

The Gayaki of Ustad Alladiya Khan

Dr. Gurinder H. Singh

Associate Professor

Janki Devi Memorial College, University of Delhi

guriragini@gmail.com

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Abstract: Revolutionaries with creative endowment have been known to break away from the confines of tradition and create styles, which further evolved into new *gharanas*. One such genius was the all-time great *Ustad Alladiya Khan* who engraved a distinct, indelible mark on the edifice of Hindustani classical music.

During the golden age of Hindustani classical music i.e. the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, Alladiya Khan towered above the musicians of high calibre of this era; for his miraculous achievements as a performing artiste and as a perfect master, Alladiya Khan has been reverently designated ‘*Sangeet Samrat*’, the most befitting title by which he shall always be remembered by posterity.

His style of singing remained a predominant style, which reined the music world in north India much after his death. The style came to be known as the Jaipur-Atrauli style, the mystique of which left both the audience and students bewildered.

Alladiya Khan formulated a style, which was an expression for both outstanding men and women. His fame as a *guru* made considerable impact in Maharashtra; Alladiya Khan achieved the distinction of becoming the creator of a new *gharana* because his style was significantly different from that of his contemporaries. The intricate play with rhythm was the hallmark of Alladiya Khan’s *gayaki*, a style that was somewhat more difficult to grasp, and required a person with an evolved musical intellect to comprehend its development and subtleties and much more when imbibing and mastering it.

To name the *gayaki* after the great *Ustad Alladiya Khan* is a tribute to his creative genius, as the subtle and aesthetically sustaining *gayaki* of the *Jaipur-Atrauli School* was founded by him.

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Alladiya Khan's *gayaki* was not only different from that of his contemporaneous singers but also from the music that existed before him. His *gayaki* had old, traditional principles but what set it apart was the unique acumen of retaining them in inventive ways.

The emergence of this distinctive *gayaki* was an outcome of a catastrophic episode of Allidiya Khan's voice impairment, a strain inflicted due to excessive performances; But with his strong resolve and high aspirations he spun this catastrophe into an opportunity. Thus arose a thought process which ultimately developed as an innovative and exclusive *gayaki*.

With his intense commitment to beauty in sound, Alladiya Khan evolved an intricate *gayaki* where all rudiments of the style were highly developed, balanced, comprehensive and unabridged.

The unusual mould that he formulated was reflective of the *gamak* and *acharak* of the *Been ang*.

“In evolving this new form, Alladiya Khan drew inspiration from Mubarak Ali, the son of Bade Mohammad Khan of Gwalior, a formidable *khayal* singer, whose *gayaki* was subtle and ingenious”¹ He belonged to the tradition of *Kawalbacchon ka gharana*, and was famous for his *kadak bijli ki taan*, suggestive of flashes of lightning.

Alladiya Khan, deeply impressed, modelled his *gayaki* imbibing his style, shaping and toning his voice through continuous and unflinching *riyaaz*. Since Mubarak Ali was employed in the Jaipur Court, and as Alladiya Khan's own ancestors belonged to Atrauli, in reverence, Alladiya named his *gayaki* as Jaipur-Atrauli.

Even though Alladiya Khan's *gayaki* was known as the Jaipur-Atrauli *gayaki*, there were other *gharanas* which were associated with Jaipur. Laxman Prasad Jaipurwale (Guni Gandharva) belonged to Jaipur and hence his *gharana* can also be known as the Jaipur *gharana*. Another branch was of Alladiya Khan's cousin Ehmud Khan who was the grandson of Jehangir Khan (*guru* of Mohan Palyekar).

Although named as the Jaipur-Atrauli style, interestingly it evolved and flourished in Kolhapur during the last seventy-five to a hundred years in Maharashtra.

