

Chapter II

History and Emergence of the Agra *Gharana*

Researcher has focussed on taking an account of historical emergence of today's Agra *gharana* of *Khayal* from the *Prabandha-Dhrupad* dominated tradition of *Nauhar Bani*. The continuous positive change in the tradition and style has a continuous documented history of more than 500 years. The researcher has also analyzed the trajectory of musicians, their exchanges and association with other *gharana* artist and evolution in the styles and techniques of performance. This has lead and resulted into a very rich singing tradition of Agra *gharana* of *Khayal* singing.

2:1 *Nauhar Bani* and Agra *Gharana*:

As mentioned previously, Indian Music has always been more religious in nature in the pre-Dhrupad era and was sung in the form of *Prabandhas*. Today's Indian (Hindustani music in particular) classical Music is believed to have been derived from *Banis*, which were founded by enlightened souls like *the Rishis* who originated around 10/11th century A. D. before the Muslim invasion. The *Banis* had existed for almost 700 years.¹

During the golden period of Indian classical music (1550-1650 A. D.), the *Banis* got their names as we know them today. During the Akbar's time these *Banis* came to be known as Gobarhar *Bani*, Khandhar *Bani*, Dagur *Bani* and Nauhar *Bani*, mostly being names of the places where the leading musicians of the respective *Banis* hailed from.² Many are of the opinion that the four *Banis* followed the *Alap*, *Dhrupad* and *Dhamar* styles during Akbar's time, but each specializing in certain aspects of the basic style. The exact origin of the *Banis* - and even that of the *Nauhar Bani* – is not known. However Nayak Gopal (court musician of Devgiri of South India), who was a saintly Brahmin, a very highly learned scholar and musician of the 13th century A. D. was either the founder or is the oldest known musician of the tradition or the system of

¹ N. Jayavanth Rao, *Sajan Piya* p. No. 2

² Hakim Mohammed Karam Imam, *Madaanul Mousiqui*

music that came to be called - more than two centuries after it was founded - the *Nauhar Bani*.³ Nayak Gopal was defeated in a musical debate and brought by Amir Khusro to the North. Aparna Chakraborty confirms the above account of Nayak Gopal as follows:

"Nayak Gopal was brought to Delhi from Devgiri in the south by Malik Kapur, general of Allauddin Khilji, as a spoil of war...on account of his excellence in *Nayaki*(theory) and *Gayaki* (practice) of music. As a great musician composer, he truly deserved the title of *Nayak*."⁴

One more story is about 'heat producing' Raga Deepak, which is separately attributed to Nayak Gopal, Haji Sujan Khan and Tansen. In each case the emperor concerned is made to request the musician to sing the Raga by some jealous courtiers. The musician takes it as a challenge, sits in the cool waters of the river Jamuna and starts singing Raga Deepak. However such stories to be accepted with more than a pinch of salt.

N. Jayavanth Rao, in his book '*Sajanpiya*', mentions conflicting information on Nayak Gopal and suggests that there could be two Nayak Gopals in history - one from the period of Allauddin Khilji and another contemporary to Nayak Baiju at the court of Akbar.

Nayak Gopal had four disciples by the names of Alakh Das, Malukh Das, Khalak Das and Lohang Das. They were all "*Jataadhaari*"(having long hair) Gosains and were erudite scholars of Music. It is known that among Alakh Das's descendants was born a Sujan Das "*Nauhar*" (or Sujan Singh "*Nauhar*") who lived in Akbar's period. The gap between Alakh Das and Sujan Das' periods is of nearly 150 years"; during which there were 4/5 generations about whom no information is available. Allauddin Khilji's rule (he was Nayak Gopal's contemporary) ended in 1316 and Alakh Das is believed to have been born after that time.⁵ Very little is known about the musical happenings in

³ Ut. Yunus Hussain Khan's Lecture demonstration at the Khairagarh University.

⁴ Aparna Chakraborty, *North can meet South*, *The Statesman*, 19 September 1997.

⁵ N. Jayawanth Rao, *Sajan Piya* p. 12.

North India from then till the 15th century, except for Jaunpur's Sultan Hussain Sharqi. One of the reasons for this is almost certainly the misadventure of Mohammed Bin Tughlak and his terrible period followed by the century of socio-political instability till Akbar's period from 1556. In such a situation, naturally, music and musicians were virtually forgotten.

It is believed that Nayak Dhondhu was the founder of the *Nauhar Bani*, probably born in Alakh Das' family a couple of generations before Sujan Das. However this is just a guess by N. Jayawanth Rao. Nayak Dhondhu may have made a significant contribution to the evolution of the *Bani* or rejuvenated it from its dormancy; hence the belief that he was the founder. There is a mention of Niranjandas, however no information is available about him through any other books or sources.⁶ Probably he was the link between Ramdas alias Nayak Dhondhu and Sujandas Nauhar/Haji Sujan Khan.

2:1:1 Haji Sujan Khan (1455-1538 A. D.)

Alakh Das's descendent Sujan Das '*Nauhar*' was a highly accomplished musician at the court of Akbar. He was the first musician of the *Nauhar Bani* to take to Islam and became Sujan Khan. Later, performed holy pilgrimage of Haj and was known as Haji Sujan Khan. His Islamic name was 'Abdul quddus gangohi Rahamatullah'.⁷ He has been mentioned in a number of scholarly books⁸ such as:

- 1) Abul Fazl: Ain-e-Akbari
- 2) Dr. Aziz Ahmed: Islamic culture and Indian Environment
- 3) Dara Shikoh: Safinat-ul-Aulia.

Sujan Khan was a Sufi of the Chishti sect and had a great command on poetry in 'Brij' and 'Urdu'. He composed many *Bandishes* using the pen name '*Alakhdas*'.

Sujan Khan was a musician (singer and a flautist)⁹ of a very high calibre and had a supreme control over his voice production. One anecdote suggests he once sang *Raag Deepak* sitting in a tank in the court of Emperor Akbar as a result of which

⁶ R. C. Mehta, *Agra Gharana parampara gayaki aur cheezen p. 11*

⁷ Lecture demonstration by Khan, Yunus Hussain, IKSVV. Khairagarh (C. G.)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Lecture demonstration by Khan, Yunus Hussain, IKSVV. Khairagarh (C. G.)

extinguished flames were relit and started flickering. Emperor Akbar was pleased and conferred the title of "*Deepak Jyot*" to Haji Sujan Khan.¹⁰ There is a *Dhrupad* sung occasionally and attributed to Haji Sujan Khan where the words "*Deepak Jyot*" appear.

During his *Haj* trip, he visited Mecca and *Madina* and was so deeply touched by these holy places that he was inspired to compose the celebrated and outstanding *Dhrupad* in the Raga Jog with the opening words "*Pratham Maan Allah*".

Sthaayi: "Pratham Maan Allah, Jin rachyo Noor Paak, Nabee ji pe rakh Imaa, E re Sujaan"¹¹...

(The composition is mentioned in Chapter No. III - *Agra Gharana* and Creations) This is the first *Dhrupad* in the history of Indian music with an influence of Urdu in its poetry.¹² All traditional musicians of the *Agra gharana* learn this *Dhrupad* with great reverence and devotion.

Ustad Tasadduq Hussain Khan was a studious musician of the *Agra gharana*. Prof. R. C. Mehta mentions his manuscript in Urdu has a reference to a *Dhrupad* composition, which confirms that Haji Sujan Khan was a contemporary of Tansen. The words indicate that it was composed during the marriage ceremony of Haji Sujan Khan, son of Alakhdas and the word *Miya ji* in the last line of the song might be a reference to the great musician Mian Tansen:

*Sthaayee: Byaahan aaya baajat dhol mangal,
Ghongal nishaan dharaayaa...*

Antaraa: Asees mor kanganaa mehendi sohe, Paagaa sone Sajaayaa...

Abhog: Nar Naari mil mangal gaavat,

Sakhiyan tona chalaya,

Aage Mommadshaa peechhe,

'Deepak Jyot' Gunana saraayaa,

¹⁰ Ut. Vilayat Hussain Khan, *Sangeetayon ke sansmaran*. .p51

¹¹ Mention of 'Sujaan' as a composer, *Sangeet Raag Kalpadrum-Part I*, p. 264

¹² Ut. Aqueel Ahmed Khan, *interviewed on 15th March, 2014*.

Cheer jug jeeyo Alakhdas ko dulha,

Miyan ji ne mangal gaayaa...

Here 'Mommadsha' probably refers to the King, who was accompanied by Deepak Jyot – Haji Sujan Khan, when he went to a marriage. Here, 'Miyaji' refers to Tansen. This Dhruvapad was composed on the occasion of the marriage of Haji Sujan Khan's son, Alakhdas. And Mian Tansen had personally participated in it. In a manuscript possessed by Ut. Tasadduq Hussain Khan. The manuscript mentions that "Sujandas belonged to the family of Ramdas (Dhondu as another name), was born in *Rajput* community. The *Bani* was *Nauhar* and they practiced Yoga. In the fourth generation Sujandas was born, who later became Muslim and was known as Haji Sujan Khan"¹³. Haji Sujan Khan and his brother Bichitra Khan were both great musicians and were called "*Nauhar Rajputs*". Once Tansen heard young Sujan Das "*Nauhar*" singing and was so pleased with his outstanding musical talents that he made him his son-in-law, converted to Islam and sent him for Haj pilgrimage.¹⁴ It is believed that Haji Sujan Khan was a very devout and saintly person and was almost like a *Yogi* or *Rishi*, and lived up to the age of nearly 125 years.

Towards the end of Akbar's long reign, Haji Sujan Khan's son, Surgya Khan, also a distinguished musician, scholar and a "*Nauhar Rajput*", became a court musician. The *Khandaan* of the *Nauhar Bani* was carried down through Surgyan Khan. Akbar honored Haji Sujan Khan by rewarding him with a village named Gondpur near Alwar of Rajasthan. It is said that Surgyan Khan and his descendants went to live there after Akbar's death and lived there till the Sepoy Revolt of 1857.

