

Appreciating Carnatic Music
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Lecture - 09
Lecture title: Understanding Rag -2 (Raga & Swara)

(Music Starts: 00:21) (Music Ends: 06:30)

We just heard an alapana of Raga Suryakantham on the violin rendered by V V Subramanian one of our foremost musicians in Carnatic music. This is a raga which must have evoke super found moods in any one who listen to it; what mood did it evoke in you; will it evoke one? or were there multiple moods that it evoked in you and do you think a raga or any piece of music at all must necessarily evoke a mood in the listener.

To many of us it is a given that music does evoke images, it evokes moods any kind of music at all and certainly classical music. The music material so used that it charges the atmosphere charges the musical space and the listener is able to gain access to some coherent images, coherent emotions.

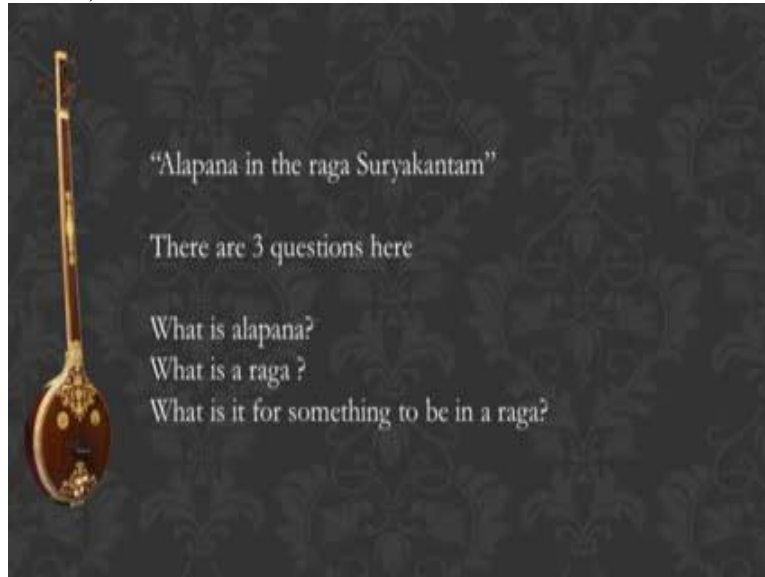
We sign off our last session with a mention of the association of raga and mood. In fact, the very word raga itself, does not have any musical meaning of the word raga, terminologically we mean. It does not have anything do with music per say.

Raga in Sanskrit and in some Indian languages like Marathi it is associated with notion, with passion. In fact, in modern variety, raga is used in the sense anger and in Sanskrit definitely, the context in which raga is used raga virahita. We have word vairagya which means dispassionate.

So, the word raga really means passion and the musical idea of raga is that, it evokes some emotions, some mood. It colors the mind of the listeners in certain ways which is why it is called raga.

Now, I just said that, we heard an alapana in raga Suryakantham, now for a complete (())00:09:39 to carnatic music. I expect there are few such among our learners.

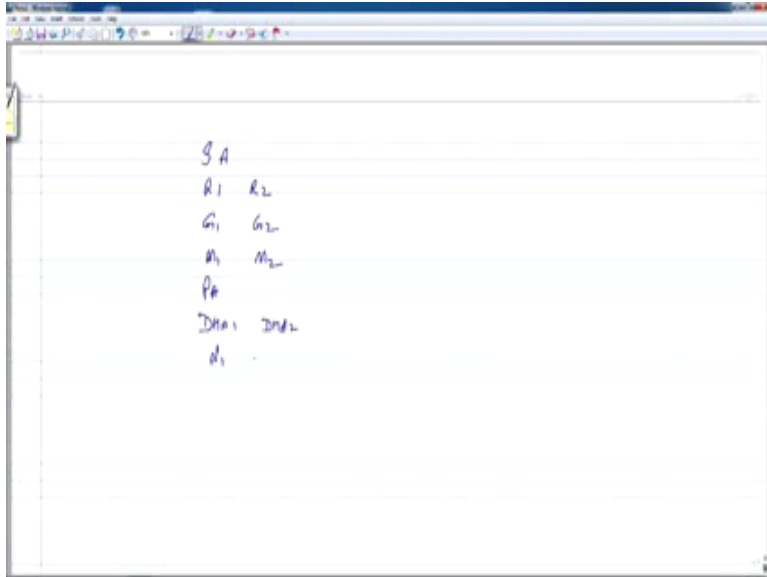
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There will be three questions, what is alapana? and What is it for an alapana or anything to be in raga. Of course, What is a raga? And this is what we are trying to understand what is a raga first of all because as I said, Raga is the fundamental. It is a fundamental importance as far as content of carnatic music course and along with tala, the rhythmic aspects it forms a grid upon which carnatic music is mounted.

