



Swaranjali Music School

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Visharad Pratham Theory

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Theory: Written Exam Paper # 1:

Chapter 3: Structured Song Type (Nibaddha Gaan Prakaar)

1. Dhrupad

Before Dhrupad – Dhamaar, (before 13th century), there was a song type called ‘Prabandha (one that is structured)’. Prabandha used to have pleasant combination of swar-taal-laya-chhanda-lyrics according to rules of music theory. It used to have four dhaatoo and six components.

Dhrupad was created after 13th century. It has four parts (Avayav, Bhed or Varna): Sthayee, Antaraa, Sanchaaree and Aabhog. Dhrupad was very popular in middle era. Mansinha Tomar (late 14th and early 15th century) was the first one to compose Dhrupads in Braj language. Before this, Dhrupads used to be in Sanskrit language. Swamee Haridaas, Taansen, Gopaal Laal, Baiju, Baaj Bahaadur were also leading composers of Dhrupads.

Lyrics of Dhrupad included praises for the gods and goddesses, glories of the great elements like the sun, admiration of kings etc. Forceful, serious nature and even tempo were the main staples of Dhrupad singing and the percussion accompaniment was performed by Pakhaavaj and Mrudanga. Swar were filled with ‘Aa’, ‘Oo’ and ‘Om’ sounds. Out of four parts, the first one was Sthaayee. This was the song’s ‘Poorvaardha (first portion)’ and Dhrupad’s stability in Poorvaanga (early component) was established here. Second part was Antaraa or Uttaraanga (later component). These two together developed the Dhrupad. After this, in ‘Sanchaaree’, ending of dhrupad was started. Some people called it second antaraa. After Sanchaaree, there was the most entertaining Varna (part), Aabhog. Aabhog included aspects of the first three parts in a very enjoyable manner.

Improvisation in the form of aalaap was done before starting the Dhrupad. Aalaaps were performed by saying ‘Too hi Ananta Hari’ or ‘Nom Tom’. Dhrupad singing included mesmerizing variations of tempo and some creative dugun, tigun, chougun process (double, triple, quadruple tempo). This was not dugun, tigun done in classroom. It had a more creative play between tempo, swar and lyrics.

Dhrupad singing used taal like ‘Choutaal’, ‘Sooltaal’, ‘Mattataal’, ‘Teevraataal’. Just as khyaals have ‘Gharaanaas’, Dhrupads have ‘Baani’ or ‘Baaniyaan’. Names of Dhrupad Baani: 1. Gobarhaar, 2. Daagur, 3. Khandahaar, 4. Nohaar. These days only Daagur Baani singers are still practicing.

2. Dhamaar

A taal with fourteen maatraas that has a Dhrupad flavor is called Dhamaar. A song that uses taal Dhamaar is called ‘Dhamaar’. Lyrics of Dhamaar mostly has descriptions of Holee, Raadhaa – Krushna, raas leelaa (Dandiyaa) of gop – gopis (milk maids and cow herder boys). Dhamaar that describes Holee is called Hori-Dhamaar. Dhrupad – Dhamaar has similar singing style. Hence Dhrupad singers also sing Dhamaar. Dhamaar also has lyrics in Braj language like Dhrupad and its improvisation is done by dugun, tigun, chougun and some odd tempo variations. This is called ‘Layakaaree’. sometimes in layakaaree, boltaans are used. For percussion accompaniment, Mrudanga and Pakhaavaj is used. Dhamaar has only two parts – Sthaayee and Antaraa.

3. Taraanaa

This song type's definition has a lot of different opinions. Some people think when you sing a song with some meaningless words as lyrics, it is called Taraanaa. Other opinion is, saints from Soofi sect sing the mantras or hymns that are called Taraanaa. We can say that Taraanaa in classical music is a very attractive type of song.

Ancient structured song 'Prabandha' had four Dhaatu and six 'Avayav (parts)'. Taraanaa has three parts – Swar, Taan and Taal. It is said that Taraanaa is performed when a singer has finished singing vilambit khyaal and madhyalaya khyaal (Badaa and Chhotaa khyaal or slow and medium tempo compositions) and still feels like he/she has something more left to express. Many times, after singing a slow composition in Roopak or Jhaptal or some lingering madhyalay bandish and after decorating it with aalaap, bolbaant, Sargam and Taan, singer feels like singing a Taraanaa. Other times, after singing khyaal, chhotaa khyaal, if singer wants to show some astonishing performance and his accomplished singing ability, he performs a Taraanaa.

Taraanaas are performed in taals like Jhaptal, Roopak, Teentaal, Aadaa Choutaal, Drut Ektaal. In Drut lay antaraa, improvisation is done with 'Dir Dir' words. In raag Darbaaree Kaanadaa, there are taraanaas similar to khyaal. Some Taraanaas give preference to Layakaaree and Sargam.