Haji Sujan Khan's youngest daughter was married to a direct descendant of Hazrat Amir Khusro. She gave birth to a great musician, Wazir Khan '*Nauhar*', and he was an accomplished scholar of '*Khusravi Mausiqui*' (considered to be the precursor of today's *Khayal*). Wazir Khan's sons were Hasan Khan '*Nauhar*' and Saiyad Khan '*Nauhar*', both were known to be *Nipuns* – experts – in the *Khusravi Mousiqui*. They lived in early part of Aurangzeb's reign. It is a matter of interest that one of the two

¹³ Mehta, R. C., *Agra gharana Parampara Gayaki aur cheezen*, p. 65

¹⁴ N. Jayawanth Rao, *Sajan Piya* p. 14

was the forefather of Faiz Mohammed Khan of Baroda, the first *Guru* of the Great Agra *gharana* musician Bhaskarbua Bakhale and father-in-law of Faiyaz Khan.

Surgyan Khan's son, Qader Shah (lived during Jehangir's reign) and grandson Hyder Shah (lived during Shahjehan's reign) lived in the Gondpur village but still were informally attached to the Mughal court. They were, therefore known as "*Gondpuriye*" but were also called '*Jogi Bachche*', being the direct descendants of Sujan Khan. The *ragas Gondgiri, Gondani Todi and Gondgiri Bahar*, sung by the Agra *gharana ustads*, were composed by them or later by their descendants in memory of the place that gave them shelter for quite a few generations.

The members of the family lived in Gondpur till 1857; however, they hastily left carrying only their very essential belongings during the Revolt. They had to leave behind almost all their heavier possessions including valuable old books, manuscripts (including diaries of the ragas and compositions) and many more.

According to Vilayat Hussain Khan, the Agra *gharana* of *Khayal* style has two branches, of which the first is very well-known and the other is relatively unknown, for which reason the present thesis focuses on the first.

2:1:2 Sarasrang and Shyamrang

Dayam Khan Nauhar - Sarasrang and Qayam Khan Nauhar - Shyamrang(1780)¹⁵ were descendants of Haji Sujan Khan, were sons of Malakhdas. They were accomplished Dhrupad singers and great composers. Some of their compositions are still sung not only in Agra *gharana*, but in other *gharanas* also. It is said that even Natthan Peerbaksh, the legendary *Khayaliya* of Gwalior *gharana* also learnt many *Dhrupad* and *Dhamars* compositions from them. Natthan Peerbaksh received *bandishes* of *Dhrupad-Dhamar* of pure forms of raga from them, on the basis of which he created *khayals* that went on to become very popular and were lauded all over India.¹⁶ Although Shyamrang and Sarasrang were artistes of the highest calibre,

¹⁵ Ut. Vilayat Hussain Khan, *Sangeetayon ke sansmaran* p. 98

¹⁶ R. C. Mehta, *Agra Gharana parampara gayaki aur cheezen* p.13

they could not acquire the kind of fame that they deserved. That was because they never left Agra. They had several disciples. In their time, the king of Kashi, Veerbhadrasingh, stayed in Agra, who provided refuge to the brothers. They had good knowledge of the Hindi and *Brij* languages and were excellent poets as well. Many of their *bandishes* are sung by artistes of the Agra *gharana*. Among the large number of the compositions, a very popular one is in Raga *Chhayana*, "*Nevar ki jhankaar*", which is widely sung by musicians of Agra *gharana* and others. Miyan Saras Rang left Delhi during the Aurangzeb's reign and made Agra his home, the place that he found most suitable to pursue his art.¹⁷ He was the last musician of the *Khandan* to have had the title of *Nauhar* added to his name. It can, therefore, be deduced that the *Nauhar Bani* more or less ended and the *Khandan* came to be called the Agra *gharana* during the time of Miya Saras Rang. Saras Rang, therefore, occupies a preeminent position in the evolution of the Agra *gharana*.

Qayam Khan-Miya Shyam Rang also was an accomplished musician. There is a controversy about the relationship between Shyam Rang and Saras Rang. While Dipali Nag, Kumar Mukherjee and N. Jaywanth Rao mentioned in their books *Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Lost world of Hindustani Music* and *Sajan Piya* respectively that Shyam Rang was son of Saras Rang, in contradiction R C Mehta and Vilayat Hussain in their books *Agra Gharana parampara gayaki aur cheezen* and *Sangeetayon ke sansmaran* contradicted it by stating that they were brothers. However it must be noted that Shyam Rang also was a famous exponent of Agra *gharana* during the period of Mohammed Shah *Rangila*, when classical music got a much-needed boost after Aurangzeb's vain attempts to obliterate it from his empire. Sham Rang was just as good a composer. The famous composition in the rare and old Raga *Birju Ki Malhar* "*Aaye badara kaare kaare*" is his creation.

Shyam Rang lived in the period of Mohammed Shah *Rangila* and almost certainly he was contemporary to the legendary musicians Sadarang and Adarang in the 18th century.

2:2 Ghagge Khudabaksh - the beginning of Agra gharana of Khayal

Shyam Rang had four sons called Junghu Khan, Soosu Khan, Gulab Khan and Khudabaksh. The youngest son Khudabaksh (1800-1850/60)¹⁸ or (1790-1880)¹⁹, was later known as "*Ghagge*" Khudabaksh because of gruffness in his voice. Till this period of time, Agra *gharana* were strict followers of *Nauhar bani* of *Dhrupad* genre.²⁰ However the existence of compositions like "*Nevar ki Jhankar*" in *Raga Chhayana*t by Saras Rang and "*Aaye badara kaare Kaare*" in *Raga Birju ki Malhar* by Shyam Rang, which are distinct *Khayals*, raises doubts on this issue. It is possible that these and other similar *Khayal*-like compositions of pre-Ghagge Khudabaksh period started off as *Dhrupads* and were later adapted to *Khayals*. However the literature of these compositions suggests that they are purely of the *Khayal* genre. Therefore, it won't be amiss to posit here that the artistes were also aware of *Khayal* but since it was then considered to be inferior, they did not sing it in concerts. This statement of mine has been corroborated by the Gwalior *gharana* singer and musicologist Prabhakar Gohadkar.²¹ Yet another confirmation is the fact that several *Khayals* by Sadarang, Adarang and Manarang in several ragas are found in the Agra *gharana*, which are not found in the oldest *gharana* of *khayal*, Gwalior *gharana*, or for that matter any other *gharana*, but are sung in the Agra *gharana*.

Sr.	Composer	Raga	Bandish sung in Agra Gharana	Tala
1	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Khemkalyan	Piharwa maika hi de ho bataye	Vilambit Trital
2	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Vibhas-Marwa Thath	Tarwa ginat ginat maika rain	Madhyalay Ektal
3	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Hem Nat	Tum bin mai	Vilambit Ektal
4	Sadarang-Niyamat	Bageshri	Ja ja re kagawa	Vilambit Ektal

¹⁸ Ut. Vilayat Hussain Khan, *Sangeetayon ke sansmaran*, p. 99

¹⁹ N. Jayawanth Rao, *Sajan Piya* p.17

²⁰ R. C. Mehta, *Agra Gharana parampara gayaki aur cheezen* p.12

²¹ Jayant Khot & Prabhakar Gohadkar, interviewed on 21st July, 2013

	Khan	Bahar		
5	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Gorakh Kalyan	Dhan dhan bhaag	Vilamit Ektal
6	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Hem Kalyan	Daiya ri mai kaise jaay karu	Vilambit Ektal
7	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Lalita Gauri	Preetam Saiyan	Vilambit Ektal
8	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Saar Nat	Sajan galbahiya	Vilambit Trital
9	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Shuddha Bilawal	Tab to kaisi keeni	Vilambit Trital
10	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Shahana kanada	More aaye ho kunwar kanhai	Jhaptal
11	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Megh Malhar	Garaj ghata ghana	Jhaptal
12	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Shivmat Bhairav	Taal Suran ki	Madhyalay Trital
13	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Jait Kalyan	Jo more saiyan	Vilambit Ektal
14	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Jaldhar Kedar	Dhan ghari dhan raat	Madhyalay Trital
15	Sadarang-Niyamat Khan	Bihari Nat	Sajan gar gare baiyan	Vilambit Trital
16	Adarang	Ramkali	Jaag re salone	Madhyalay Ektal
17	Manarang	Ramkali	E menda dil lagawe	Vilambit Ektal
18	Manarang	Barwa	Eri maiko naahi parat chain	Vilambit Trital
19	Manarang	Bhankhar	E Kartaar	Madhyalay Trital
20	Manarang	Jait Kalyan	E Jhakaran ye	Vilambit Trital
21	Manarang	Vibhas	So ab more surajanwa	Madhyala Trital
22	Manarang	Pradeepaki	Tumi san laagi	Vilambit Ektal
23	Manarang	Jaitashree	Dariye mori maai	Madhyalaya

				Trital
24	Manarang	Suha	Yahi ganimat jana	Madhyalay Trital

This is just a small list from the exhaustive collection possessed by Agra musicians. Khudabksh had a flaw in his voice, which made it sound unmusical. All of Shyamrang's sons were trained very well and picked up the style very well except Khudabaksh. The rest became good performers. Khudabaksh had become laughing stock of his family as he could not sing properly because of the gruff voice. Unbearable taunts led him to run away from home and travel to Gwalior to learn from the legendary *Khayal* exponent Natthan Peerbaksh of Gwalior *gharana*, with a determination to become a good musician at any cost. He was still in his teens and thought if his voice was unsuitable for the *Dhrupad Gayaki* of his own *khandan*, he could possibly do better in *Khayal*. Natthan Peerbaksh was very much impressed by the determination of the teenager when he heard his story and gladly accepted him as his disciple. Natthan Peerbaksh had himself learnt many *Dhrupads* at one time from an Agra *Gharana Ustad* (most probably Miya Saras Rang).²² It is also understood that Natthan Peerbaksh composed a number of beautiful *Khayals* based on *Dhrupads* and *Dhamars* that he acquired from the Agra *Gharana*. So it made him very happy to assist young Khudabaksh. Khudabaksh was rigorously trained in voice culture, *Khayal* etc. by Natthan Peerbaksh for fourteen years. The result was fascinating. Khudabaksh's voice became sweet, melodious and of mellow quality. He had in him now a most beautiful blend of the majestic and methodical *Alap-Dhrupad-Dhamar* oriented style of his own *Khandan* and the soulful and melodious *Khayal*-oriented style of Natthan Peerbaksh of the Gwalior *gharana*.