Alladiya Khan hailed from Jaipur and Atrauli both in terms of his origin and *taalim* but his individual style was structured more during his stay in Kolhapur. Hence, it may be more appropriate to call it 'Alladiya Khan' *gayaki* ; But Alladiya Khan was modest enough to

¹ Deshpande V.H., 'Indian Musical Traditions'. Pg 50

credit an entirely new style to his ancestral land calling it the Jaipur-Atrauli *gharana* which was an indication of the tremendous devotion he had for his father and *guru*, Khwaja Ahmed and his uncle Jehangir Khan as well as his ancestral maternal home land Atrauli.

Alladiya Khan earlier had a fine quality of voice until the age of about forty and was acknowledged as an established and respected musician in the field. During this period, the prince of Amleta a great connoiseur of the art prevailed upon Alladiya Khan to perform for him successively around the clock over an extended period. This strain, it is reported, impaired his voice forever. He then moved to Jodhpur where treatment from a renowned *hakim* and fervent prayers helped to an extent; but his voice, which did improve eventually, had lost its original rich timbre and the luster was gone forever. Thus, realising that the days of pleasing audiences with a lyrical voice were over, and evolving a new content rich *style*, was the only option left on hand, he moved, thereafter from Jodhpur to Bundi where he accepted the invitation of the queen (who was the sister of Maharaj Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur) to serve as a court singer. He remained there for two years and then travelled to Ahmedabad, Baroda, Bombay and finally made a base in Kolhapur in 1895-96 after Chattrapati Sahu Maharaj (who was greatly impressed with Alladiya Khan's phenomenal *gayaki*) offered him the appointment of the court singer in his Darbar.

While formulating a new *gayaki* Alladiya Khan deliberated profoundly to understand the prevalent music scenario then. He made sure, when framing his new *gayaki*, that while it must remain grounded in old traditional doctrines, it should also merge well within his innovative approach. This thought process resulted in a unique form, thus setting it apart from the *gayaki* of contemporary *gharanas*.

It was conceptualized in a manner where the *swaras* were sung in a camber and spiral movement, and where the rhythmic swinging and swerving of the *swaras* mesmerized the listeners. This was a complex and subtle *gayaki* which was difficult to comprehend and even more difficult to sing. This was a *gayaki* which could be understood only by people having a deep, sensitive and aesthetic sense of listening to music and above all a very deep cognizance of this art.

It is evident that Alladiya Khan framed an individual style on the basis of his prevailing voice conditions; he assimilated what suited his voice and eliminated other inapt factors. It was probably the period of silence during the years of the loss of his voice which took him deeply into reflection and retrospection in music. There have been a number of instances when artistes have moved from the confines of tradition and emerged as individual institutions and Alladiya Khan did precisely that.

Structure- Form- Technique-The exclusivity of this *gayaki* rests both in the ecstatic unification of the various ragas as well as in the intense sense of design and structure. Further, the basic technique of this new style was also the enigmatic synthesis of the *swara* and the *laya*. The arrangement of each such *avartana* consisted of a pre-planned scheme of building up a zenith which moved slowly to a point just preceding the *mukhda*, thereby bringing the pattern to an unexpected and startling culmination. The form of each *avartana* was predicted in a manner that the avidity created by it was higher than that of the previous one, followed by an immediate pinnacle on the *sam*. This special quality pervaded each individual *taal-avartana*.

Each aspect of this form - *bandish, alaapchari, bolbant and phirat* was not only explored fully but also shaped and chiselled to adapt itself to the requirement of formula and balance. The complexity of the style was evident also in the pauses and repose interspersing the intricate *layakari*. But the most impressive part was its *taan phirat* of unusual length, which was made possible by cultivated breath control. This was crafted into exquisite patterns to follow one after the other every few seconds and finally terminating them with an unexpected camber before the *sam*.²

Alladiya Khan's technique had strong impressions of the dhrupad style. This was palpable in every *swara* and phrase he chose to sing, highlighting in every *avartana* the most suitable *swara*, and specific shruti creating an incredible artistic experience. The fixed *sthai*, authentic *antara* and clear picture of the *raag*, and embellishments like *meend, ghaseet, kampswara* and *gamak* were rendered with deep concern for aesthetics. His *gayaki* was also arithmetically calculative due to an arduous dhrupad talim. He was particular that his *alankaars* should be powerful, clear and beautiful and applied them with tremendous discretion.

