

## **Historical study of musical construction of Khayal and its association with establishment of Gwalior Gharana**

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### **Abstract**

*Khayal is an important musical form of Hindustani Classical Music. Khayal as a word means imagination. It comprises of a short poetry of two lines and artist has freedom to improvise on it within the frame of Raag and Taal. There are various lineages following specific styles of singing for Khayal known as Gharana. Gwalior Gharana is the earliest in which Khayal was raised as a complete crystallized musical form. This research presents key points of history regarding musical construction of Khayal. The paper also includes a study about how Khayal was popularized as a structured musical form and contribution of Gwalior Gharana artists into it.*

**Key words:** Khayal, Sadarang- Adarang, Gwalior Gharana, Ashtang Pradhan Gayaki

### **Introduction:**

From ancient times, the political upheavals directly or indirectly have affected the prevailing cultures in India. In such diverse cultures, various arts have been a major part of society. Music basically practiced for the purpose of performance, has undergone tremendous changes in its presentation. There are many sources and evidences to understand structure of music from Vedic to medieval period. In medieval to modern period, Khayal is an important musical form of Hindustani Classical Music. Development of Khayal is a vast subject. Hence this is an attempt to put forth the salient points behind musical construction of Khayal and its association with Gwalior Gharana.

There are different opinions about the invention of the Khayal. Some musicologists consider that to be the credit of Hazrat Amir Khusro, while few of Sultan like Hussain Sharqi who was the king of state Jaunpur says, “15 वी शताब्दी के पूर्व दिल्ली में ख़ाल गायकी प्रचलित थी. इन ख़ालों की भाषा हिंदी ही होती थी परंतु बीच-बीच में फारसी के शेर भी मिला दिए जाते थे. यह ईरानी संगीत

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अमीर खुसरो की देन थी जिसे मुस्लिम शासकों ने राज्याश्रय भी प्रदान किया था<sup>1</sup>. Sultan Hussain Sharqi was not only a musician but also a knowledgeable personality in music. "Hussain Sharqi" introduced regional language in Rasaka Prabandha, which was popularly known as cutikila or cutkula. In course of time, cutikila lost its original name and came to be known as Khayal<sup>2</sup>

During the reign of, Mohammad Shah II (1719CE - 1748 CE) of Delhi Sultanate, Sadarang (1702 CE – 1748 CE) was a court musician. His real name was Nyamat Khan. It is said that Sadarang was a 10<sup>th</sup> descendent from the lineage of Tansen's daughter Saraswati Devi. His father Lal Khan (Nirmol Khan as per some opinions) was an eminent Beenkar. Sadarang was a disciple of Mahakavi Dev, whose real name was Dev data Kavishwar. Sadarang was a 'Dhrupadiya' as well as a 'Beenkar'. Adarang, whose real name was Firoz Khan was his Nephew according to some scholars. Mohammad Shah was also called as Rangile, as he was extremely fond of various forms of music like Panghat, Hori, Qawwali, Qaul, Thumri etc. During this time political power and standard of Mughal Darbar deteriorated. Sadarang also left Rangile's court and settled in Lucknow. That was the time when Thumri was famous in Lucknow while Dhrupad Gayaki was obscure. He thought of changing his style of singing. He changed the poetry to suit the requirement of musical entertainment resulting Shringar Ras to become prominent subject of the poetry. At that time, Khayal didn't have the significance as compared to Dhrupad but still he composed Khayal in various Raag and those became very popular. He then composed hundreds of Khayals in Dhrupad Ang. Both Vilambit and Drut Khayals were composed of which the proportion of Vilambit Khayals were more."<sup>3</sup>

The exact structure of Khayal Gayaki which was famous during Sadarang era is difficult to know but the style passed to the next generations and his disciples. "आज हमारे पास यह जानने का कोई साधन नहीं है कि सदारंग के युग में ख्याल गाने की क्या विधि थी।"<sup>4</sup>. It is said that these Khayal were presented by female artists also called as Kalavantin. Another group of musicians who adopted this Khayal style was Qawwal. Taaj Khan who was Qawwali singer started using these verses of Khayal in Qawwali form. Ghulam Rasool was a Dhrupad singer as well as follower of Sadarang's Khayal Gayaki. He also composed Khayal and used to sing it. His Son Ghulam Nabi also known as Shori Miya had a good Taleem of Khayal from him. He is popularly known for Tappa Gayaki and he is credited to compose huge numbers of Tappa. Ghulam Nabi had younger sister whose sons were Shakkar Khan and Makkhan Khan. They were trained in Khayal singing from this tradition. It is said that their names were given according to their tonal quality. Shakkar means sugar. Makkhan means traditional tender butter. Shakkar Khan had very sweet voice whereas Makkhan Khan had lucid tender tone. It

<sup>1</sup>Bangare, *Gwalior Ki SangeetParampara*, 47-48.