When Ghagge Khudabaksh reached home in Agra and displayed his voice and *Gayaki*, the family's joy knew no bounds. All were astonished with his utterly sweet and tuneful voice. His *gayaki* had acquired a new dimension which was absent in the *khandan*. He was welcomed home with open arms and suffice it to say that the family

²² Aqueel Ahmed, interview on 15th March, 2014. and Tapasi Ghosh, *Praanpiya* p.17

decided then and there that the next generation of musicians in the *khandan* would be trained by Ghagge Khudabaksh in his unique *gayaki*. Thus started the new Agra *gayaki* - a harmonious blend of the *Khayal* and *Dhrupad-Dhamar* styles.

2:3 Trajectory of Agra *gharana*

For more than five centuries, this tradition has been consistently progressing on its musical journey, and it has truly been a great gift to the refined music of India. This style of singing developed in northern India, in and around Agra city. Over time, the offshoots of several other *gharanas* came under its wing. Artists born into the Agra *gharana* found favour. *Bandishes*, *ragas*, kinds of singing, the various facets of singing, teaching methods and so on were exchanged; which resulted in the firm establishment of the rich tradition of the Agra *gharana* in the *Khayal* style of singing. Generation after generation, it was promoted, developed and carried forward in a most discerning manner by progeny and pupils. Over time, its most reputed exponents were honoured in several dominions of northern, western, and central India. They were also honoured as far as Mysore in the south as invited court singers. These dominions included Agra, Mathura, Gwalior, Tonk, Jaipur, Rampur, Indore, Baroda, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Mysore, Riva, Bharatpur, Alwar, Kashmir, Kolhapur, and Patiala. These artistes indulged in a healthy exchange of knowledge of music with artistes they met in these places.

By the decline of the Mughal Empire and the middle period of the British Empire (before the War of Independence of 1857), musicians of the Agra *gharana* had left their place of origin and taken refuge in various dominions. In Mumbai, Ustad Sher Khan brought Agra *gharana* for the first time in 1953 and thereafter his son, Ustad Natthan Khan roamed in Mysore; northern Karnataka provinces such as Dharwad and Hubli; Baroda and Bhavnagar to create an impact through his own and his disciples' efforts and establish the Agra *gharana* in western India. The most important among Natthan Khan's disciples in addition to his own sons were Baabli Bai from Goa and Bhaskarbuva Bakhle of Baroda. Bhaskarbuva used his singing to bring about a musical revolution and awareness in Maharashtra! Thereafter, Faiyaz Khan, Vilayat Hussain Khan, and several disciples established the Agra *gharana* as a major front of classical music in the western region. Several top teachers and artistes

were born.

Ghagge Khudabaksh first started training Sher Khan, his eldest brother Junghu Khan's only son, in his new style. Junghu Khan became a fine musician in just a few years' time. Ghagge Khudabux was in most demand by various royal princely states, so started travelling to display his most magnificent *Gayaki* to the several Kings and nobles in the country. In fact, he was the first Agra *gharana Khayal* musician to have travelled outside Agra to spread his music. Even Sher Khan, after completing training, set out on his travels.

Wherever Ghaggeji went, the kings and the subjects were wonderstruck at his very beautiful *Gayaki*. It is said that within minutes of starting to sing he would bring tears to the eyes of his listeners with his intensely melodious and tuneful voice and the music.

In Jaipur, the then Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh was so pleased with his soulful music that he immediately appointed him the court musician. It is said that Ghaggeji joining the court 'filled the one gap that existed' in the distinguished court of Jaipur comprising such legendary musicians as Rajab Ali Khan (Been player of Jaipur and Maharaja's own Ustad), Imratsen Sitariye (discendant of Tansen), 'Pandit' Behram Khan of Dagars-Saharanpurwale, Sadruddin Khan of Delhi, Mubarak Ali Khan of Qawwal bachche and others. This was truly a great honour for him. He became so popular that even after his appointment as the court musician he was very frequently invited to several places and princely states such as Gwalior, Jhalawar, Tonk, Rampur, Benaras, Mursaan, Ballabhgarh, Bharatpur, Rewa, Dhaulpur and many more. Among his prominent disciples were: 1) Ghulam Abbas Khan-eldest son 2) Sher Khan-nephew 3) Ali Baksh of Bharatpur 4) Pandit Shivdin-son of Pandit Vishwanath, the then Prime Minister of Jaipur state. He left a great legacy after his death sometime between 1850 to 1860²³.

²³ Khan, V. H., *Sangeetagon ke sansmaran*, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi, page 103

2:3:1 Sher Khan (1805-1862)

Sher Khan was known to be a true Sher (tiger), now a great musician and brilliant performer. He too travelled all over, gave recitals at various courts, started getting name and fame and started influencing musicians of respective places. Sher Khan took upon himself task of training Ghaggeji's elder son Ghulam Abbas Khan rigorously in the father's true style. Ghulam Abbas Khan studied with great devotion for several years and became a fully trained accomplished musician. Sher Khan while in Gwalior, had even impressed the legendary Haddu Khan of Gwalior so much that he introduced him to the Maharaja Jiwajirao Scindhia. The Maharaja gifted him a very handsome amount. Sher Khan was first musician to migrate to Mumbai in 1851²⁴, however according to N. Jaywanth Rao it was sometime between 1835-40. Nevertheless, it can be said that much before Gwalior *gharana* (through Balkrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjkar), the Agra *gharana* got established in Maharashtra.

2:3:2 Ghulam Abbas Khan (1818 or 20 or 35-1932 or 34)

Ghulam Abbas Khan is considered one of the avant-garde artistes of the Agra *gharana* and represents inimitable contribution. He has contributed greatly to passing on the singing style of the Agra *gharana* to the next generation. He was the son of the inventor of the Agra Khayal style of singing, Ut. Ghagge Khudabaksh. According to Khan Saheb Vilayathussain Khan²⁵, the two most melodious singers he ever heard were Ut. Ghulam Abbas Khan and Ut. Abdul Karim Khan. He was born in Agra.

He initiated his training in Music with his father, Ut. Ghagge Khudabaksh and his cousin, Sher Khan, which went on for years. He had knowledge of several *raagdaris* and *bandishes*. He learnt a lot of *Dhamar-Hori* from his other cousin, Ghasit Khan. He was an expert at Dhrupad-Dhamar and also sang Khayal with great skill. In '*Sangeet Kalaprakash – Part 1*', Pt. Ramkrushnabuwa Vaze writes, "It is extremely difficult to find a singer who can sing in such a *Vilambit laya* (slow tempo)." But the Ustad had impressed Vaze buva with his renditions of very serious ragas such as Todi and Aasaavari. Pt. Vaze buva had gone with Ut. Natthan Khan Agrewale to a programme organized by Zohrabai to listen to him. In that programme, he sang these

²⁴ Khan, Yunus Hussain, Lecture demonstration, Khairagarh University.

²⁵ Interview of Haldankar, Babanrao on 15th August, 2011.

ragas without the use of *taans* or other techniques because using *taans* in such ragas hampers them. This book describes him as a very skilful singer.

In '*Sangitagy ke Sansmaran*', Ut. Vilayat Hussain writes that he possessed very long breath and his style of lingering on notes mesmerized everyone and made their hearts yearn. He was a much-decorated artiste of his time. And the rich and rajas and maharajas would invite him to their establishments. He was in great demand at Alwar, Tonk, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, and other states. In 1907, despite his age (he was 87), he went to the Mysore court on the occasion of Festival of *Dussehra*, greatly impressed the Maharaja and received several awards.

Ut. Ghulam Abbas Khan remained a celibate for the 30 most important years of his life and dedicated himself to practicing Music. He was a Music training and physical fitness enthusiast. A serious demeanour and long breath were his specialties. He could sing *Taans* without break in as long as 18 continuous cycles in one breath²⁶. Therefore, he was completely fit and able to use that fitness in his devotion to Music and earn a name among the best names in Indian Music.

Among his most important disciples were his younger brother Kallan Khan, Ut. Natthan Khan, his nephew Ut. Tasdduq Hussain Khan, and Aftaab-e-Mousiqui Ut. Faiyaz Khan. He provided maximum training to Faiyaz, the son of his sister, Abbasi Begum, and shaped up his musical personality in Toto by taking him along when he gave programs all over India.

He was himself an established composer of *bandishes*. According to Ut. Yunus Hussain Khan, he created several composition under the pen name '*Sabrang*'. Before Ut. Bade Ghulam Ali, he made several efforts for the promotion of Music. According to Prof. Yashpal ji, he also gave several *bandishes* to Pt. Bhatkhande ji, which were included in his "*Kramik Pustak malika* part I to VI series, e.g., *Dhan dhan Murat Krishna Murari* - in *Raga Bhairav*. Zohrabai Agrewali and Chandan Chaubey of Mathura Pushtimarg were among his disciples. He expired in 1932 in Vadodara.

²⁶ Interview of Haldankar, Babanrao on 15th August, 2011.

2:3:2 Kallan Khan (1835-1925)

Kallan Khan was the youngest son of Ghagge Khuda Baksh but was trained by elder brother Ghulam Abbas Khan. However, he learnt many Ragas and compositions from Pandit Vishwambharnath, a senior disciple of Ghagge ji. Kallan Khan was later appointed court musician by the Maharaja of Jaipur. He was an equally brilliant teacher and trained many musicians. A few to name were his son Tasadduq Hussain Khan, grand nephews Faiyaz Khan, Vilayat Hussain Khan and Nanhe Khan, grandson Bashir Khan and great grand nephews Khadim Hussain Khan and Anwar Hussain Khan. All of them became great masters and each taught hundreds of disciples within and outside the family.

2:3:3 Natthan Khan (1840-1901)

Natthan Khan was the only son of Sher Khan. Being the Khalifa, Ghulam Abbas Khan taught him with great devotion for several years. He was also trained by well-known musicians such as Ghasit Khan, Khwajabaksh and Mubarak Ali Khan of Qawwal Bachche, a contemporary of Ghagge Khudabaksh. He was an outstanding performer, and the first to introduce very slow tempo in *Khayal*²⁷, much before the modern trend. He could do raga exposition and perform all intricacies of *Khayal* and the '*Bol ang*' from the *bandish* with utmost ease. He was equally accomplished in raga elaboration and the *phirat* - fast movements of the notes and had an unparalleled command over the rhythm. He was highly regarded by the tall musicians of those days. His elder sons Mohammed Khan and Abdullah Khan (composer of famous composition '*Eri aali Piyabin*') were his prominent disciples in the family and outside were the famous Bhaskarbua Bakhale and Bablibai alias Chanda Karwarkarin. He remained a highly regarded court musician of Mysore till his death in 1901.