Fundamentals of Jaipur-Atrauli Gayaki

The first and foremost is the principle of continuity,(achievable only through a sustained breath control) the pivotal point of the entire presentation, which was to remain consistent during all the applications of Aakaar, Alaapchari, Awaaz, Bandish, Gamak, Meend, Mukhada, Taal, laya, Sam, Phirat, Taankari, Bal, Wazan.

- **Continuity-**A relentless unending flow of a musical thought process is vital to this *gayaki*. This is achieved with the *alaaps* and *taans* commencing soon after the *sam* and carried through to the next without any break. This continuous flow in the *alaap* and *taan* is the focal point of the entire presentation.

² Deshpande V.H., 'Indian Musical Traditions'. Pg 52

This aspect is the hallmark of the *gayaki* and is rarely found in other styles. It requires highly developed breath control and demands strict adherence to this rule.

- **Bandish-** *Bandishes* were composed to be rendered only in one single breath the impact of which was truly majestic. Worth noting that the *bandishes* were composed firmly rooted in the norm of a form unbroken. In order to give substance to the design they were structured to be rendered only in a single breath and not in broken pieces as shortness of breath would severely take away from the aesthetics and style. The *Bandishes* were dedicated to Khwaja Ahmed Khan, under the pseudonym of ‘Ahmed Piya’.
- The *Sthai* was the soul of Alladiya Khan’s singing. It covered every aspect of the *raag* and style being presented. The *raag* delineation, the *vadi*, *samvadi*, *gruha*, *ansha*, *taar*, *alpatva*, *bahutva*, *nyasa*, *upanyasa*, the desirable patterns and *alankaars*, *meend*, *kan*, *khatka* and *gamak* were all condensed in the *sthai* itself.
- *Sthai-Antra* – It was a requisite to sing the *antra* soon after the *sthai* in continuity, and not after the *alaapchari* proceeded to *taar shadhaja*. Unlike other *gharanas*.
- *Sthai Bharana* – a term used for expansion of the theme of the *sthai* with different alternatives was a distinguishing feature of his *gayaki* in which the words and notes unravelled in a rhythmic tempo.

One of the explicit features of this *gayaki* was the precision with which the *bandish* (*sthai* with an *antara*) was rendered. It was evident that a considerable amount of thought must have gone into the presentation of each *bandish* while setting it to every single segment of the beat. Unless presented with this degree of accuracy the entire equation between *bandish* and *taal* would have been lost. It had to be a precise fit. Although arrival on the *sam* could happen with any variation, but, it would have taken away the precision of the performance. It was only when the *bandish* was presented correctly that the arrival on the *sam* would be exact and only such a presentation of the *bandish* would become befitting and acceptable.

The lyrics and grammar of the text were knitted into striking phrases and the technique of *bol uccharan* or enunciation needed to be perfected. Any *bol*, be it in *alaap* or *taan*, was gently wrapped in a clear, rounded movement. There was transparent clarity in *aakaar* with emphasis on accurate sound and vowel presentation. In his compositions he preferred the *nirguna bhava* and *braj bhasha* to Hindi and Urdu. He felt that *braj* was particularly suitable for poetic expression, which is why his *khayal* compositions have a resilient resemblance to traditional *dhrupads* and *dhamars*. Another reason for preference for *braj bhasha* could be his comfort level with the language since his maternal home was Atrauli in the *braj* expanse.

- **Wazan-** *Wazandar gayaki* and classicism-maintaining a serious, enduring and weighty presentation is another norm of this *gayaki*. The more delicate ornamentations like *murki*, *harkat*, adorning semi classical and lighter forms of music, were shunned.