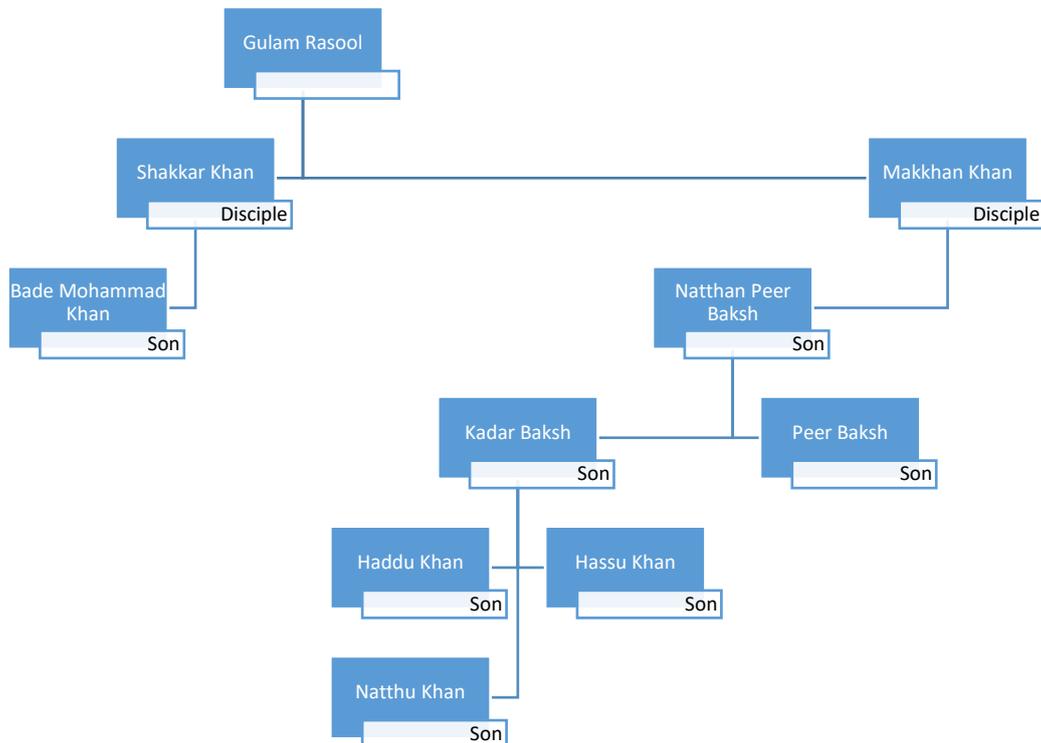
<sup>2</sup>Chandorkar, *Compositional Forms of Hindustani Music A Journey*, 146.

<sup>3</sup>Pandit, *India's Heritage of Gharana Music Pandits of Gwalior*, 26.

<sup>4</sup>Katyal, *Nemat Khan 'Sadarang' - Feroz Khan 'Adarang' Evem Unke Samkaleen Sangeetayon Ka Utter Bhartiya Shastriya Sangeet Mein Yogdan*, 190.