2:3:4 Sons of Natthan Khan: Mohammed Khan (1870-1922) and Abdullah Khan (1873-1922)

Mohammed Khan was the eldest son and Abdullah Khan was the second son. Each had a huge repertoire of compositions in various popular and lesser-known Ragas. Mohammed was a Urdu poet. Both brothers composed several *Bandishes*. The famous

²⁷ Khan, V. H., *Sangeetayon ke sansmaran*, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi, page 107

bandish 'Eri aali Piyabin' in Raga Yaman is a composition of Abdullah Khan. Mohammed Khan was great teacher and Abdullah Khan was a great performer, even Faiyaz Khan was influenced by his singing. Abdullah Khan performed at various princely states and other places all over India. He was appointed a court musician along with his father.

Other sons of Natthan Khan like, Mohammed Siddique Khan, Nanhe Khan (composer Shaqueel Piya), Babu Khan were also good musicians but all died very young. However Vilayat Hussain Khan gained significant name and fame as a performer and a teacher. His contribution will be covered in the fourth chapter. The only daughter of Natthan Khan, Faiyazi Beghum, was married to Altaf Hussain Khan of Atrauli. Her three sons, Khadim Hussain Khan, Anwar Hussain Khan and Latafat Hussain Khan were excellent musicians of the twentieth century.

2:3:5 Faiyaz Khan (1881-1950):

Faiyaz Khan was amongst tallest figures of classical music from the last century. He was a direct disciple of his maternal grandfather Ghulam Abbas Khan. He was court musician of Baroda. The separate write-up has been given in the fourth chapter.

2:3:6 Tasadduq Hussain (b. 1879)

Tasadduq Hussain was in the Baroda court and also worked as an Ustad for 22 years. He trained many renowned musicians of last century including Dipali Nag, Bashir Khan, Aqueel Ahmed Khan, Shafi Ahmed Khan. He composed many *Bandishes* with a pen name "*Vinod*". Had deep interest in Urdu, Persian languages as well as Theory of Music. He has an unpublished work on the *Raga-Raginis* to his credit.

Thus Agra *gharana* as combination of *Dhrupad-Dhamar* and *Khayal* style got well established all over India by the beginning of the twentieth century through its wide range of musicians born in the family and the disciples outside family.

Veteran musicologist, R. C. Mehta attributes²⁸ the dominant aspects of Agra's post-*Dhrupad* stylistics largely to its retention of *Dhrupad* as a performing tradition, and

²⁸ Mehta, R. C., interviewed on 10th October, 2013

the *gharana's* continued adherence to the dhrupad philosophy as the foundation of *khayal* vocalism.

2:4 Agra Gharana and its second branch

I would like to quote some musicians, who belonged to the second branch of Agra *gharana*. The detailed information has been published in '*Sangeetayon ke Sansmaran*', the book by Vilayat Hussain Khan.

2:4:1 Imdad Khan (1800-1860)

He was a very popular singer of his time. The Maharaja of Benaras was greatly impressed with his singing and became his disciple. He remained in Agra, never travelled outside.

2:4:2 Hamid Khan (1840-1909)

He was trained by his maternal grandfather Nanhe Khan. He was a very popular singer in the princely state of Bundelkhand.

2:4:3 Nanhe Khan & Salem Khan (1800-1895)

Both were born in Agra. They were brothers-in-law. They were always together and sang together all over India. Both of them were very popular singers and were highly regarded in the princely states of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Panna and many others. They were gifted a village by the Maharaja of Ratanpur.

2:4:4 Pyar Khan (- d. 1915)

Pyar Khan was Salem Khan's son. He was more inclined to singing in lighter classical styles such as *Thumri* and *Dadra*. He was an accomplished Jaltarang player as well. The Jaipur Maharaja was highly impressed with him and had employed him in the '*Guni jan khana*'. He left the audience spellbound in a concert in which the Prince of Wales (who later became George V and the King of England) and the Queen were present, at the Jaipur court.

2:4:5 Latif Khan (b. 1875)

He was son and disciple of Pyar Khan. He also had more inclination towards *Thumri*, *Dadra*. He had a tremendous command over the rhythmic aspect. He was very popular in the princely states of the Rajasthan such as Jaipur, Shahpura, Indergarh etc.

2:4:6 Mahmood Khan (- d. 1920)

He was the third son of Pyar Khan. He was accomplished in *Khayal*, *Thumri*. He invented an instrument called "*Veena Ragaswaroop*". This instrument was like a one-stringed *Veena*, without any frets on it. He was a court musician in Shahpura and later in Bhadaawar.

2:4:7 Raza Hussain (1891-1960)

He was the last son of Pyar Khan. He was an expert singer as well as a master at playing instruments. In spite of being a traditional Indian classical musician, he never sought to be a part of an orchestra as a performer or even as a composer. He was a court musician of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III of the Baroda state from 1909 till his death.

Thus Agra *gharana* since its inception, continued to grow culturally and geographically. Its musicians got well placed in the famous courts of the Maharajas and *Nawabs*-the important sources of patronage. These musicians interacted with the other contemporaries of other *gharanas* and enriched not only themselves but influenced others. This journey has been continued for more than 500 decades. As a result they developed a unique aesthetics in music, style, philosophy and training methods etc. The researcher would take like to take an account of the same.

2:5 Philosophy and Principles - Training and other distinguishing features

2:5:1 The Oath of the Agra *Gharana* and aesthetics

The philosophy of the Agra style is based on vision, mood, and special constituents, which are carefully safeguarded. They are deliberately reached to the disciples by means of training. This we shall call the oath of this *gharana*.

2:5:1:1 Purity of *Raga*

In the Jaipur *Gharana* Conference organised at ITC-SRA at NCPA, Mumbai²⁹, Vidushi *Shruti* Sadolikar, Pt. Dinkar Panshikar, and Pt. Satyasheel Deshpande praised the training in *raga* purity in the Agra *gharana* in generous words. According to the mention in the Bhatkhande Smritigranth, Pt. Bhatkhande had praised Ut. Faiyaz Khan in the context of *raga* purity.

That is not to say that *raga* purity in other *gharanas* is neglected. However, deliberate training to bring out the nuances of the *ragas* and invoke the aesthetic constituents in them is a very meticulously taught subject in Agra *gharana*. The very logical reason for purity of *Raga* in Agra *gharana* is its *Nauhar Bani* of *Dhrupad*. *Raga* principles, including not just the grammar (*Vaadi*, *Samvaadi*, *Shuddha*, *Vikrut*, *Aaroha*, *Avroha*, *Varjya*, *Avarjya*) but also special Swarkrutis, distinguishing between pronunciation of the *swaras*, the long and short of the *swaras*, and the treatment to them are all paid due attention. E.g., the notes of the Purvi *raga* (*Re*, *Ma*, *Dha*, and *Shuddha Ma*) are sung in at least ten other *ragas* in this *gharana* (such as *Purvi*, *Purva*, *Vasant*, *Paraj*, *Parajkaalingada*, *Lalitagaauri*, *Chetagaauri*, *Ramgaauri*, *Kaphargaauri*, *Cheta Gunkali*, *Rupkali*), still aspects such as pronunciation, treatment-*lagaav*, phrases- *swar sangati* training are used to distinguish between them. In the various forms of various *Ragang Ragas*, specific differences between *ragas*, and other things are clarified on the basis of *Raga Prakriti*. In the *Raga Barwa*, *komal gandhar* is used with *laag-daat* while in *Sindhura*, it is very light. Capable singers can announce the *raga* only through the use of this note. Pt. K.G. Ginde's lecture-demonstrations at the Baroda Music College on the *bandishes* of the Agra *gharana*, a very short phrase of Multani was sung to create the mood of entire *raga* in a few seconds and knowing audiences acknowledged it spontaneously. Pt. Babanrao Haldankar says that Faiyaz Khan could clearly determine whether the *raga* was *Yaman* or *Bihag* from just the '*mandra Ni*' note. In Agra style, the *raga*-specific importance of the notes is given greater importance. Behind this paraphernalia, the objective is to safeguard the aesthetic constituents hidden in the *raga*. A *raga* has its own mood. If that is safeguarded, the appropriate *bhava* may be created and for that, purity is all-essential. Therefore, even in the *taans*, without harming the *raga*, *raga*-specific *taans* are sung. For example, in *Raga Darbari* the

²⁹ ITC SRA seminar on Jaipur *gharana* at NCPA Mumbai, on 9th May, 2010

komal gandhar – i.e. to show the long *komal dhaivat*, those notes are repeated. For example, G G G G, M M M M, R R R, S S S, Ṃ S, Ḍ Ḍ Ḍ, Ṇ Ṇ Ṇ, P P M P, G G M M R S etc. the repetition of the notes will be sung. In many traditions, whatever the kind of *raga*, it is limited to *vilambit aalaap*, one single kind of *laya*, one pace, and the expansion of the form and fast *taans*. This leads to no distinction between Jogiya and *Gunakri*, *Puriya* and *Marwa*, *Puriya Dhanashree* and *Shree*. To safeguard these nuances, 18 *ang* have been mentioned in another chapter. E.g., *Lahak*, *Gamak*, *Sut*, *Laag-Daant* are used only in accordance with the constitution of the *raga*.

In the Agra tradition, during special training, 18 *ang* are taught. And senior teachers advise their disciples to learn to recognise the *tabiyat* of the *raga*. Today, most singers sing a major *raga* and then – to avoid monotonicity – sing *thumri* or some similar, light music form. But in the Agra *gharana*, since the *ragas* of diverse kinds, that approach is not necessary. After singing the main *raga*, *Pancham Sohani*, *Sunderkali*, *Paraj*, and such other *ragas* to sing are included in the *gharana*. These *ragas* are mercurial. Therefore, after singing the main *raga* at length, such compositions help lighten the mood.

