

**Appreciating Hindustani Music**  
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**Lecture 24**  
**Khayal, A Compositional Form - 1**

Having discussed raga and tala we are ready to enter the world of Khayal. "Khayal" is a name for both the genre and the compositional form used in it. Khayal the genre is a particular aesthetic of the coming together of composition and improvisation. Khayal includes compositional forms, the most prominent of which are also called khayal. That is, khayal, as I said, it is a type of composition and it is also the name of the genre. In this video we will look at khayal the composition, as a compositional form. Composition in Khayal - all kinds of composition - they have the generic term "bandish" or "cheez". Specifically, the various kinds of composition that are used in Khayal are khayal itself, tarana, chaturanga and so on, but khayal compositions form the most prominent bulk of the repertoire of Khayal the genre. Khayal compositions are always set in a particular raga and tala with text in Braj, Avadhi, which are dialects of Hindi or even Punjabi and they can be about many themes.

Let us look at the text of a very well known, very widely performed Bandish in Raag Yaman from the world of Khayal and this is set in the taal Teentaal. The text is like this:

The Sthayi, which is the first part of the composition, goes like this:

eri aali piya bina sakhi  
kalana parta mohe ghari pala china dina.

Then the Antara or the second part of the composition goes like this:

jabse piya paradesa gavana kino  
ratiya katata more tare gina gina.

So, a Khayal bandish is very short, you know, compared to Dhrupad composition or a Carnatic composition. It is typically only four lines long and four avartanas long - four time cycles and it is divided into two parts the Sthayi which usually remains in the Madhya Saptak or the middle range.

And the Antara which typically sores into the higher ranges - the Taar Saptak. Lyrics are simple in terms of prosody; that is often, the last syllables of the Sthayi and Antara rhyme as in this case - as in the case of the bandish that I just discussed.

There may be alliteration or what is called praasha, but really there are no prosodic rules or expectations regarding the poetry of the text of Khayal compositions. In the above Khayal the Nayika or the heroine tells a friend: "without my love (piya bina) I am restless and ever since he went away, my nights are spent counting the stars."

So, very simple and unpretentious- it is not high poetry, but it packs a lot of music into it and can unlock more because the bandish in Khayal is the anchor around which the raga is explored through various strategies of improvisation. The crux of this is the Mukhada of the bandish which leads to the sam which is the first matra of the taal.

I will demonstrate. Please watch the demonstration [Music]. So, I will be demonstrating [Music] with an app [Music].

Before apps we had electronic devices [Music] which were very useful for practice and even for demonstration [Music]. So, these are apps that stand in for the actual Tanpura or for the actual tabla. So, these apps and electronic devices would give us the Tanpura sound or even the tabla thekas.

And the app that I am going to be using today has the Tanpura as you can hear. It also has the tabla and many other things with a wide range of options and the reason I am using this is because it is easy - it will give you a visual aid. So, you can actually see the matras, the number of the matra.

So, because I want to demonstrate how khayals are set in taal this can be very useful because you can actually see the number of the matras as it goes in cycles. Now for you it will be a visual aid, but I will still only be following the sound of the theka. So, I am not going to be looking at the app - the app is for your reference, but I will be hearing it. So, here goes.

I will first sing eri aali piya bina with the app and I will show you how this is set in taal - you know, this is teentaal.

And I am going to put [Music] 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 now this starts on the 9th beat. [Music] [Music]. So, this is the bare Sthayi, the first part of the composition. The antara that is the second part also starts from the 9th matra [Music] [Music].

Now, in this "eri aali piya" that is what is called the Mukhada - the Mukhada of the composition, of the Sthayi. What is the mukhada? Mukhada is the phrase of the song of the composition that leads into the sam.

So, there is a mukhada of the sthayi and there is a mukhada for the antara. So, the first line of the sthayi will have a phrase which will land on the sam will have a text - in this case its eri aali pi the sam is on the on piya right? The word the syllable pi falls on the first beat which is the sam. So, eri aali pi [Music] now this is the mukhada eri aali piya that is the mukhada.

