

Most beautiful place of TAAL: "SAM"

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Abstract

In the field of music "SAM" is very important thing and a well-known key word to be used by every musician. From the beginning every student of music learn about this key word "SAM".

As soon as we grown up, our vision become vast and we try to go in the depth of the subject. In this article it has been tried to set a new definition of "SAM", which can satisfy all the feelings for this key word because no musician can live without "SAM" in the world of music.

Keywords: TAAL, SAM, Tabla

Introduction

In early age or beginning stage of learning "Tabla" we all have read and write that the first matra of any "Taal" is called "SAM" but it was my curiosity that why all musicians or music lover enjoyed much after reaching to the place of "SAM"? What is the importance of "SAM" in the world of music? Why not the other places of "Taal" other than "SAM" are not attracting so much the general audience, music lovers etc.? What is the opinion & views of a Tabla Artist in this regard? What vision should be developed with a student of higher education / research scholar in this regard?

To find out my above queries, I once again go through the definition and details mentioned in some books written on Tabla subject and also contacted some Tabla maestros.

"TAL PARICHAY, Pt.-3" is a famous Tabla book of U.P. state as well as in other state too, written by Acharya Shri Girish Chandra Srivastava of Allahabad. It has been defined in this book that, 'the first matra of the Taal, from where the composition of different "Geet" or "Gat" are being started and finish too, is called "SAM". It is also mentioned that generally the "BHARI KE BOLE" (the bole used with open volume of the BayanaTabla) like " Dha", "DHIN", "DHEE" are being used at " SAM" but exceptionally, in some of the Taals "BAND BOLE" (the bole used with dead volume of the BayanaTabla) like "Tee", "Ka" etc. have been used by our great maestros of past era' 1.

Pandit Vijay Shankar Mishra has also described about "SAM" in his book "TABLA PURAN". 'It is mentioned there that most important place of any Taal, where all the vocalist, instrumentalist or dancer met with each other after finishing their composition and be ready to present another composition, is called "SAM". First matra of any Taal is known to be "SAM" and Tali is being used with some more emphasis except some Taal like RupakTaal' 2. According to Prof. Sudhir Maindker's Tabla book "TablaVadan-kala&Sastra", 'the beginning point of any Taal is "SAM"' 3.

In this connection once I could be able to talk with Mr. Anoop Banerjee, a noted Tabla Artist of Allahabad and a senior

disciple of the legendary Tabla Maestro late Prof. Laljee Srivastvaji of Banaras & Farrukhabad Gharana, who told me that Prof. Sahab had a different views in this regard, which seems to be his very practical approach of the Tabla subject. According to him, as per definition of "SAM", which should be taught to the beginners must be a shortest form and as such following definition is correct-

"The first matra of any TAAL, from where the TAAL is begning is called SAM". But in advance stage of study of Tabla subject or during Tabla performance, either it may solo performance or accompaniment with vocal, instrument or kathak dance, our vision regarding "SAM" must be vast and should be attached with the sentiment of "SAM" because without understanding the importance & sentiments of "SAM", sometime performer may fail to represent the same in a decent manner.

Before describing about "SUM" we should know about the originating points of "Taal". In our life, we find that the Pulse rate & heart beat of everyone are functioning in a fixed rhythm. If this rhythm is disturbed, then we rush to doctor for its treatment and to make them in their own rhythm. This means that system of a fixed rhythm in our body has been provided by God and this fixed rhythm is known as "Taal" in our music. This fixed rhythm of our body generates the sense of "Taal" in everyone, which are being developed by someone through the studies in music.

God has provided a number of inbuilt systems in our body for proper functioning. These inbuilt systems are movements, feelings, sentiments, memories, love, angry, hungry, sleeping etc. The movement in our body whenever connected with music, is called "Taal". As such "Taal" is an inbuilt system of human body. It was also described by him that the "TAAL" is also behaving like a human nature and the "SUM" is the most beautiful place of the "TAAL", where all the musicians, whether he or she may be vocalist, instrumentalist or dancer wanted to reach. In another words it can be say that the "SAM" being the most beautiful place of the Taal, is the targeted point of each musicians to reach there positively. Not

only to reach that point, if anybody fails to reach to the "SAM" in a right way during the performance, the performer is never being appreciated by the audience and the performer is called "BETALA" by the everyone. It means the performer is less perfect in Taal and the composition performed by him is not fit in that particular Taal or the performer may not be well versed with that particular composition.

As such it is very essential to reach to the point "SAM" properly along with a beautiful manner for every musicians to prove himself a good music performer otherwise no one accept him as a good musician. Hence, the "SAM" is the point where a musician is being judge that how perfect he or she is.

Now one another issue is also involved in this scenario that how beautifully the performer or the musicians are reaching to the "SAM". During some performance of vocal recital or instrument or dance, some time we saw that before finishing the "Tihae" of the composition rendered by the artist, the audience guesses the "SAM" and they claps loudly when the artist reaches to the "SAM" in a very beautiful way. All appreciate this beautification. The audience also understood without giving any signage that the "SAM" is coming and they started clapping and say "wah-wah". Sometimes some of the audience thrilling with joy and moved their head or hand in witness to catch the "SAM". As such it proves that "SAM" is so important and well known place of the Taal which is being recognized not only by the artists, performer even than by the audience too.