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is said that Shakkar Khan and Makkhan Khan both were also trained in Qawwali and they were popularly known as Qawwal Bachhe. Their singing style of Khayal had influence of Qawwali therefore they earned the title for their Gayaki as 'Qawwal Bachho Ka Gharana'. Shakkar Khan had a Son named Bade Mohammad Khan. Makkhan Khan had a son named Natthan Peer Baksh. Eventually Natthan Peer Baksh got settled in Gwalior. He had a good Taleem of Khayal and passed it to his next generations. “मखन खाँ के पुत्र नथन पीर बख्श भी ख्याल गायकी के अप्रतिम गायक थे. इनके अस्थायी ख्याल में ध्रुपद की गंभीरता और गहराई थी और इनके लयदायी में भी होरी और ध्रुपद का स्पष्ट प्रभाव था”<sup>5</sup>. His son Kadar Baksh was a court musician of Maharaja Daulatrao Scindia (1794-1827). By this time Bade Mohammad Khan was popular in Lucknow and Maharaja invited him to Gwalior as a court musician. Kadar Baksh had three sons Hassu Khan, Haddu Khan and Natthu Khan. Kadar Baksh was poisoned due to some rivalry and lived a short life. Thus Natthan Peer Baksh had a responsibility of his three sons Haddu Khan, Hassu Khan and Natthu Khan. Natthan Peer Baksh gave all the training of Khayal to his grandsons. Bade Mohammad Khan, on the other hand, was being popular for his unique singing style of Khayal.



<sup>5</sup> Bangare, *Gwalior Ki Sangeet Parampara*, 210.

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The family tree shown here is made according to the references given by Dr. ArunBangare.<sup>6</sup>

**Inclusion of Taan into Khayal Gayaki:**

Bade Mohammad Khan gave additional aspect to the Khayal that is, an implementation of Taan Patterns of Qawwali into the Khayal. He was famous for his Tanayti, that is, Taanbaji. He used to sing a difficult, rigorous and hence special Taans like Kadak Bijli Taan. Natthan Peer Baksh suggested Maharaja to give an opportunity to Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan for learning this Tanayti specialty –the ‘Tarkib’. But due to strong competitiveness, both brothers eventually learnt Taan from Bade Mohammad Khan, without his knowledge. Since then Taan acquired elite position in Gwalior Gharana’s Gayaki. “प्रसिद्ध उस्ताद बड़े मुहम्मद खाँ कव्वाल-बच्चे ही थे, जिनकी नकल हस्सूखाँ और हद्दूखाँ ने की, अतः ग्वालियर की ख्याल गायकी कव्वालों के बच्चों से प्रभावित है.”<sup>7</sup> This incidence is important to reveal that musical presentation of Khayal has an impact of Taan patterns from Qawwali.

**Formation of Gharana:**

The amalgamation of Haddu-Hassu Khan’s Gayaki with Bade Mohammad Khan’s Gayaki gave a new facet to the Khayal rendering. The Gayaki hence discovered and developed was exhaustive and was in a completely developed form. Both Hassu Khan and Haddu Khan were extra ordinary singers and said to be first promoter of Gwalior Gayaki. This Gayaki was a result of long tradition, discipline, and contribution of various artists. The Khayal Gayaki thus formed was crystalized in such a way that it was all-inclusive. This speciality is Ashtang Pradhan Gayaki of Gwalior Gharana. According to Pt. Sharad Sathe, “Ashtang Gayaki means ‘Paripoorna Gayaki’ meaning, the Gayaki which is fully developed. The brothers had already learnt their own style very well from Ustad Natthan Pir Bux. After regular listening and rigorous practice done at home, they judiciously mixed the Taans of Bade Mohammad Khan with their own Gayaki under the guidance of Ustad Natthan Pir Bux and secretly evolved a unique artistic style, which was later called Ashtang Gayaki.”<sup>8</sup>

Ashtang Gayaki is a soul of Gwalior Gharana singing style. In recent centuries the Gwaliori Dhrupad tradition and the eight faceted Khyal or Ashtang Gayaki have been further crystallized by great masters like Gulam Rasool, Natthan Peer Baksh, his son Kadar Baksh and his grandsons Haddu Khan, Hassu Khan and Natthu Khan.<sup>9</sup> Today, Gwalior Gharana Gayaki may have changed its outer shell over the long period and number of traditions but Ashtang remains to be the primal feature of Gwalior Gharana.