In the antara it is jabse piya paradesa because the sam falls on desa [Music]. Now, this mukhada is all important in a Khayal presentation and I I will talk more about it later, but what if I want to say is every Khayal of course, expresses it brings out a certain facet of the raga every Khayal is also a very unique setting in that particular taal. So, there are hundreds of bandishes hundreds of Khayals in Teentaal and dozens of Khayals, even hundreds of Khayals in Yaman itself in Teentaal.

How are they different? They are different because of how the composition is set in the tala also and I will now demonstrate a couple more compositions in Yaman in Teentaal to show how the compositions are set differently. The khayal as I said it is in Yaman, it is in madhyalaya or slightly faster drut teentaal, but their setting in taal is different.

So, that is what makes for a variety of khayals which in turn offer different possibilities for the unfoldment of the raga. So, this was eri aali piya bina ah this is set 150 150 beats per minute it is not something that a musician, a Khayal singer is concerned with. Actually it is very subjective today I am singing at 150 beats per minute tomorrow I may sing at 160; the day after I may sing at 140. So, that is not anything fixed, but today this composition I sang in 150 beats per minute.

Now, the next composition is generally run at a faster speed; I like to render it at a faster laya and the mukhada is also different. So, I will just increase the speed: this is at 175 beats per minute. The words are mein vaari vaari javoongi] and the mukhada starts on the 12th beat [Music]. Now, in this case the antara starts on a different matra. In the previous composition both sthayi and antara started on the 9th matra.

In this case the sthayi starts on the 12th matra whereas, the antara will start on the 9th matra [Music]. So, this is a completely different setting. The same tala, completely different set of words. The text is different and the setting in tala is also different. Now, another composition also in teentaal the words are sukh data saban ke Shankar this is in praise of lord Shiva. The other two were Sringara based - romance. This is a devotional khayal [Music]. Now, this starts on the 14th beat; the Mukhada is only four matras long.

[Music] [Music]. So, this is how every composition offers a different set of possibilities for the performer to improvise, to present the raga. So, now, as I said the mukhada is all important in a Khayal presentation and for that matter even in instrumental music. See, this is what the musicians constantly return to to establish structure in their presentation, to create tension and resolution.

And the important thing about mukhada is that as I said it has to land on the sam. So, if I were to go back to the first composition that I sang, eri aali piya bina. So, this is a little faster than what I sang earlier, this is at 160 beats per minute [Music]. So, the mukhada is, as I told you, eri aali piya is the mukhada and the sam falls on the syllable pi p [Music] and as the composition is set the mukhada starts on the 9th beat.

But in presentation the mukhada is varied to varying degrees depending on the musician, depending on the school also. Some schools prefer to not vary the mukhada much while others vary it all the time. You know as a musician I vary the Mukhada all the time. So, ah please try to observe how I vary the mukhada each time. The variation can come from the matra where I pick up the mukhada.

It can come in the melodic setting of the mukhada, but what will not vary is that the sam will always for the word p the letter pi of piya will always fall on the sam or the first beat of the tala that will not vary, but where I pick up the mukhada how I render it those things can vary [Music] [Music].

Now, all these variations, trust me, were created on the spur of the moment. That is what we trained for, that is what we practice and in presentation, you know, in the heat of the concert or of a performance so many other variations can strike the musician. You could listen to a performance of the same bandish by Sanjeev Abhyankar at the link given below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARCqdOY55s8>

Now, in every raga there are hundreds of bandishes and a good musical training includes learning many bandishes in every raga which gives a handle over different facets of the raga, different mukhadas to arrive at the sam, different talas, themes, composers and so on. Now, composers of Khayal or dhrupad for that matter are called Vaggeyakaras. It is vaak plus geya plus kaara - that is those who make both the vaak and the geya. Vaak means text in this context and geya means that which is sung.