The weightiness was made possible with the principle of continuity. There were other factors that also lent weight to the *gayaki* – for instance, the *aassa*, *bal* and the *meend* when integrated at the appropriate place maintained the weight- *wazan* of the style.

- **Gamak** –The most significant aspect, the essence of this complete *gayaki* inclines on the pillar of *gamak*.

The swinging *gamak* was the core and it reflected through his entire style. Alladiya Khan knew the traditional techniques and *kayadas* of the *Been ang* and understood the meaning and application of *gamak* the way it was practiced on the *Been*. It was pure *gamak* of the *tantang* with a resonating *meend*. The *swaras* sounded like they were originating from the previous *swara* thereby maintaining an uninterrupted connection between them forming continuity with no broken lines.

An extension of *gamak* was ‘*Acharak*’ which was a forte of the *Been ang*. *Gamak* and *Acharak* are the two characteristics of the *Been ang* which Alladiya Khan had built into his *gayaki*.

- **Aawaaz** - Emphasis was to achieve a voice which was free, open, firm and supple. The sound was to be neither through the throat nor the nose and was not to be forced. Techniques were practiced to make the voice powerful, voluminous and weighty and there was an explicit mellifluous method of voice production. Histrionics with the voice were discouraged while accent was laid on straight and smooth delineation.
- **Alaapchari – Layakari – Aakaar** - Alaapchari was bounded by *laya* which moved forward in gentle, ever rising eddies. The notes were not broken or severed and there remained a constant nexus between any two notes. From the beginning of the *avartana* to the entry into the *mukhda* to which the last note of the *alaap* was intriguingly linked, it remained one single sequence.

The vital aspect of *alaapchari* was that it was based on the *tant ang*. Alladiya Khan would start the *vilambit* in a clear *aakaar* with emphasis on the *tant ang* and *dhrupad ang*. This was a characteristic feature, where the continuity of the *aassa* from the preceding *swara* was coiled to the next with *gamak* and *meend* which was the main *kriya* of the *been vadaan*. His slow *alaap* would reflect the *dhrupad ang*; the *taans* would consist of *gamak* and *tappa ang khatkas*, thus revealing his expertise in intelligent application.

Alladiya Khan, in his time was the only musician who knitted *alaaps* with *taal*.

Though in *Been vadaan* and *dhrupad gayan*, there is no *theka* in the beginning. But he kept the *vistaar* in his *gayaki*, from the start, in a manner that maintained a constant union with the *taal*. This was indeed a revolutionary stride.

“The *aakaar yukt lagaav* is the most difficult technique of this *gharana*. The more surprising specialty, be it an *alaap*, *meend*, any variety of *gamak* or even the most difficult *taanpalta*, the technique and quality of *aakaar* does not change.”³

- **Taankari and Phirat** - Variety in *taans* is another hallmark of the Jaipur-Atrauli *gayaki*.

Alladiya Khan's *phirat* was intricate and difficult. In the quick spin of notes there was sometimes an unexpected halt that rested on the nuance of the *khatka* of the previous note.

Most stalwarts of that era equated Alladiya Khan's *taankari* to *aatishbazi* like floral and colourful fireworks. He would fling his *taan* like a firecracker only for it to come down in astonishing decorative patterns. He designed his *taans* in a manner which had a wonder element for the spectators, suddenly changing the course of the pattern in an implausible, intricately intertwined string of notes just before arriving on the *mukhda*!

In every *taan kriya* and *raag vistaar*, Alladiya Khan's clever planning of new *swara krutis* showed through. The *taans* would expand, get wider and enriched with *balpech*. His arrangement of what *taan* should be, of what length and of how many *avartanas*, of which *swaras*, how to arrive at the *mukhda* and with what variety of 'swing' etc. – all these would flow naturally and effortlessly from the power of his genius. It was because of his long and sustained breath control that one would never find any gaps between his *taans*. His *taan* patterns were remarkably well planned and his proficiency showed through them. The *taan* that he sang was clear, *aakaar yukt* with well-formed *gamaks* and with every *swara* in pointed pitch. The special *gamak* which he sang with startling ease and mastery in his skilfully trained voice, was not seen in any other musician.