2:5:1:2 Singing with the *Sthayi Ang*

This concept is included in Agra *gharana* as it is in the Gwalior *gharana*. According to it, the gross form of the *bandish* is regarded while it is expanded on as per the *raga* articulated. For this reason, the rendition of the *raga* is seamless and of a specific form. Using specific *swarakritis* (phrase) in the *bandish*, the *raga* is expanded, for which reason the sentiment of the *raga* becomes clearer and more powerful. This leads to strengthening the integrity of the environment. In many traditions, no matter what kind of *bandish* is used, if the *Mukhda* contains higher notes, or if there is a *Sam* on the *Uttarang Swar*, after the *Mandra Saptaka*, consecutive notes in the *Madhya Saptak* are used for the *aalaapkari*. These are irrelevant for phrases in the *bandish* for the appropriate *raga*. For this reason, the *raga* reflected in the *bandish* is not clarified by such expansion. E.g., A *vilambit* composition in *Raga Yaman* “Kahe Sakhi Kaise Kariye” S G R G, and P G, P and G, G R G, R – Shuddha M, such unusual sangatis are found, and their expansion in *Yaman* will be used in this *bandish*. In Ut. Faiyaz Khan's recording, such expansion from the *Sthayi Ang* is found.

When the *raga* expansion is not in accordance with the *bandish*, it leads to repetition. In such a *bandish*, there is no pleasure of the specific *raga*. On account of repetition, the creative challenge is wasted. Therefore, the quality of the music also suffers. The composition does not come across as a composite whole, it sounds scattered. Against this, singing with the *Sthayi Ang* the *raga ang* hidden in the *bandish* is clearly visible.

2:5:1:3 Powerful Rendition:

The attraction to such singing lies in its powerful constituents, such as sharpness, weightiness, and resonance. If cine music is light, it influences our minds for a very short duration. In comparison, *thumri*, *ghazal* have a more powerful impression and prestigious and their impression lasts longer on the mind. Even better is *Raga* music. In this manner, as singing style progresses from cine music to *Raga* music, it becomes deeper, heavier as it progresses toward supremacy and formlessness. Heaviness in music leads to greater quality and it can be effected in two ways: 1. through the voice and 2. through presentation.

2:5:1:4 Vocal Power

For a powerful voice, practising bass is extremely important. The base note, *Shadaja*, on which our *ragas* and the entire *raga* music stands supported, requires a weighty voice with resonance and maturity. And this is compulsory practice in the Agra *gharana*, for which training in voice cultivation is mandatory. For such training, a full-throated voice is gradually increased toward the lower octave to achieve a special grandeur/breadth of the voice. In order to ensure that the voice has dignity in it, practising for a bass voice has been given greater importance in the Agra *gharana*. In comparison to the other *gharanas*, it is believed in this tradition that after practising the bass the voice is cultivated and some light *ragas* and the other prestigious *ragas* are sung in the lower octave without the '*Khench*' to fully present the *raga*. e.g., *Raga Darbari* of Faiyaz Khan or the recordings of artistes like Latafat Hussain Khan contain a *Dhrupad*-like *Khench*. Late Vamanrao Deshpande has accepted in book '*Gharandaj Gayaki*' that the singers of the Agra *gharana* have 'lightning' in their voices.

It is also important to cultivate resonance in one's voice, which wields greater importance in the *Mandra Saptaka* and the *purvanga* of the *Madhya Saptaka*. It never

fails to impress the audience. This kind of capability of Ut. Faiyaz Khan has been mentioned by authors such as the late Keshavrao Bhole, Thakur Jaidev Singh and Thakur Gajendranarayan Singh in their writings. A voice that is weighty infuses dignity into the notes. It is a stunning voice on account of its sharpness and makes for a very touching experience for the audience on account of its resonance. Thus, cultivation of the bass makes the voice profound.

2:5:1:5 Dignity in Performance

Here, the mental exercise is more urgently required than the physical exercise. For a presentation that is full of splendour, the first medium is the *bandish*. The singing that contains treatment appropriate to the needs of the *swaras*, the steadiness of the *swaras*, meend, aans, khench are used to properly articulate the relationship between two *swaras* and wherein *murki*, *khatka*, and such light forms, when sparingly used, make for majestic music. Long *Swarakritis*, and capacity for singing them in a single breath are qualities that make the singing grand. For this, appropriate training and practising breath control are indispensable. Talking about this, Yunus Hussain Khan has said that Ghulam Abbas Khan could sing a *bandish* with *vilambit* khyal in a single breath. Babanrao says that Ghulam Abbas Khan could take a *taan* of over 18 cycles in the Chhota Khyal. His *guru*, Khadim Hussain Khan used to say, “*Arre bhai, gaanaa to saans ka kaam hai.*” Some *bandishes* of this *gharana* were composed in the form of ‘*Dam Saans ki Bandishe*’ as well.

In the context of the grandeur of presentation, the *laya* is also very important. This means that singing too much of *vilambit* or singing the *aalaap* in 4x or greater *laya* will lead to deformation in the music. Grandeur in one's music can be achieved by using *Dirgha Meend*, *Khench*, *Suron ki aas*, *Andolan*, *Gamak* in *taans* (prolonged sliding notes, *Khench*, reverb effect of notes, vibrations in notes etc. in *taans*) as well, and so on in a controlled manner in *Madhyam Vilambit* or *Madhya Laya* as well. Faiyaz Khan's *Madhya Laya Teentaal bandish 'Ay Kartaar'* in the *raga Bhankhaar*, was a great example of grandeur.

By following the above musical aspects while performing with utmost dedication, the Agra *gharana* musicians visualized their own aesthetical approach to Indian classical

music, influenced the Indian musical scene for over one and half century and became very successful.

2:5:2 Ashtang in Performance

Kumar Mukherji³⁰ says that the *khayal* singers of Agra were inspired by the *Ashtaang Gayaki* of Gwalior to adopt the eight *Ang* of *bandish*. Same can be realized after analysis and observations of traditional training pattern and performances of masters. Technically and historically Gwalior and Agra *gharana* are two sides of one coin, so it is not to surprise that these *angas* prevails equally in both the *gharanas*, they are:

2:5:2:1 Nayiki

Singing the *bandish* exactly as received from the guru

2:5:2:2 Gayaki

Playing with the *bandish* with own imagination and expanding it.

In a way an artist can depart from the composition passed down, laid with each line in any manner commensurate with the '*chalan*' or the movement of the Raga. Here the artiste's own imagination comes into play. Many *Ustads* of the Agra *gharana*, would sing the *bandish* first in '*Nayiki Anga*', repeat it and then sing the same composition with subtle variations in the original composition.

2:5:2:3 Vistaar

The slow unfolding of the Raga as distinct from unfolding and ornamentation of composition. '*Vistaar*' can be done in any tempo, depending on the artiste's mood.

2:5:2:4 Bahalawa

"Long *meends*" are a speciality of Agra and Gwalior *gharanas*. *Behlaw* is a play of combination of notes and phrases with the help of medium tempo heavy '*taans* and *meends*'. *Bahalawa* slowly evolved into *Taans* at a later stage.

³⁰ Mukherjee, K., Agra Gharana-Seminar, Khairagarh, 2001.

2:5:2:5 *Baant* or *Bol Baant*

It is a rhythmic division of *taal* with the help of words. It is a playful melodious rhythmic activity with the help of the lyrics of the composition without disturbing the meaning.

2:5:2:6 *Bol taan*

Here the words and rhythmic *taan* are combined together, a very special feature of Agra *gharana*. Many musicians of other *gharanas* were inspired and adopted this variety.

2:5:2:7 *Layakari*

Origin of *layakari* is the '*Dhamar*' genre, and it involves play with *taal* with the help of words as in *Dhamar* and '*ladant* and *tihais*'; cross-rhythmic variations are parts of '*Layakari*', unfortunately '*layakari*' in the real sense is slowly disappearing from *Khayal gayaki*.

2:5:2:8 *Taans*

Taan are taboo in *Dhrupad* and *Dhamar*, but favored in *Khayal*. Styles of *taans* differ from *gharana* to *gharana*. However the *Taans* sung by Agra musicians are full of '*Ghamaks*', which represents *Dhrupad* genre. Thus the *Taans* are full-throated and forceful and hence may not be in fast tempo. However the speed helps in maintaining the purity of the *raga*.

2:5:3 Studios attitude while safeguarding tradition

Practically all the artistes of this tradition exhibit a studios attitude and the desire to innovate while safeguarding tradition. The base of tradition was never neglected by them. The effort to create anew with the neutral attitude of traditional knowledge and to pass on such knowledge via family and various disciples is observed in this *gharana*. They created fresh work but at the same time retained the old styles of singing (*Dhrupad*, *Dhamar*, *Khayal*, *Tappa*, *Tarana*, and so on), *bandishes*, *ragas*, and compositions.

2:5:4 Variety

The Agra *gharana* is a unique repository of forms of singing, raga *bandishes*, *laya*, *taal*, and more, presented in a variety of ways and inventing a range of sentiments. The Agra *gharana* artistes and style of singing exhibit unique presentation of various sentiments through effecting a variety of changes in the content and style of creations.

2:5:5 Generosity

It would be no exaggeration to mention that the singing of the Agra *gharana* is akin to a feast full of delicacies. The singers of the Agra *gharana* are ever ready to serve the choicest titbits to the audience. They are also keen on receiving requests (*farmaish*) from the audience. On account of their mastery of the *ragas*, audiences receive immense pleasure from listening to new and varied compositions. The artistes of the Agra *gharana* are also at the forefront when it comes to imparting education in music. History is witness to the fact that the artistes of the Agra *gharana* have cast aside criteria such as familial ties, language, region, tradition, and gender to provide education in music with an open heart.

2:5:6 Stylistics, Aesthetics and specialties of Agra *gharana*

The Agra *gharana* is known for its full-throated and aggressive vocalization, inspired by some streams of dhrupad vocalism. This approach to voice production and delivery gives it a bias towards staccato intonation, and a marked angularity of melodic contours. Consistent with this bias, Agra vocalists tend to deploy the bolder forms of melodic execution from the *Dhrupada* genre, such as *Meend*, *Ghamaka*, *Gitkiri*, *Khatka* etc. to near exclusion of delicate ornamentations such as *murki* and other lighter embellishments, more frequently found in *Khayal* vocalism of other lineages. Therefore, Agra vocalism is perceived as being masculine. After Faiyaz Khan, however, a progressive softening has been observed in this *gharana*'s approach to vocalization and the handling of intervallic transitions. This is a response to the growing sophistication of the acoustic environment, and to the challenge from melody-oriented rival styles.