So, the Vaggeyakara is one who composes both the song text and the music for the composition and often it is as a single spontaneous act. Or, at least, the kernel of the bandish usually emerges as a whole; that is, the lyrics and the music are an integral whole or so it is generally believed. And it is generally true also that they are composed simultaneously; it is a spontaneous, a spontaneous act of simultaneity.

The oldest Vaggeyakaras in Khayal are certainly Nyamat Khan Sadarang and his Nephew Feroze Khan whose signature was Adarang. The very first video, the very first lesson of this course started with the composition of Sadarang in Raag Bihag, if you remember. Now, perhaps it was a tribute to their patron the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah Rangila that these two composers incorporated the word rang in their signatures.

So, we have Sadarang and we have Adarang, and ever since then many vaggeyakaras have adopted the rang part of the signature. And so we have many Khayal compositions with one or the other rang signature such as Premrang, Dilrang, Manarang, Sabarang, Hararang etcetera.

We also have Vaggeyakaras signing off with “piya”, such as Pranpiya, Prempiya and so on - Raspiya. We have hundreds of bandishes composed by these Vaggeyakaras that are in circulation and we probably had many more that are unfortunately lost. Now, broadly, we have two kinds of Khayal compositions: the bada Khayal or the big khayal and the chota khayal or the small khayal.

The former, that is the bada khayal is always vilambit, that is it is sung at a very slow speed. If you remember there are three layas - vilambit, madhya and drut. So, bada khayal is always Vilambit khayal which is sung at a very slow speed. The chota khayal can be in madhya laya or drut laya. What follows is a demonstration of a few chota khayals to show the different ways in which the bandishes are created.

So, I will first present two bandishes of “Sadarang” Niyamat Khan - chota khayal; both are in madhya laya teentaal. The first is “gore mukha so more mana bhaave”. It is a description of a beautiful woman and the composer says that a glimpse of her beautiful face brings me great joy. That is the message, the idea behind the composition. The text is like this.

Now, in this, the sthayi, the mukhada of the sthayi starts on the 10th beat, the 10th matra. So, suppose ...and the antara. The sthayi and antara can ... the mukhadas can start on different matras not necessarily the same matra, though usually it is the case that both sthayi and antara they start off on the same matra, but sometimes they can be different as in this composition.

So, in this the sthayi mukhada starts on the 10th beat, the 10th matra and the antara mukhada starts on the sam itself or just after the sam. Now both the songs, both the compositions that I am going to sing are in raga Bhimpalasi just to show how compositions are, you know, subtly differently set in the same taal - both are in teentaal. [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music]. The next bandish is also in Bhimpalasi and teentaal which is also around the theme of romance or sringara.

The words are “ja ja re apne mandarawa”. Both these compositions are, as I said, composed nearly 300 years old and they are widely performed, very beloved compositions in Raga Bhimpalasi. Now while the first composition gore mukha so started on the 10th matra this starts on the 7th matra and the text is such, the play of words is such that it offers interesting variation in the mukhada itself.

The words are ja ja re apne mandarawa as I said and it starts from the seventh matra 1, 2, 3 start [Music] little faster [music] 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [Music]. So, you see how many variation of ja ja re itself is possible. That is the beauty of this bandish [Music] 1, 2, 3, 4, [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music].

So, you would have noticed that typically, when we finish a bandish when we want to end the presentation, we present what is called the tihai.

The same phrase is repeated thrice so that it lands on the sam - in this case ah it was [Music]. So, this is a very commonly found presentational technique that we find in many parts of Khayal and also instrumental music or even dhrupad for that matter. So, the repeating of a phrase or a pattern thrice to find some kind of resolution that is called a tihai.

Now, I am going to present another composition again in Bhimpalasi, but this time in drut ektal and its a composition of Adarang, that is Feroze Khan who was the nephew of Niyamat Khan Sadarang and this is the drut bandish and this starts on the 7th beat this is drut ektal.

So, it is [Music] start here listen 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 1 [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music]  
[Music].