The musicians of this *gharana* render their *taans* with a difference vis-à-vis other *gharans*. They do not render *taans* with single notes. Instead, there is a practice of forming groups of two's and three's and weaving patterns within these. More significantly, these patterns are woven together with the *laya* thereby maintaining an incessant connection between *swara* and *laya*. Interestingly, the *taan* commences giving an impression of being a straight *taan* which suddenly takes a tricky turn and then continuing to grow in a circumvolution making

³ Marulkar N.R *Sangeetatil Gharani*, Pg.117

coils and spirals, within the framework of *laya*, there by leaving the listener completely bewildered!

Mukhda and Sam- Arrival on *sam*, is, in any case a significant happening, be it in the tradition of Alladiya Khan or any other. But somehow the technique in Alladiya Khan's tradition was always more arresting. Alladiya Khan had specialized in composing the musical phrases in such a way that they would automatically merge into the beginning of the *mukhda* and reach the *sam*.

When the entire *alaapchari* is bound by rhythm, the prominence of the *sam* had to be particularly outstanding. An exceptional feature of this *gayaki* was the artistic compositions and an adroit presentation of the *mukhda*. To maintain this *sam*-technique, he laid down definite guidelines: The *mukhda* was to remain fixed and restrained to the exact number of *matras* without any adjustments, which should further be connected with an accurate swing of the notes, and then to the last note or phrase of the *raag badat*. It also must arrive comfortably on the *sam*. In the application of this technique, the *mukhda* was only an extension of the *alaap*, *bolalaap*, *boltan* or *taan*.

“Alladiya Khan's arrival on the *sam* has become a legend now” says Baburao Joshi. “Whenever Khan Sahib was about to arrive on the *sam*, the listeners in the front row would actually rise from their seats in excitement and then bow their heads. In those days this was the way of showing respect and admiration. I have heard so many artistes perform but the standing applause and adoration, which Khan Sahib received, especially on his exquisite *sams*, was astounding. It appears as though the audience was rising to welcome some esteemed entity. This episode has left such an impact that even after fifty years, it has remained fresh”⁴

- **Bol taan Layakari-** Every nuance of a *bol-taan*, like all other aspects of his *gayaki*, were also bound in *laya*. His *bol taans* were not only beautiful but also lent his *khayals* tremendous substance and weight of the kind of *dhrupad-dhamar gayaki*. In short, every *bol taan* sounded like a small, beautiful composition in itself.⁵
- **Bol bant Layakari-** In *Bol bant* the *bols* of the *sthai* were to be sung only once in the *avartan* in single or double time. To achieve this, the musician had to predetermine the fraction of the *matra* from where it would start and arrive with precision before the *mukhda* or with an *aamad* on the *sam*.

⁴ Joshi Baburao, 'Alladiya Khan', Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Akademi, Jodhpur, Pg.- 22.

⁵ Tembe Govindrao, 'Alladiya Khan Yanche Charitra' (edition-1984), Pg.16

The intricacies of the *taal* and divisions of every *matra* were fully understood and fine-tuned by Alladiya Khan. The characteristic feature of his style was the importance of the balance of every segment of a beat with that of the balance of every subtle happening with each note. He was averse to inappropriate pauses.

“It is believed that during Tansen’s era, the emphasis was on *raag vistaar* without the *taal*, followed by the *dhrupad* sung to the accompaniment of percussion. Khansaheb’s *raag vistaar* was not only spread evenly in terms of weightage on every *matra*, but on every minute part, even on the anaghat spots! This was a revolutionary step, further than Sadarang’s!”⁶

According to Tembe “The secret of tantalizing both the uninitiated and the enlightened audience with his music was the principle of *laya*”⁷ where the listeners experienced liveliness.