If we consider the "Taal" as a human being, then in some respects it also can be defined that the "SAM" is a most beautiful aspect of Music world in "Taal", who attracts all the musicians, dancer as well as the audience too, towards her beauty and after touching her feet; everyone feels happiness of the music world. It is also important to mention here that this stage of feelings is a spiritual stage comes through music without getting or touching anything in physical. This happiness can't be expressed in words just like if you eat some delicious food or fruit, but it is impossible for everyone to write about the test of delicious food or fruit after having the same too. This is the reason; the music is called spiritual and way to reach the God.

In some other words it may also be say that the most important place or aspect of a "Taal" where all the musicians surrender themselves with their full devotion or meet each other, can be considered as "SAM". It may also be considered as a home of the "Taal", because home is a place where everyone has to reach after finishing all the work to stay or take rest and if someone does not reach their home after finishing his work, he or she will be restless and will be recognized as homeless or "AWARA", an indisciplined person. It means that in a routine way everyone has to reach their home and on the same way when you are moving or playing something in "Taal", it is supposed to reach at "SAM", of the particular "TAAL" after finishing the composition in a decent way.

It is also presumed and found in our daily life that entry in home should be with happiness. This quality can be seen in "SAM" too. Just see, when any composition like Peskara, Kayda, Gat- Kayda, Rela, Laggi etc. are being played, it is traditionally finished with a "Tihae" after being played a

numbers of Palta, Bant etc. and must to finish at "SAM". This is also must to keep the volume of "DHA" to be used at "SAM" loud than the other "DHA" used in other portion of "Tihae", which shows that the particular composition has been finished and now this composition will rest at home, i.e. at "SAM".

This is very practical and can be experienced during the performances, whether it would be a Tabla Solo item or accompaniment with instruments or Kathak Dance that the last finishing Dha of any Tihae always being played loudly by the Tabla artist as well as by other performer too. The last Dha of tihae never being played with low sound. If the last Dha, which will conclude at "SAM" is being played with low sound than the other Dha of rest portion of tihae, then the beauty of that particular composition will be damaged and the sentiments of that composition will kill. So, the artist of every field uses to beautify the "SAM" with giving special attention or enfaces. Every musician tries to decorate the "SAM" with their own sentiments according to the composition because without "SAM" no musician can alive in the Music World.

In this context we also find that the Tabla accompanist use a small "tihae" or "mukra" while going to start the "Theka" portion in a vilambitkhyal or vilambit or maseetkhani gat, only to beautify, decorate and identified the "SAM" of particular "TAAL". The same thing happens before starting the "Theka" portion in a "Chotakhyaal" or rajakhani gat. Sometime a small Tukra along with a good tihae is also being used by Tabla Artist before starting the "Theka" portion in a Chotakhyaal or rajakhani gat. In a same manner during the time of Tabla accompaniment with instruments like Sitar, Violin, Flute etc., the Tabla Artist/ accompanist use a small "Tukra or Chand or some compositions of different laya along with tihae" while going to start "Theka" portion in a Vilambit as well as Madhya or Drutlayabandish being played, only to beautify, decorate and identified the "SAM" of particular "TAAL".

In the field of "KATHAK DANCE" we have also seen that before starting the "THAT" portion, usually the Tabla Artist first play little solo portion of Tabla according to his mood and finished at "SAM" with a beautiful manner and then the kathak dancer go ahead. It is a focal point of that dance item and if the Tabla artist failed to play nicely then the grace of the programme become reduce.

All these practices are being done only to beautify the most important place known as "SAM". So, by the above discussion we found that it is the target of each artist of vocal, instrumental or dance to decorate the "SAM" first with full devotion & whole heartily and then go ahead.

Here it is important to mention that all these practice are being done every field of music & dance only to beautify, decorate and identified the "SAM" with an own imaginations. If we go in little depth of this study, it is found that the "SAM" is himself works like a director and guides to all compositions to fix their length, weight, destinations and other characters. For example, when some Geet, Gat or any composition are being played, after reaching to the "SAM" it is being decided whether to proceed further in next "AVARTAN of TAAL" or not. If the length of the said composition is long, then after passing of "SAM" it directs to decide to remaining portion to go. Suppose you are playing a "Farmaysi Chakkardar"

composition of 5 Avartan in any Taal, then after reaching to "SAM" of first avartan of Taal, it directs that 4 Avartan is left to play more. It can also be pointed out that whenever the second portion of tihae of the second round of said composition of "Farmaysi Chakkardar" reaches to the "SAM", it shows that now the last round of the "Farmaysi Chakkardar" is to be played and after that the composition will be over. As such, we find that the "SAM" guides the player to decide how long you have to go and on the way where you have to check yourself again and in which bole you have to give weightage.

Apart from above discussion, the meaning of "SUM" means "Total". The same meaning may be seen with word "SAM" in the field of music too. As such the "SAM" can be defined with a new approach according to above discussion as per following:-

"Beginning point of a "TAAL" which is a most beautiful place or aspect, who attracts all the musicians, performer, and the audience too, towards her or the place where all the musicians surrender themselves with full devotion and after getting that place or reaching to that place or that aspect in a perfect and beautiful manner, the performer considered to be a good performer and from where any "Taal" starts its life and the meeting place of musician or home place where most of the compositions concluded as well as resting, is called "SAM", who directs or guides to the performer during the performance. It should be presented with full respect giving a clap and "BHARI KE BOLE" (the bole used with open volume of the Bayana Tabla) like "Dha", "DHIN", "DHEE" should be used at "SAM".

References-

1. Taal Parichay Part 3, Page No. 93, Girish Chandra Srivastava.
2. Tabla Puran, Page No. 65, Pt. Vijay Shankar Mishra.
3. Tabla Vadan Kala Avam Shastra, Page No. 17, Pt. Sudhir Mindkar.