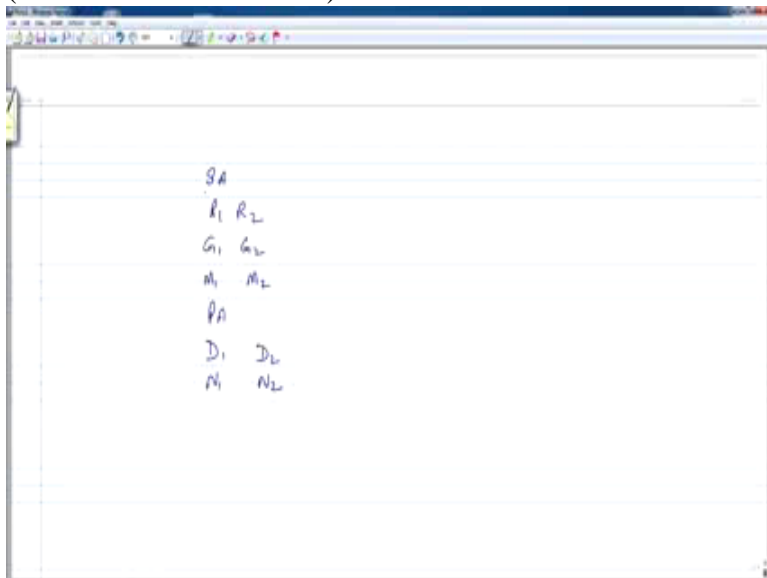
Now raga at a basic level, this is something just you saw last session. Basically, raga means certain swaras in it and certain swaras are not there in it. We must always bear in mind that, when we speak of swaras it is just the skeleton of the raga, raga is much more than the swaras that comprised it and that also something we will see later on.

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For a moment, we will revisit the twelve swaras thanas, schema we have sa, ri one, ri two, g one g two, ma one, ma two, pa. There is no variants dha one dha two ni one ni two. Now the raga that we just heard Suryakantham the swaras. In this are (Singing Starts: 11:41) (Singing Ends: 13:05) Now let us go back to mohanam, that we saw in the last session the swaras were

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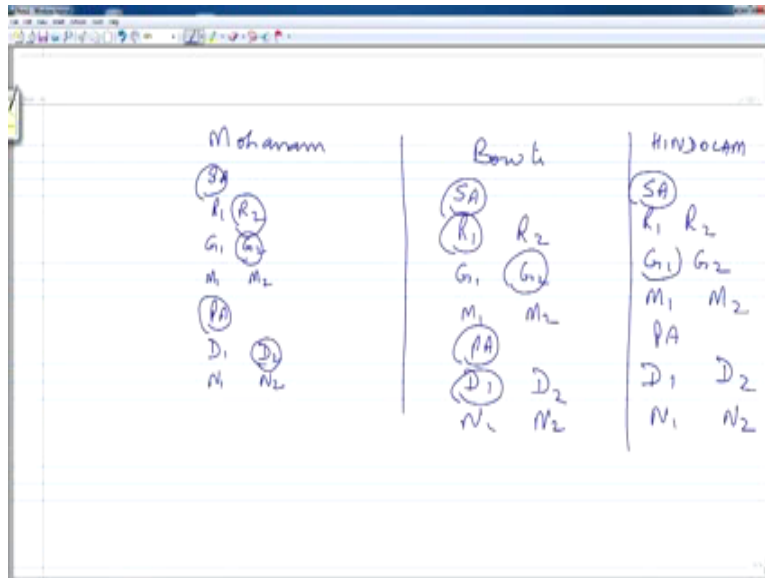
(Singing Starts: 13:15) (Singing Ends: 13:27) here suppose I just, I did change the gandhara last time and showed how the mood completely change this. (Singing Starts: 13:40) (Singing Ends: 13:41)