2:5:6:1 Abundant Use of *Shruti*

The Agra *gharana* style puts a premium on '*Shrutigayan*', which accounts for its characteristic purity that is also the soul of our Music. However, we have witnessed 2/3 generations that have 'surrendered' to the harmonium, hence, it would be wrong to expect *shruti*-laden singing. Viewed in the context of the harmonium, such singing would seem out of tune. Such accusations have been levelled at several singers of the Agra *gharana*. However, in the music samples that I have provided, there are several artistes whose singing contains levels of *shruti*-laden singing. For example, the *Ati Komal Gandhaar* in *Raga Darbari*, or the higher *Dhaivat-Nishaad* coupling in the *Aaroha* sounds lower in the *Avroha*. Similarly, in *Raga Lalit*, the level of the *Dhaivat* (between *Komal* and *Teevra*) and such other examples are extremely attractive and worth imbibing. The *Teevra* and *Komal* notes in a single *raga* have different levels in the various phrases. This is a measure of the commitment of the Agra *gharana* toward the *raga* and purity of principle. The recordings of artistes such as Faiyaz Khan, Latafat Hussain, Khadim Hussain, Dinkar Kaikini, and Sharafat Hussain are testimony to *shruti*-laden singing in the Agra *gharana*. Also, in *ragas* such as *Shree*, *Bhairav*, *Desi Todi*, *Miyan ki Todi*, and many more, the artistes of this *gharana* have produced *shruti*-laden levels of notes. Since such singing of the *shrutis* is included in the training itself, all artistes of the Agra *gharana* sing it exactly and effortlessly, according to Dinkar Kaikini, Babanrao Haldankar and Satyasheel Deshpande³¹. The singing of the *shrutis* is most useful in evoking the mood.

2:5:6:2 Articulation and the element of drama

The artistes are easily able to establish a dialogue with the audience and befriend them using easily hummable *bandishes* in various *talas*. An attractive *bandish* is what is required to make the programme successful. And the most extensive inventory of such varied *bandishes* probably lies with the Agra *gharana*. The style of singing employed in this *gharana* is abstract in the *Dhrupad aalaap* on the one hand, and on the other it is methodic presentation of the *bandish* makes it concrete. When a singer of Agra *gharana* sings, he is easily able to converse with his audience. When listening to a singer of the Agra *gharana* along with the *laya* the singer also enjoys the words of the *bandish* and develops the *raga*. At such a time, the audience is able to tell the

³¹ Interview of Kaikini, Dinkar, Haldankar S. S. and Deshpande, Satyasheel on 27th September, 2009

emphatic beat (*Sam*) along with the singer. It is as if the audience feels that it is also a part of the act of singing. It is as if the singers create *raga* drama using the lyrics. Often, the concert is akin to a dramatic performance. And the singer also employs his skill to make it seem more like drama.

2:5:6:2:1 Bada Khyal and Bol Aalaap

As in other *gharanas*, in the Agra *gharana* the *aa-kaar* are not sung and only the *bol-aalaap* are sung. The *bol* of the *bandish* are used in the *bol aalaap*, wherein one or more than one group of *bols* are combined meaningfully before singing the *vilambit* khyal. E.g., in the composition in *raga* Bihag, “*Kaise samjhaun sakhi re, jiyara kal nahi pare*” the singer expands the *raga* by using combinations such as '*kaise samjhaun*', '*sakhi re kaise samjhaun*', and '*kaise samjhaun sakhi re*'. In this process, since the words are used, the relationship of the tempo of the *taal* is clearly observed. Just as awareness is created even in the *vilambit khayal*. This result is not achieved using *aa-kaar*. In the Agra *gharana*, the words are added to the various measurements of the *laya* with a kind of consistency to sing the *Mukhda* in a very proper manner to reach the *Sam*.

2:5:6:2:2 Bols: their Pronunciations and articulations

Ragas are intentionally unravelled using the *Bol Ang* only in the Agra *gharana*. The weight with which the *layakari* is started through the use of *bol* is maintained, the *Mukhda* is sung and finally the *sam* is reached³². When more than a single *bol* are used in an *aavartan* (cycle), the change in the weight is kept consistent between the *bol*. In this process, the long and short letters in the appropriate *bol* in the *bandish* are given due attention and the singers sing them without harming the meaning of the words. The pronunciation of the words is done in great style by the singers of the Agra *gharana*. The Agra style was born and developed in the land of *Brij*, therefore the singers were able to effortlessly make use of the sweet pronunciation of the *Brij* language and since Urdu was their mother tongue, their style of singing the *bandish* and its '*kahan*' are both done in great style. The singers of this *gharana* use 'a' as in 'hat' instead of the *a-kaar*. The word '*Sapane mein*' is pronounced as '*Supane mein*',

³² interview of Pt. S. S. alias Babanrao Haldankar taken on 21st September, 2013.

and a nasal word 'Na' in 'Bamana' in the high *Shadaj* is conjoined to the 'Saa' with a resonance, and gently up to the 'Na' it is converted into an *aa-kaar*. In this manner, words are used in a consistent and communicative manner and the *khayal* is sung in great style in the Agra *gharana*.

2:5:6:2:3 Permeance of the *Bol*

Creating diverse meaningful combinations of groups of words in the *bandish*, keeping the meaning intact, to unravel the *raga* using *tala* is known as *Bol Prastaar* (permeance of the *bol*). Here, without making major changes in the *raga* lyrics, the *raga* is unravelled, spread out. For example, Dinkar Kaikini's *Bada Khayal* in *raga Yaman*: “Hey, manaa kaise gaaun, aise guniyan ke beech me!(Oh my mind, how can I sing in presence of such intellectuals!). In this *bandish*, without disturbing the original *raga* lyrics, phrases such as “kaise gaaun, manaa kaise gaaun, kaise gaaun guniyan ke beech, guniyan ke beech kaise gaaun etc. are used to unravel the *raga*. In the process, the long and short syllables of the words are appropriately used with off-beat or beat in a skilful manner. In the principles of *khyal gayaki*, singing as per the *Ang* of the *Sthayi* is very important. *Bol Prastaar* is a coherent example of the same.

2:5:6:2:4 *Taan* and the Agra *Gharana*

Among the singers of Agra, since the Dhrupad *Ang* wields greater influence, the *gamak* in the *taans* and the *jaw* are used more often. According to Babanrao Haldankar³³, it is not a *taan* from the *jaw* but it would seem to come from the *jaw* on account of the ample use of the *Gamak*. In the Agra *gharana*, not much importance would be given to the *taan* because it harms the purity of the *raga*. While providing this information, my guru, Madhusudan Joshi, narrated an incident. In the early 50s of Faiyaz Khan's life, as he started singing a *taan*, his grandfather and guru, Ghulam Abbas Khan, who was sitting across him, shook his stick to express displeasure. In the singing of artistes such as Khadim Hussain Khan, the *taan ang* is very rarely heard, though among the singers of the new generation of the past century, fast and very fast *taans* may be heard. His *taans* display the influence of the *taans* of Ata Hussain Khan of the Atrauli *gharana*. In addition, Latafat Hussain, Chidanand Nagarkar, Chinmay Lahiri and such other singers display three main kinds of influences on their *taans*: 1.

³³ Haldankar, S. S. 'Julu paahnare don tambore, pg. 111, Rajhans Prakashan

Gamak of *Dhrupad*, 2. The well-shaped, fast *taans* of Atrauli and 3. *Taans* from the Gwalior *gharana*.

In the *taans* of the Agra *gharana*, to maintain the purity of the *raga*, only the relevant *taans* are made use of. For example, instead of singing *raga* Bhairav as S R G M P D P M G R S, it is sung as 'SSS GGG MM, PPP, MMM, GG, MMM, RRRS. Repeating the notes in this manner, a semblance of the intermittence of the notes is created.

Ut. Vilayat Hussain Khan wove together short phrases of notes with the *bol* and *laya* to create some specific and attractive *taans*. These *taans* may not have been very aggressive, but they were very graceful and colourful. Faiyaz Khan's *taans* would create a semblance by using modulation (changes in the volume) by using more than a single *laya* and *bol* in a *taan*. He would sing a medium paced *taan* to make it seem faster. In Vamanrao Deshpande's book, 'Gharandaaz Gayaki', he says, "In the *taans* of the Agra *gharana*, one experiences a semblance of the dense war of the Kurukshetra"³⁴. The best example of this semblance is in Faiyaz Khan's *taans* in his 78 rpm records containing *raga* Darbari and Sughray, in which Ata Hussain Khan has also rendered powerful accompaniment.

2:5:6:2:5 Agra Gharana and Rhythm

For the analysis of the *Laya* aspect in Agra *gharana*, the researcher had series of interactions with various prominent Gurus and scholars of Indian Music. Recordings of great masters like Faiyaz Khan, Vilayat Hussain, Khadim Hussain Khan, Latafat Hussain Khan, Sharafat Hussain Khan, K G Ginde etc. has been used for this analysis.

On listening to the recordings of several artistes of the Agra *gharana*, there is greater clarity on certain matters:

1. In the beginning of the presentation of a *raga*, the '*aalaap-jod-jhala*' in the expansion from the *Vilambit* pace to the *Drut* pace is a *Dhrupad* kind of singing, which makes singing the *Vilambit khyal* at a slow pace irrelevant. Therefore, it has an utterly natural medium pace.

³⁴ Deshpande, V. H, *Gharandaj gayaki*, Mauj Prakashan.

2. Only in the place of the *aa-kaar*, in the *aalaap* of the *Dhrupad* kind, the *nom-tom* wording, such as '*Ri Ra Na Na, A Ta Na, Ja Na, Nu Ma, Ta Na Ri Na*' and such meaningless syllables create a meter that is more influential but also informs a good pace to the music.

