goes like this [Music].

So, the four notes are Sa Ga Ma Dha, but when you come from Sa to Dha [Music]. So, there is a meend from Sa to Dha, the Ni has used. [Music] no, we do not sing that way [Music]. Hindol is an ancient raga, one of the meend you know ragas in the raga-ragini paddhati. Bahar as you know [Music]. Let us listen to how these two ragas come together in the jod raga Hindol bahar. [Music].