

Most Beautiful Place of Taal - 'Sam'

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Abstract

'Sam' is the best known word to be used by every musician practising Indian Music. The importance of 'Sam' can not at all be denied in the field of music. 'Sam' is a must for every beginner of music to be learnt. Our vision expands simultaneously with each stage of our growth and we become keen to know and go deep into the depth of every subject and every concept. In this present paper I have attempted to set a new definition of 'Sam' and go deep into the subject according to my vision and knowledge of the subject concerned.

Keywords

Tabla, Sam, music, performer, compositions

Full Paper

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 other than 'Sam' are not attracting so much the general audience, music lovers etc.?

To find out my queries I once again go through the definition and details mentioned in some books written on Tabla subject and also contacted some Tabla maestros. A famous Tabla book of U.P. state as well as in other state too, written by Acharya Girish Chandra Srivastava of Allahabad, is *Tal Parichay*, Pt.-3, wherein it is mentioned 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 Bole*" (the bole used with open volume of the Bayana Tabla) like " Dha" is being used at " SUM" but exceptionally, in some of the Taals "*Band Bole*" (the bole used with dead volume of the Bayana Tabla) like "Tee" , "Ka" etc. is being used.

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 other 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 Rupak Taal.

In this connection once I could be able to talk with Mr. Anoop Banerjee, noted Tabla Artist of Allahabad and a senior disciple of the legendry 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, before describing about 'Sam' 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 called "Taal" in our music. This fixed rhythm of our body generates the sense of "Taal" in everyone, which are being developed by someone's 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. He also described that the "*Taal*" is also behaving like a human nature and the 'Sam' 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 fail to reach to the 'Sam' in a right way during the performance, he or she, the performer is never being appreciated by the audience and the performer is called "*Betala*" by the everyone. It means that 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 right music performer otherwise no one accept

him as a good musician. Hence, the 'Sam' is the point where a musician is being judge. Now one other 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 guess the 'Sam' and they clapping 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 thrilled 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 are 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 "Taals", who attracts all the musicians, dancer as well as the audience too, towards her beauty and after touching her, 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. Everyone feels happiness and become happy. 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 recognised as homeless or "AWARA", an indisciplin 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' , after finishing a composition.

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 Tehae

after being played a numbers of Palta, Bant etc.and must to finish at " SUM". 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, wether 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 tihai 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 respect use to beautify the 'Sam' with giving special attention or enfesis. 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. 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 remaing 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 played and after that the composition will be over. As such , we find that the 'Sam' guides the player to decide how long to go and on the way where you have to check yourself again and in which bole you to give weightage.

Apart from above discussion, if we search the meaning of 'Sam' in the dictionary, it 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:-

" 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 without getting that place/ reach to that place or that aspect in a perfect and beautiful way, the performer could not 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.

Reference:

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