Dr. Marulkar says that Alladiya Khan’s *gharana* has an independent and a special *laya* technique;⁸ and he was the only musician at that time who chose to sing in difficult *taals* such as *adachautaal*, *jhaptaal* or *dheema teentaal* which were different from the Gwalior or Agra schools which favoured *ektaal*, *tilwada* and *jhoomra*.

- **Raags-** Alladiya Khan had a vast repertoire of compositions in numerous *raags* and *raaginis*. “Prior to Alladiya Khan, it is believed that Maharashtra listened to simpler *raags* like Yaman, Shankara, Bageshree,. The connoisseurs of music gave him credit for introducing various combinations of Nat, Bilawal, Kanada to the Maharashtra scene. It is no surprise that he was referred to as a wonder singer”⁹

“Alladiya Khan’s selection was of complex and difficult *raags* like Bihagada, Nand, Jaitashree, Nat-Bihag, Bhoop Nat, Basanti-Kedar, etc. which were sung for the first time in the Jaipur style”¹⁰

(Other rare raags which Alladiya Khan made popular were the Nat varieties like Sawani Nat, Nat Malhaar, Shuddh Nat, Nat kamod, Kedar Nat, Hem Nat; Kanada varieties like Kafi Kanada, Raisa Kanada, Nayaki Kanada, Basanti Kanada; Khambavati, Jaijivanti, Lajvanti, Bibhas, Hindol, Basant Bahar, Malashri, Hindol Bahar, Khokar, Lalita Gauri, Gunkari, Tilak Kamod, Jhinhoti, Sampoorana Malkauns, Paraj, Meera Ki Malhaar, kalyan,

⁶ Dharmavrat Swami, *Mala Umajlele Alladiya Khan*, Pg.68

⁷ Dharmavrat Swami, *Mala Umajlele Alladiya Khan*, Pg.68

⁸ Marulkar N.R. *Sangeetatil Gharani*, Pg.125-126

⁹ Ratanjankar S.N. *Swargiya Alladiya Khan, Sudha Rajhans, Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Akademi*, Pg.11

¹⁰ Deodhar B.R. *Mehroom Khansaheb Alladiya Khan, Sudha Rajhans, Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Akademi*, Pg.15

Jait Kalyan, Khem Kalyan, Todi varieties like Lachari Todi, Bhaduri-Todi, Khat).

“Khansaheb’s was a *gayaki* of *balpech* with difficult *raags*, difficult *taals* and difficult *taan phirats*-on the whole, it was a difficult *gayaki*!”¹¹

Conclusion:

Undeniably, Alladiya Khan’s *gayaki* stirs the musical intellect, giving a sublime experience of an eternal and unceasing musical flow to the listener. As mentioned earlier, this is attributed to the devout observance of the fundamental precept of sustained breath control along with the purity of *aakaar* and a free flowing voice thus illuminating the majestic grandeur, which the Jaipur-Atrauli *gayaki* is so well known for.

‘*Sur sangat raagvidya*’ was Alladiya Khan’s *mantra* and philosophy of music. He strongly propagated the ideology of *amaran riyaz* meaning *akhand sadhana* or practice unto eternity. He firmly alleged that a musician’s status was based on three significant aspects ‘*gavo, bajavo, rijhaavo*’ - sing to elevate the soul and that *Riyaz* was the most crucial aspect and the essence of musical pursuit.