Consider there is (Singing Starts: 13:44) (Singing Ends: 14:03) this is Sivaranjani, the mood is completely different only because other variant of ga is used (Singing Starts:14:12) (Singing Ends:14:24) this is Mohanam (Singing Starts: 14:26) (Singing Ends: 14:36) Sivaranjani.

If suppose I change the ri of Mohanam it sounds different (Singing Starts: 14:47) (Singing Ends: 15:06) ri and ga if it is changed. (Singing Starts: 15:09) (Singing Ends: 15:28) Suppose I take entirely different set of notes from Mohanam (Singing Starts: 15:37) (Singing Ends: 15:38) Mohanam. Now

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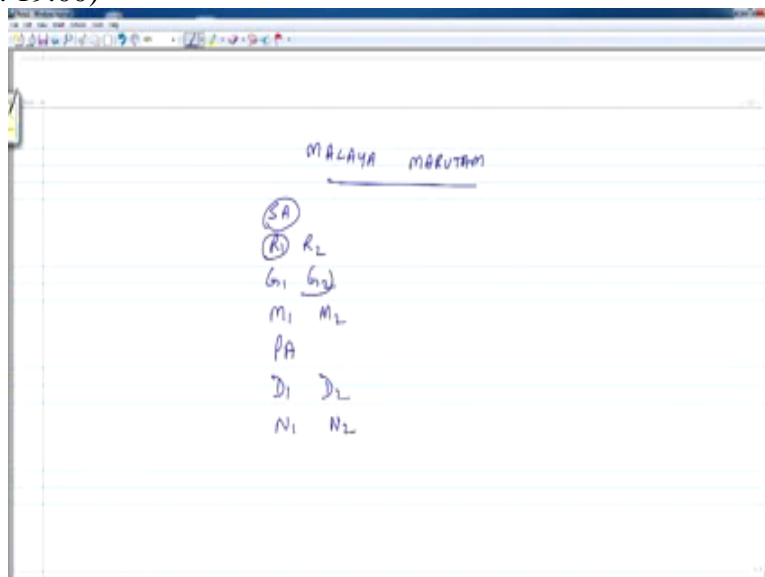


(Singing Starts: 15:40) (Singing Ends: 17:07) all this demonstration, I just to show you, how what we speak of ragas are at a very basic level made of swaras.

How many different combinations of swaras are possible? How the presence of one or another swara can change and determine mood of that raga. As we saw, there are ragas which have all the seven notes on the seven swaras. There are ragas that have only five swaras like Mohanam or Hindolam, which we saw last. There are ragas which has six swaras. (Singing Starts: 18:04)

(Singing Ends: 19:05)

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There are six swaras and then we have combinations. Thus, you can have five swaras in the aroha and seven swaras in avaroha, seven swaras in aroha and five swaras in the avaroha.

Now all this determine the raga, that is raga admits of certain swaras certain swaras make up that raga and those swaras have to be used, you cannot skip one are the other. Only those swaras may be used and some swaras are allowed in aroha sequences, in certain ragas for certain instances, raga Bilahari. (Singing Starts: 19:58) (Singing Ends: 20:11) So here, this aroha is (Singing Starts: 20:14) (Singing Ends: 20:19) avaroha is seven so we have this kind of ragas also. So, we will take a look at this technicality later, but the point that I want to make here is, swaras are basic building blocks of ragas.