Usually Gwalior **Gharaanaa** singers used to sing Taraanaa, however, now Taraanaas are quite popular and singers from all gharaanaas sing Taraanaas. In older times, pandit Nissar Husain's taraanaa was famous. One needed to be an expert in singing taan to sing like him. Pandit Vinaayakrao Patwardhan was famous for singing taraanaa in very fast tempo and expand it by singing 'dir dir dir dir'. He was called 'Taraanaa Samraat'. Late Pandit Veena Sahasrabuddhe was famous for singing taraanaa in taal Aadaa Choutaal.

Taraanaa singing is rather difficult but very attractive. In classical music, all raagaas that have khyaals, also have taraanaas. It is said that to imitate 'jhaalaa' from Sitaar, taraanaa was created. Some people think some creative person composed taraanaa by fitting 'nomtom' from Dhruwad to a taal. A story is also told, that there were two Rajput girls names 'Taanaa, Riri'. Taansen became very sad by their story and started chanting 'Taanaa Riri, Taanaa Riri' and that is the origin of Taraanaa.

Taraanaa may have been created by any means, but it has a prominent place in today's classical music.

4. Tappa

North Indian Classical Music is recognized by several singing styles like Dhruwad – Dhamaar, Khyaal, Thumree, Tappa.

Tapaa is a unique composition that is spectacular, playful and full of ornamentation like Murkee, Gamak. Word Tappa has many different meanings in Hindi language. Rise, flight, jump, leap, odd crooked walk etc. This odd crooked, skewed walk and the way camel walks in desert by making 'Tappa Tappa' sound, together with swar-lyrics-tempo is Tappa style.

Gulaam Rasool was a royal singer from Lakhnow's king's court. In 18th century, his son Gulaam Nabee went and settled in Panjab. He was a skilled singer, composer and an intelligent, ambitious person. He wanted to compose something different than khyaal style singing. He studied Panjab's culture, life style, language, industry, trade, folk music, romantic songs and formed a song of a new style. Panjab has a region called Tappa. Gulaam Nabee assumed a new pen name – 'Miyaan Shouree' – and composed many new Tappa songs.

Tappa is sung in raag Kaafee, Khamaaj, Des, Pilu, Jhinjhoti, Bhairavee etc. Different taal like Punjabee, Tappa taal, teentaal are used. Lyrics mainly have descriptions of love stories, longing, separation, chance, luck, sadness, ardent emotions, romance. Deliberate, emotive pronunciations of words is a specialty of Tappa style. Tappa has two parts called 'Tuk'. Tappa singing style is kind of special. It does not have straight aalaap or taan. An aalaap here, pause there, some small pieces of taan or plain taan or taan with Murkee, layakaaree, gamak, murkee, firkee, meend, ornamented pieces, fast, ultra fast taan, boltaan, clear enunciation, deep strong breathing: all these things together create a rich strong singing style. The language of lyrics is a bit different – Panjaabee, Urdu, Sinha, Baluchee or braj language is used. Tappa songs are difficult to sing. Lot of stamina or quick playful sophisticated voice is needed. Singer needs to have command on swar, words and Laya (tempo). Meaning of words is important.

Scholar/singers like Maalinibai Rajurkar, Veena Sahasrabuddhe, Kalpanaa Jhokarkar are famous for singing Tappa.

5. Thumree

A composition that includes emotions, dramatics and uses swar, taal, laya to enhance it is called Thumree. A beautiful stylish woman walking with great attractive graceful dramatic steps and special dignity creates a geet like Thumree.

Thumree has few words and lot of skilled dramatic presentation. It has two parts: sthaayee and antaraa. It uses taal like Deepchandi, Jatataal, Kaharvaa, Panjaabee, Teentaal. A navaab from Lakhnow, Vaajid Aleeshah, gave Thumree style a prominent place in 18th century.

In one era, Thumree was considered feminine style singing. In king's court and dance halls, concubines, maids, servant girls used to sing Thumree. They used to earn their living this way. When Thumree was presented with plenty of acting, audience found it pleasant and entertaining. Slowly Thumree acquired a prominent place in society and stage. Now both men and women perform Thumree with equal respect. Thumree style singing has same prestige as Dhrupad, Dhamaar, Khyaal styles.

Thumree's elegance is different. Voice quality and use, acting, presentation, swiftness, emotion, murkee, meend, up and down of words and swar, charm, meaning of words and emotions, imagination – all these things together created different sub-styles of Thumree like – Lakhnow, Panjabee, Banaaras gharaanaas. Thumrees depict sadness, romance, devotion. Lovers' heartache, Raadhaa – Krushna leela, attachments, separations, happiness-sadness, dance moves, are structured and composed with swar, taal, laya. Rules of raag are less rigid. Aalaap, taan are different than khyaal. Mixing swar, words and emotions with imagination and skill creates Thumree. It is composed in raagas like Kaafee, Des, Tilak Kaamod, Tilang, Khamaaj, Jogiyaa, Pilu, Pahaadee, Jhinhotee, Gaaraa, Paraj, Maand, Bhairavee etc.