*Sur sangat, raag vidhaya,
Sangeet Pramaan,
Jo Kanth kar dikhaye,
Vako jaaniyae, Gunni Gyani.*

*Anudrut, laghu, Guru Plut
Taal mool Dharma Rakheyae
So aanchar sudh vaani.*

The above composition of Alladiya Khan has the essence of his approach, doctrine and the definition of what goes into the making of a erudite musician. He felt that a true musician was he who mastered the *shadja*, the *vadi-samvadi*, had an in-depth understanding of the *raag*, fractions of the *taal* and flawless enunciation of the poetic content. Alladiya Khan was a combination of all these. He was acclaimed as the ‘Gayan Maharshi’ not only on the basis of his intellect but more importantly, because of his sustained *swara sadhana*. Alladiya Khan’s pride was in having mastered the important tenets of the *meend*, *gamak* and *acharak* through his voice *sadhana*. Though he was indicted for having created anarchy in the world of Hindustani classical music but looking at the bigger picture, it cannot be denied that his

¹¹ Tembe Govindrao, ‘*Gayanmaharshi Alladiya Khan Yanche Charitra*’, Pg.18.

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uncontained creative genius gave to the world a *gayaki* which had numerous spectacular dimensions. It was only because of this that he won applause and respect even from the worst of his critics.

Alladiya Khan achieved the distinction of becoming the creator of a new *gharana* because his style was significantly different from that of his contemporaries. The difference in Alladiya Khan's style as compared to the two other prominent styles like the Gwalior and Agra schools which existed side by side was that this particular style was subtle and curved vis a vis Gwalior and Agra which were simpler and uncomplicated, though the Agra style was more complicated in comparison with the Gwalior style. The intricate play with rhythm was the hallmark of Alladiya Khan's *gayaki*, a style that was somewhat more difficult to grasp, and required a person with an evolved musical intellect to comprehend its development and subtleties and much more when imbibing and mastering it.

The style came to be known as the Jaipur-Atrauli style, the mystique of which left both the audience and students bewildered.

The probable reason why Alladiya Khan's music had strong rhythmic foundations was apparent because he came from a family of established *dhrupad* singers. His father Khwaja Ahmad Khan was a well-known exponent of *dhrupad gayaki* and served in the court of Uniyara, a small state near Jaipur. The family had migrated from Atrauli near Aligarh decades before Alladiya Khan was born. The amalgamation of the four *banis* in *dhrupad* had already begun due to intermarriages and tutelage and Alladiya Khan in all probability grew up absorbing them all in a restricted family environment.

It is evident that the formulation and presentation of this unique form had its deep roots in its intricate traditional authenticity. There are reminiscences about Alladiya Khan's ancestor Mantol Khan's unrivalled ability to make his audience cry and even send them into a trance with the magic of his voice. There are reported instances of Khwaja Ahmad Khan singing a *dhrupad* in *Shuddh Sarang* continuously for three hours. These aspects would be worth considering as these may, have been inherited by Alladiya Khan in *Virasat*.

There are references about Alladiya Khan's music *taalim*, which was strongly based on the learning of *bandishes*. It was a requisite for an accomplished singer to be able to sing many *bandishes* in the same *raag*. For example, Jahangir Khansaheb's anthology of over 25,000 *bandishes* in *dhrupad*, *dhamar*, *khayal* and his unstinted generosity in imparting them to Alladiya Khan is well known. This could probably be a strong factor, which contributed towards Alladiya Khan's mastery in composing unusual *bandishes* of the kind much talked

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about amongst contemporary *ustads* from different *gharanas* as well as amongst the connoisseurs in music circles.

There are instances of trading *bandishes* as dowry in marriages instead of material wealth. Alladiya Khan was known to have mastered over 15,000 *bandishes* by heart. What is important to note is the quality and the essence of training he received, which also gives an insight to the relativity of what his ancestors must have possessed and also what is now left with the present generation of singers of this tradition.