<sup>6</sup>Bangare, *Gwalior Ki Sangeet Parampara*, 209-211

<sup>7</sup>Brihaspati, *Muselman, Ghazal, Qawwali aur Khayal*, 60

<sup>8</sup>Pandit, *India's Heritage of Gharana Music Pandits of Gwalior 2018*, 29

<sup>9</sup>Chakravarty, *Gwalior Fort: Art, Culture and history*, 86

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Considering history of Khayal singing, it was the first peak point at which Khayal Gayaki was in completely developed state and popularly rendered by Gwalior Gharana artists like Haddu – Hassu Khan. This Gayaki was established and universally accepted that time. Haddu – Hassu Khan were so popular musicians of Gwalior Darbar that many artists throughout India came to Gwalior and took Taleem of their Gayaki. Their earlier two generations were also into the developing phase of Khayal Gayaki and this duo was a matchless Jewel of the time. All these developments took place under the patronage Schindia kings of Gwalior State. Hence, these singers and their style of singing were identified by the name of their place that is Gwalior Gharana. It was a vision of Natthan Peer Baksh to train his grandsons and he took efforts to teach them his traditional Khayal Gayaki along with the new aspect of Bade Mohammad Khan's Tanayti. Hence he is called as the founder of Gwalior Gharana. Ustad Natthan Pir Bux is rightfully called the innovator of the Gwalior Khayal style. It was under his able guidance and direction that Ustad Hassu, Ustad Haddu and Ustad Natthu Khan got training and insight to create a new style.”<sup>10</sup>

**Observation/Analysis:**

1. It is important to understand that Khayal Gayaki was in existence before Gharana system got established. When the Khayal and its style of singing is considered, the subject goes way back to the history. There is very less information available about exact musical improvisation and appearance of that style.
2. Khayal composed by Sadarang Adarang are famous even today but it is difficult to understand its Gayaki, improvisation techniques and presentation style which was in practice that time. Eventually it has undergone changes which made 'Khayal'- a complete crystallized form. For the first time, the crystallized form 'Khayal' and its Gayaki emerged in Gwalior Gharana. As said by Pt. Sharad Sathe, “Aesthetic presentation of Khayal composed by Sadarang and Adarang has been the specialty of Gwalior Gharana.”
3. Ashtang Pradhan Gayaki as a fundamental property played important role in this process. This property is like a medium for creativity of an artist. Ashtang and their implementation gave artists freedom of expression in Khayal omitting the duplication in the Gayaki. It is a method that musicians of Gwalior Gharana follow in current times as well.
4. 'Gharana' word was in use before establishment of Gwalior Gharana, as Gayaki of Shakkar Khan – Makkhan Khan was recognised by the phrase 'Qawwal Bachho Ka Gharana'. This can be an inspiration to recognise Khayal Gayaki of Gwalior artists as Gwalior 'Gharana'.

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<sup>10</sup>Pandit, *India's Heritage of Gharana Music Pandits of Gwalior 2018*, 30

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1. There are several sources available about the history of lyrical construction of Khayal but this was an attempt to study the history regarding musical construction of Khayal which gives a new aspect to this work.
2. With the continuous thought process, plenty of ideas are found to further this study. All possible angles and its future scope are noted. Among which 'Impact of Dhrupad-Dhamar, Thumri, Tappa on the musical construction of Khayal' seemed to be very important.
3. This study gave a direction towards core Gayaki of Gwalior Gharana, Ashtang Pradhan Gayaki. As an inference, various opinions regarding Ashtang Pradhan Gayaki can be studied further. It is a primitive feature of Gwalior Gharana.

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**Glossary:**

1. Gharana: A group of musicians that follow specific way of singing 'Khayal' in Hindustani Classical Music. Gharana deals with tradition, discipline and style. The tradition can be within one family or a Mentor-Discipleship.
2. Gayaki: It is a particular style of singing which is followed by Gharana's musicians.
3. Dhrupadiya: A Dhrupad singer.
4. Beenkar: An artist who plays 'Been' instrument.

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5. Qawwal Bachhe: Representing a duo Shakkar Khan-Makkhan Khan who was famous for their Qawwali singing.
6. Qawwal Baccho Ka Gharana: A tradition of Qawwal Bachhe.
7. Shrungar Ras: Romantic sentiment, the first Rasa out of Nav-Ras defined by Bharat Muni in his work Natyashastra.
8. Taleem: A special training from a mentor involving rigorous practice to master the subject.
9. Tappa: A musical form in Hindustani Classical Music whose poetry is usually in Panjabi language and style of singing involves especially short winding Taan patterns.
10. Tanayti, Taan Baji: Taan is an element of singing which includes fast melodic movements. The style of singing various structured Taan patterns is Tanayti, TaanBaji.
11. Tarqib: A method, key or trick for finding the solution of the problem.