3. Although the '*swar*' and '*laya*' are the foundational elements in music, to create the effect of the *rasa* words are used. When words are accompanied by rhythm, they give rise to a sentient ambience. The various concussions and designs of sound created by the words work together with the rhythm to make the resulting music more effective. This is found especially and only in the *Agra gharana*.

4. Although there is no use of any percussion instrument in this process, the various meters heard in the *nom-tom aalaap* with the intentionally taken '*yati viram*' and rhythmic '*mohra*' make the endings of sentences very stylish.

5. The *Madhya Laya* is the soul of the *Agra gharana*. Its *Vilambit Khyal* is also of a medium pace. Scientifically too, it is said that a person's heartbeat rate is his *Madhya Laya*. Listening to music of that pace keeps the listener at ease and comfortable. Therefore the *Madhya Laya* provides great pleasure to the audiences.

6. In the *Agra gharana*, almost all the *talas* including *Teentaal*, *Jhumra*, *Ektaal*, *Tilwada*, *Ada Chautaal*, and *Rupak* are used in singing. The *tala* is selected as per the *bandish*, which makes the *bandish* very stylish. There is always a scope for elaboration in these *bandishes*, but there is also plenty scope for creating *layakari*. Therefore, while learning or teaching a *bandish*, it is not just the structure of the notes but the designs of *laya* set to the words of the *bandish* are also paid due attention.

7. The introductory stanzas (*Mukhdas*) of the *bandishes* of *Agra gharana* are varied. They start from a *matra* of any *taal*. The words set in these sound very attractive in their play with the rhythm. Often, every line of the *chhota khyal* of a *bandish* starts from different *matras*. Several artistes of the *gharana* have expressed various emotions in their *bandishes* but the common thread in all of them is formed by the attractive first stanza and rhythmic wording.

8. The expansion of the *laya* along with the *bol* leads to the use of improvisation and play with the *bol* to take the *Mukhda* in the same *laya* to reach the *Sam*. This is very challenging, and constitutes a challenge for the *tabla* accompanist.

9. On a superficial level, it may seem mathematical, but while listening to the singing itself, it sounds very catchy and attractive. *Layakari* is started from a *matra* to reach the *Mukhda*. Whether it is *Dugun*, *Tigun*, *Chaugun* or *Aad laya*, the *layakari* is created without breaking the words.

10. On account of the master over *tala*, *bol* and *laya*, the artistes of the *Agra gharana* are expert exponents of rhythm and meter. Therefore, *tabla* accompanists also have to be just as proficient. Therefore, it is necessary to not just follow the rhythm, but to establish a dialogue with the singer. According to the improvisation by the singer, the creation of the *bol* of the *tabla* make for an impressive presentation of *Agra gharana*.

Due to the special relationship with *laya* and *taal* of the *Agra gharana*, *tabla* accompaniment has benefitted from several positive influences.

a. While accompanying an artiste of the *Agra gharana*, the *tabla* exponent has ample opportunity to exhibit his command of *laya*, capability and talent. Along with the singer, the *tabla* accompanist is also given importance.

b. As singers of the *Agra gharana* are masters of the *taal*, the *tabla* accompanist is also confident that he will not let go of his *laya* or miss a cycle. Therefore, while accompanying, he creates *bols* of the *tabla* without hesitation.

c. The style of the *Agra gharana* also has an indirect influence over solo *tabla* performance. While accompanying in the *Agra* style, aspects of playing the *tabla* such as *peshkaar*, *kayda*, *bol vistaar* – *nikaas*, *chhand nirmitti* (various designs of meter), *yati viram*, and *aamad* of the *Mukhda* are included. Therefore, if these aspects are properly studied, expandable creations of the *tabla* in the *Agra* style – just like *khayal* – can be musical. This is the opinion of the renowned *tabla* scholar Pravin Karkare³⁵.

³⁵ Karkare, Praveen, interviewed on 38th September, 2013

2:5:6:2:5:1 Layakari

The guru insists that the disciple master not just the *raga* and the notes but also the *taal*, during training. Whether a *tabla* player is a novice or highly experienced and renowned, the concert will not be enjoyable unless he practices well with the singer of the Agra *gharana*. The nuances of the *laya*, the feet of the *taal*, and every single beat is well-thought-out in this style of singing. As the *bandishes* are also in accordance with the *taal*, the *bandish* completes the image of not only the *raga* but also the *taal*. That is because on account of the influence of the Dhrupad style, the performances by artistes of the Agra *gharana* are oriented throughout around the *taal*. *Taal* as per the phrases of a *raga* and the *bandish* was given due thought in *Dhrupad* singing. The Dhrupads of *ragas* such as Pancham, Shree, Lakshmi Todi, the *taals* are found in the names of those *ragas*, as for example *Pancham*, *Shree*, or *Lakshmi*. In dhrupad too, all the singing is oriented around the *taal* and the meter, and the *raga* is accordingly expanded in the Agra *gharana*.³⁶

2:5:6:2:6 Winning streak

This is a very remarkable specialty of Agra musicians. Even musicians like Feroze Dastur and Bhimsen Joshi, though belonged to Kirana *gharana* open heartedly used to acknowledge this quality particularly of Faiyaz Khan and Latafat Hussain Khan³⁷. Since Agra *gharana* musicians are equipped with the knowledge of all kinds and techniques of singing, the artiste takes to the stage with the confidence that he has all the required equipment to perform exceedingly well. He takes the stage with pride for the tradition, fulsome learning, and the blessings of the best among gurus. He has all the confidence to win the hearts of the audience when he comes onto the stage.

2:5:6:2:7 Agra and Training

The tradition of the Agra Dhrupad and *Khayal* style is like a massive banyan tree. Over thousands of years, it established relationships with several other *gharanas* and was enriched as a result. But, on account of a dedicated loyalty toward Art and true and primary training, in the *bandishes* representative of *ragas* and by all the artistes of

³⁶ Kashalkar, Vikas, Souvenir of "Agra gharana Seminar", page no. 10, published by Pune vidyapeeth, Feb. 2013

³⁷ Interview of Anand Bhate and Sujana Rane, as on 9th September, 2013.

the *gharana* and other elements seem to be always linked by a common thread.

It's difficult to say that there's a special method to training in the style of the Agra *gharana* tradition. However, training is provided to improve the voice, ensure purity of raga, sounding the correct note, *laya*, *taal*, and so on in various forms.

My guru, Pt. Madhusudan Joshi ji would say of Ut. Faiyaz Khan that he two simple methods of teaching:

1. Khan *Saheb* would sing and require that the students only observed and listened to him.
2. The students would be instructed to sing after him.

After the students imitated his singing, there would be just one of two comments: "It went well" or "It wasn't up to the mark". Overall, these were forms of passive training. Although, to an extent, Ata Hussain Khan used to analyse the ragas and raginis. That is why Faiyaz Khan would secure training from Ata Hussain Khan for all his disciples.

According to Ut. Yunus Hussain Khan, training in the raga Bhairav would be provided first and foremost³⁸. Here, Haji Sujaan Khan's *saadraa*, 'Allah ho Allah' and devotional compositions such as '*Tu Ab Yaad Karke*' are taught. This is done so that the students develop an understanding of the the structure of the raga Bhairav and a meditative mood and concentration. In addition, it was probably also intended to help them understand the notes, the *shrutis*, the difference between them, and serious tempo of notes to help develop the voice. Training would also be provided in sweet ragas such as the Yaman. Over time, each artiste developed an own teaching methodology based on personal thinking and capability. Among the chief gurus of the Agra *gharana* in the modern period are included scholarly stalwarts such as Ut. Vilayat Hussain Khan, Ut. Ajmat Hussain Khan, Ut. Khadim Hussain Khan, and Pt. Ratanjankar. Their vast traditions are proof of their high capability.

³⁸ Khan, Yunus Hussain, as per recorded lecture demonstration at Khairagarh University, 1980.

Pt. Ratanjankar is considered a highly erudite and thinking guru of the Agra *gharana*. As an academician, he occupied a high position. In addition to Pt. Bhatkhande and Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi, he obtained intensive training over five years from Ut. Faiyaz Khan. According to my Guru Dinkar Kaikini³⁹, he never taught the grammar of a raga during training. He would take due note of a student's capacity for imitation and compare the raga with a popular tune, in an effort to increase the musical intelligence of the student. He would start the training as per the tradition of the Agra *gharana*, beginning with *nom-tom aalaap* in raga Bhairav. He would teach for 1 year and 6 months the *aalaaps* of ragas such as *Bhairav*, *Todi*, *Marwa*, and *Purvi* without naming the ragas. He never used the notation of *bandishes* to teach.

The ustads of the Agra tradition would insist that their students listen to the singing of specific artistes at the beginning of their training. They would even keep them from listening to certain artistes. Ratanjankar also trained his pupils in a similar manner. Although he did encourage them to accompany on the *Tanpura* with certain artistes, so as to help them overcome stage fright, and they also received musical refinement by other artistes.

According to Pt. Babanrao Haldankar and Sau. Lalitrao, Ut. Khadim Hussain Khan would also train his pupil using the observation method. After training them in familiar ragas for the first few years, he would also train them in lesser-known ragas. Overall, in order to develop the creative thought process, passive methods such as observation and imitation were employed.

Pt. Dinkar Kaikini provided me with intensive training over the first 6 months in the form of the raga Yaman and expansion of the *bada khayal*, *upaj*, *bol upaj*, and so on. After the teaching the basic form of the *bada khayal*, he trained me in how to enhance the imaginative aspect without spoiling the original composition and how to develop the raga using the phrases hidden in the *bandish*. In addition, he also taught me that an artiste invents not through his voice or an instrument but through using his mind. He would always say that it was the mind that sings and not the voice. He helped his

³⁹ Kaikini, Dinkar, as per personal interview on 10th Oct. 2009

students free their minds from the reference points that had oriented their music and gave them a good start on the path of self discovery.