In crafting his individuality as a musician, the influence of powerful musicians and their presence in his formative years could have also contributed a great deal towards his own development and establishment as a musician of such a high standing. Alladiya Khan has clearly spoken of Hassu and Haddu Khan, Tanras Khan and Mubarak Ali Khan as great sages of music, and the influence of Mubarak Ali Khan's music while structuring his own style. The swing and playfulness of the rhythm and complexity of pattern in the *alaaps* and *taans*, the fusion of *swara* and *laya* and the tonal complexity, which became a distinguishing feature of the Jaipur *gharana*, could have originated from Mubarak Ali Khan. That Alladiya Khan could not receive instruction from Mubarak Ali Khan due to family and *gharana* constraints was a matter of life long regret for him.¹²

Nevertheless when structuring a new style, Alladiya Khan would have in all probability, maintained the strong hold on his tutelage under his paternal uncle Jahangir Khan but seemingly there was nothing really to stop him from considering various attractive elements of Mubarak Ali Khan's *gayaki* which Alladiya Khan may have wanted to blend into his new style.

Alladiya Khan's skill to construct unusual *bandishes* eliminating basic phrases or notes of a *raag* while maintaining its flavour was not just a superior technique but also an example of unparalleled musical acumen and excellence. The emphasis during teaching was laid on capturing the soul of the *raag* through different *bandishes* and adherence to the criterion laid out in the *bandish* during *raag* delineation.¹³ In the courtly culture of the late nineteenth century much significance was given to the idea of complexity, for what was sung or played must be seen as being particularly difficult for others to achieve. The basic requisite for an aspiring singer was technical sophistication of a high order.

¹² Khan Azizuddin 'My Life', Pg. 40

¹³ Though a factor which raised controversies among the music *pundits* Refer (details in Ch. II (Ustad Alladiya Khan – A Portrayal) and Ch. VI (Gayaki) H. Singh, Dr. Gurinder 'The Tradition and Contribution of Alladiya Khan to Hindustani Classical Music' 2002,

Interestingly, the magnificent style that Alladiya Khan evolved had no resemblance to any of the existing styles. The magnetic appeal and the novelty of his style attracted and intrigued students, performers and connoisseurs of music. It certainly must have been no easy task for Alladiya Khan to propagate and establish a new independent style and also have it accepted in those times. It was indeed the genius of Alladiya Khan that he achieved this with much success for he retained the soul of the music while adhering to the principles hallowed by tradition.

Little wonder, therefore, that the *pundits* have rightly conferred upon him the title of ‘Gauri Shankar’ of Hindustani classical music.

“The reason he was so called was because he was the first musician who introduced the *phirat* of the *tappa ang taans* before concluding the *khayal* and contributed positively to the *khayal gayaki* of that period and took it towards completion and fulfilment of a thought process.”¹⁴

As a performer Alladiya Khan won phenomenal acclaim. His success as a *guru* is also undeniable as his style of singing remained a predominant style, which reigned the music world in north India much after his time.

Needless to say, that learning to comprehend Alladiya Khan’s Jaipur-Atrauli *gayaki* has been an absorbing experience, not only in terms of wanting to recognize its minuscule details but also in terms of developing the entire perception, ideology and philosophy of one’s own music. This can make one realize how important it is to be strongly rooted in tradition, and to have a consistent *taalin* spanning over decades. How important it is for one’s talents to be honed, chiseled, carved and nurtured through stringent and uncompromising discipline, how important it is to have a daily demanding and exacting *riyaz* regime; and how painstakingly and meticulously every detail needs to be recreated to perfection. It is only when rooted in tradition, does one sustain and evolve, setting new ingenious paradigms.

I had started out mainly with an objective to develop a holistic understanding of the subject so as to absorb the grandeur of the style. But in turn it unfurled much more – It helped realize the importance of having an attitude and credence for one’s own capability and believing in it.

It has indeed strengthened belief in devotion, perseverance and commitment to the art and abetted in understanding the philosophy and energy of ‘*amaran riyaz*’ the pathway to Naadbrahma!

¹⁴ Dharmavrat Swami , ‘MaLa Umajlele Alladiya Khan’, Pg. - 5

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