Thumree is presented in two types of laya. In the beginning, first words of composition start with slow tempo in plain thekaa taal. The words are wrapped in swar, lay and Thumree elegantly, stylishly goes to antaraa and then back to mukhdaa of sthaayee (first words of sthaayee). Then second part of Thumree starts with a laggi of taal (fast tempo of taal). First line of sthaayee is repeated again and again in many different jaunty fashion and tune. Tablaa player gets a chance to present his skill and he eagerly waits for it. In the end, swiftly and skillfully one cycle of taal is played in original tempo and Thumree is finished.

Singer needs a particular type of voice, special training, singular mood, distinguishing manner to sing Thumree. Usually Thumree is sung in Madhyam of original swar. Gouharjaan, Siddheshvaree Devee, Girijaa Devee, Joharaabai, Abdul Kareem Khaan, Begam Akhtar, Shambhoo Mahaaraaj, Bade Gulaam Ali Khan, Pandit Bheemsen Joshi, Ustaad Rasheed Khan, Kishori Amonkar, Dr. Prabha Atre, Shobha Gurtu, Parveen Sultaanaa, Vasantrao Deshpande are the artists famous for singing Thumree.

Many singers from Aagraa gharaanaa have composed many popular Thumrees with a pen name 'Piyaa'. A composition that is performed and enjoyed and appreciated with great relish is a Thumree.

6. Khyaal (Badaa and Chhotaa khyaal)

Khyaal is an Urdu word and it means 'an idea' or 'a thought' or 'a notion'. Khyaal as a composition does not have to follow strict rules like Dhrupad, Dhamaar. Thoughtful evolution of ideas are evident in khyaal singing. It has two parts: sthaayee and antaraa. Badaa khyaal is sung in vilambit lay (slow tempo) and chhotaa khyaal uses medium tempo (madhyalay).

Aalaap performed before Dhrupad and Dhamaar are free form and not bound by taal. Khyaal development is done by aalaap within taal and lyrics. Sultaan Husain Sharkee from Jaunpur (15th century) is considered to be the first creator of khyaal singing. Khyaal was further made popular in 18th century, in Mughal king Muhammadshah Rangeele's court and kingdom. Composers famous for khyaal creations are: Ameer Khusro, Sadaarang, Adaarang, Manarang etc.

Specialty of khyaal is that a singer improvises according to her intellect, talent and voice limitations. Lyrics have descriptions of god's praises, nature, landscape, stories from mythology, relations between mother in law – sister in law, husband, sweethearts etc. Braj language and colloquial languages were used for lyrics. Taal used for vilambit khyaal are: Ektaal, Jhumraa, Tilvaadaa, vilambit Teentaal etc. and taal used for chhotaa khyaal (madhyalay) are: madhyalay Teentaal, Jhaptaal, Roopak, Aadaachoutaal, Drut Ektaal etc.

While singing khyall, singer sings sthaayee a couple of times and then expands the raag with aalaap. After singing aalaap in mandra and madhya saptak, aalaap approaches taar saptak and then antaraa is started. Antaraa has aalaap from madhya and taar saptak. Aalaap are developed according to singer's voice range, strength of raag's poorvaanga, uttaraanga and individual swar and swar clusters. While singing in vilambit lay, swar are more prominent than emotion or lyrics. After finishing antaraa, singer comes back to sthaayee. The lay (tempo) is increased. Bol taan, layakaaree, sargam and taan make the khyaal rich and entertaining.

In chhotaa khyaal after two – three aalaap, boltaan – sargam – taan are performed in medium or fast tempo. Improvisations are done in both sthaayee and antaraa. Taan are performed in drut lay. According the singer's capacity, faster, entertaning taan are presented. Then chhotaa khyaal is concluded.

7. Trivat

This type of song is similar to Taraanaa and it is performed like a taraanaa. However, Trivat has more sounds from Pakhaavaj and Mrudang. For presentation and pronunciation, Trivat is rather difficult to perform. Trivat has mixture of three styles: sounds of taraana, sargam and sounds of mrudang - pakhaavaj. Trivat song uses following taal: Teentaal, Ektaal, Roopak, Aadaa Choutaal etc.

Trivat is performed after khyaal singing. It has sthaayee and antaraa. This song is performed with layakaaree (tempo variations), clear cut pronunciations, and unique style of presentation. Just like Chatarang, Trivat is presented as per rules of raag. Trivat is performed in madhyalay.

8. Chatarang

When four different aspects of four unique songs are composed and structured with swar – taal in one song, it is called Chatarang or Chaturang. Chatarang includes lyrics, example of sargam, words from taraanaa and mrudang - pakhaavaj sounds. It is performed like a madhyalay or drutlay bandish according to rules of raag and structured with swar and taal. Singer is expected to be expert in all four styles of singing.

Like a chhotaa khyaal, Chatarang is sung with aalaap, taan in Jhaptaal, Teentaal, Ektaal, Roopak taal. Famous Chatarang examples are: 1. From Raag Des: 'Chataranga ko gay', 2. From raag Jaunpuri: 'Chatarang rasa sana gaaiye'. Usually Gwalior gharaanaa singers sing Chatarang. Two types of Chatarang exist: 1. Only sthaayee and antaraa and 2. Four different antaraa.