In an interview given to Ashok Da. Ranade at University of Mumbai, Khadim Hussain demonstrated eighteen *Ang* (literally 18 limbs or aspects) of training traditionally given to the students taking training in Agra *gharana*. By giving such training a total disciplined vocalist is produced⁴⁰. It is said that these aspects were used during giving training to the disciples and even in performance by the great maestros of Agra *gharana* such as Faiyaz Khan, Vilayat Hussain Khan, Khadim Hussain Khan, Latafat Hussain Khan.⁴¹

2:5:6:2:8 *Shadaj Saadhan / Sadhana* (Diligent practice of the foundation note Sa)

The singers of the Agra *gharana* believe that to infuse concreteness in the singing, it is important to imbibe it in the voice. Uttering the *Shadaja* ('Sa' - the foundation note) after taking a deep breath is considered important to achieve such a voice, because it is a supporting note on which the entire *raga* composition is erected. Usually this exercise is rigorously performed before dawn. It is considered as integral part of training in this *gharana*.

2:5:6:2:9 Eighteen *ang* for training

The ocean like rich Agra *gharana* musicians possess a very significant power in dignity in their performance. Though the very foundation of this *gharana* has been the Dhrupad style, however in last more than two centuries many other *gharanas* got merged into this *gharana* and made it even richer. It's many aesthetical aspects including purity of Raga, definitiveness in structure *Raga*, *bandishes* and their presentation, command of voice production and *Laya*, over all discipline etc., could be possible through eighteen *ang* or aspects that are prevalent in this *gharana*. The total aesthetics and foundation of training of Agra *gharana* music is based on these *angas*. All great musicians practiced them as part of their training and exercise, and also used

⁴⁰ Haldankar, Shrikrishna, as per interview on 10th Oct., 2010.

⁴¹ Bahulikar, Shubhangi, in an article in '*Punya Swar*' on page 5, Lalit kala Kendra, Pune vidyapeeth.

them skilfully in performances according to the emotions of the *Raga*. They are⁴²:

1) *Laag Daant*

In a series of varied traditional understandings, *Laag Daant* has been understood and derived differently. But as per Khadim Hussain Khan's derivation when the *Swar* is designed in the upper octave with extremely afflicted emotions, then it is designated as having applied the *Laag Daant*. Between the usage and the application of the *Swar* arrangements, as and when necessary there is a 'silence' which is introduced in between. Because of which the resultant effect is very magnanimous and evidently the *Swar* touches the heart deeply. After having listened to such emotionally afflicted singing or recitation, it could be concluded could be said to be *Laag Daant*.

2) *Sarpaa*

The hands and feet of the *Raga*, that is the entirety of the *Raga* - the observation and the vision of the *Raga* from head to toe. Whilst teaching the various branches or the divisions, phrases, rest points-i.e. places of pauses etc. are considered whilst understanding and explaining the *Raga*. These aspects are taken into consideration and applied whenever stage performance is to be done.

3) *Khench*

In *Khench*, one starts to ascend the *Swaras* (the notes) from lower to the higher ones (minimum three to four notes higher), the main or the lowest note is stretched. During the performance of these lower to higher notes movements, the lingering effect of sound is tried to be kept constant. *Khench*, most of the times is begun from the notes of the lower octave (*mandra notes*) e. g. Ḍ - - - M, Ṇ - - - P etc. Here the first note is stretch to the higher one. This process is called '*Soonn*' . Some expert also call it as '*soot*' or '*Ghaseet*'. It is extremely essential to have meditatively practiced with concentrated efforts to sing this efficiently and with heartfelt efforts.

⁴² Bahulikar, Shubhangini, article on aesthetics of Agra gharana, Punyaswar, Pune Vidyapeeth, 2013. pg. 4. Haldankar, S. S. and Khan, Khadim Hussain, interviews,

4) *Gaaj*

It is most essential to have depth, resonance, reverberating and majestic effects in the voice of an Agra *Gharana* singer. If the voice is of a normal quality, then the '*Kharja sadhana*' (rigorous practice in the lower octave) is a must. The voice, enriched by the throw from the throat with controlled effect is a must. This effect is more so visible in the '*Mandra*' and '*Madhya*' *saptak*, (lower and middle octave) wherein it is more evident.

5) *Soot*

This is also called as '*Ghaseet*'. Which means a stretched pull. Whilst singing the notes in the ascending order, i. e. from the lowest note to the higher one, the notes in between are either just touched or stretched and not really laid much stress upon.

6) *Hoonk*

The voice herein is modulated with '*Hu*' (as in hut) or '*Hum*' (as in humming) i. e. without nasal or nasal. The words are applied with emotions of utmost sadness, pathos very dramatically in the singing. It gives an impression of deep sadness. The usage is more so in *Thumris* or in their meaningful lyrics of the *Khayal*, and they are colourfully used to flower the composition.

7) *Maand*

In a low and soft note the voice is emulated whilst singing and very gradually the intensity and the volume are increased, and again the voice gradually modulates to the initial softness.

8) *Lahak*

It is a kind of fast intense velocity of group of phrases and notes. But the speed is lesser than '*Taan*' yet faster than '*Alap*'. There is no uniformity in the '*Laya*' or the speed. It is almost as though the notes are swung in varied speeds forming the an irregular oscillation. Very well used in light musical forms; and quite often too.

9) *Moorak*

Used extensively in *Thumris*. Unlike '*Murki*', the notes are used in a very romantic way. The words are sung with a very coquetry attitude; using words too.

10) Daga:

The meaning of the 'Dagar' is step. The 'Alap' used herein are 'Vakra' (crooked) and not uniform. e.g. G R M G P M D P, D M P G M R G S. As mentioned in the ascending order of the group of notes, the middle notes are omitted.

11) Meend

Whilst descending from the higher notes to the lower ones, after minimum two or three notes, when the next note is reached it is brought to a slower motion. In a way it is gliding of the notes from higher to lower. The notes in between are just touched and experienced. But they don't have independent existence. The usage of *Meend* is also meant for giving emphasis to certain notes and phrases of the *Raga*. Various kinds of *Meends* form the single most important component in *Raga* music and other forms of Indian music. *Meend* is one of the most difficult elements in Indian classical music. Its proper rendition not only depends on the accuracy of the starting and ending notes but also on the exacting knowledge of the grace notes of the ragas, the speed of these *Meends* and the accents on intermediate notes.

12) Taan Bandhaan

Means binding of a *Taan*. While reciting *Aalaps*, the phrases of the *Ragas* are sung with deep breathe. The usage of *Taan Bandhaan* is maximum in the Dhrupad expositions or in the singing the *Khayal* in Dhrupad style. e. g. Agra *gharana* singers. By doing this helps maintaining purity of *Ragas*- particularly the *Ragas* with serious moods.

13) Bidaar Ang

In North India, very thick jungles or dense forests are called '*Bidaar*'. In such dense forests the innumerable trees and creepers, the branches and the tendrils and various growths are entwined and intermingled with each other such that, they cannot be located to their correct growing roots and the basic tree or creeper to whom they belong. Similarly just like these entwines when *Alap* and improvisations by singers or instrument players experiments with the usage of slow and medium *Laya* using phrases, then this presentation is called as the integral part of '*Bidaar*'. Puttan Khan, a great singer of a branch of Atrauli *Gharana* (which has merged in the Agra *gharana*) had a tremendous mastery on the '*Bidaar ang*'. He was known for his command over

'*Bidaar ang*' and was highly regarded amongst his contemporaries.

14) *Bahalawa*

Just as a child who is crying, needs to be coaxed with loving words and in a loving tone, similarly the *Aalaps* are conjured in a playful manner. In this process, in comparison to *Aalaps* the motion of *Swaras* is slightly faster and sung with *Ghamak*, and they are also significantly violent with clashes. More so, it is like playfully delivering the process.

15) *Khatka*

Here the note is given a jerk without affecting the beauty of the *Raga*. This is somewhat similar to "*Moorki*". It is a cluster of three notes, in which the phrase revolves around a particular note, a semitone higher or semi tone lower in a fast but somewhat sharp and jerky movement.

16) *Fandaa*

There is a sudden stop. Suddenly anytime while rendering the '*Bol Banaav*' -the aesthetical construction of the wordings.

17) *Gamak*

"*Gamak*" is the curvaceous modulation between two or three notes.

18) *Dhunak*

The movement from one *Swar* to the another without taking support or even touching any other *Swar* in between, and being sung is called as *Dhunak*. In Dhrupad is used when singing the *Aalaps*. The *khench* or the elongation without any lingering effect is called as *Dhunak*. There is no reverb effect in the portrayal.

The researcher finds a continuous growth and positive change in the Agra *gharana* tradition in last more than five hundred years. The unbroken recorded history of Agra *gharana* can be traced out from Nayak Gopal of 13th century and its musical lineage is a matter of great pride. Through four stages in the history of more than 500 hundred years, Agra *gharana* evolved, grew and developed into a very unique style with a

difference. Agra gharana has witnessed changes in the history through its journey from *Prabandha* to today's *Khayal*. This history clearly shows that the musicians wholeheartedly passed on the wealth of musical heritage to the next generation.

With the changes in time and the taste of the audiences, musicians also began practicing and singing various genres of classical and semi classical styles. They preserved various genres and passed them on to the next generations.

Agra musicians openheartedly accepted the *Khayal* genre and blended the '*Bol Banav*' of *Nauhar Bani* into the *Khayal* of Gwalior and gifted the prodigiously multidimensional Agra *gharana* of the *Khayal* to Indian Music.

Several other *gharanas* such as Sikandara, Rangeela, Khurja, Mathura, Atrauli and so on merged into the Agra *gharana* and it became richer over the decades. Their musicians earned acclaim in the various princely states and courts of the country and mesmerized the royalty and the masses of music lovers of all these regions.

Although the musicians of Agra *gharana* put a premium on informal techniques and individualistic approach in teaching, they did develop certain formal methodologies. A characteristic unique to this *gharana* is the training imparted in the 18 *Ang* for complete presentation of *Dhrupad* and *Khayal*. Inspired by *Dhrupad*-the purest form of *Raga* music, Agra musicians made it the base and created their own singing style. They cared for the principles of classical music by making abundant use of *Shrutis* and utmost purity of *Raga*, with great commitment and without any compromising. In place of *Merukhand*, they preserved the *Raagaang* of North Indian Music by placing a premium on *Ragaalaap*. They put to good use the *Rupak Aalaap* through their *bandishes*, also using *bol banav*, *bol baant*, *layakari* according to the sentiment of the lyrics of the *bandishes*, and employed all the 18 *Angs* to take utmost care in maintaining utmost purity of *Raga*.