CHAPTER III

BASICS OF SITAR PLAYING
3.1 Sitar

3.2 Sitting Position
   3.2.1 Female Sitting Positions
   3.2.2 Male Sitting Positions

3.3 Handling of Sitar

3.4 Gauges of Strings

3.5 Tuning of Sitar
   3.5.1 By using Piano
   3.5.2 By using Frets
   3.5.3 Tuning of Sympathetic Strings (Tarbs)

3.6 Styles of Sitar Playings/Baaj/Gat

3.7 Baaj
   3.7.1 Masid Khani Baaj
   3.7.2 Razakhani Baaj
   3.7.3 Imdadkhani Baaj
   3.7.4 Jafferkhani Baaj
   3.7.5 Maseetkhani Baaj & Jafferkhani Baaj

3.8 Gat
3.1 Sitar

Sitar is an improved form of Veena, the old and prominent instrument.

First of all it contained only 3 strings so it was called Sehtar. (Three stringed instrument) for a long time sehtar could not find its proper place in the congregation of the musicians So Veena Vadan gained popularity By this time this Sehtar Vadan was quite out of musical congregations Its sweet clink and melodious sound enraptured and enchanted the public again and little by little Sehtar could find its proper place Later on Sehtar was given seven strings. By doing so, it became more developed sweet and melodious.

The Sitar of today contains seven strings on upper part for playing and eleven sympathetic strings under the frets. After all these reforms 2 types of Sitar came in fashion

1. Single Tumba Sitar having seven strings on top only including Chikarces. This type of Sitar is more useful for beginners
2. Double Tumba Sitar having seven strings with chikarces on upper part and eleven sympathetic strings under the freets This is generally used by common Sitarists

3.2 Sitting Positions for playing on Sitar:

The sitting positions of males and females differ in Sitar playing in India. Some sitting positions are given below.

3.2.1 Female Sitting Positions

1. In the first position of playing on Sitar both the knees are bent inside. Tumba (Gourd) is supported besides right thing. It is pressed by the elbow of right hand and then Sitar is stationed diagonally in front of the player. Mizarbe is moved by first finger of right hand and thumb supports Dand. The fingers of left hand move on frets (bent) to ring out
2. In this position left knee is kept inside. The right leg knee is slightly raised up and the right leg is stretched a bit Sitar is made to support against right hip and on the left foot
3. In the third position the player is supposed to sit on a bench 1x1/2x1/2 mts. in size. The right leg is placed on the left leg and Tumba is supported besides right thing. It is pressed by the elbow of right hand. Sitar is placed diagonally.

3.2.2 Male Sitting Positions

1. In this position, the left knee is bent inside. The right leg is slightly raised up over the left leg. Sitar (Tumba) is made to support against the right hip. The Sitar is stationed diagonally and pressed by elbow and thumb of right hand.

2. In this position the right leg is bent over the left leg. Tumba is placed between right hip and the lower part of left foot. The remaining position as in Male 1st position.

3. This position is the same as the male position No. 1. The only difference is that Tumba (Gourd) is stationed between the right hip and the left foot.

3.3 Handling of Sitar in Proper Way

(i) Hold the sitar with your right hand pressing the instrument with arm on the neck and gourd and thumb on the back of end fret.

(ii) The position of finger board should be at 45° or convenient to sitting position.

(iii) Sitar should have the support of only right hand. The left hand fingers should move freely on the frets.

(iv) The player should keep the left hand fingers on frets and thumb on the back of the finger board. Then he should pull the instrument (finger board) closer to his body. The player should judge the placement of the fingers while looking at the back of the finger board.

(v) The left hand thumb should move with the movement of fingers on the frets.

(vi) Generally the first and second fingers are used. They should be held in gentle and relaxed manner.

(vii) The finger should not press the string directly on the top of the fret. The lip of the fingers should press on the string just behind the fret.

(viii) The thumb should press lightly on the back of the finger board directly parallel to the index finger and move up and down with the finger.
3.4 Gauges of Strings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>String Material</th>
<th>Gauge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Steel wire</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bronze wire</td>
<td>27 or 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bronze wire</td>
<td>27 or 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Steel wire</td>
<td>30 or 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bronze wire</td>
<td>27 or 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Steel wire (for chikari No.1)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Steel wire (for chikari No.2)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sympathetic strings 11 steel wires</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Tuning of Sitar

3.5.1 By Using Piano

1) First of all the string No 2/3 the bronze wires should be tuned to the lower C of the piano. These two strings are called strings of "Jora."

2) Thereafter, the first string, the steel wire will be tuned to the lower octave F of the piano. The first string is called string of "Baaj."

3) Thereafter, the fourth string, the bronze wire will be tuned to the one octave lower than lower octave G of the piano.

4) Thereafter the fifth string, the steel wire will be tuned to the lower octave G of the piano.

5) Thereafter the sixth string, the steel wire will be tuned to the middle octave C of the piano.

6) Thereafter the seventh string, the steel wire will be tuned to the higher octave C of the piano.

Tuning of sympathetic strings (Tarbs)

The sympathetic strings are 11, the steel wires. They are passed under the frets. These strings produce sound automatically according to the notes played on the frets/strings if and only if all the strings as well as the frets are accurately tuned.

These sympathetic strings are tuned to the notes starting from lower octave G to higher octave C according to the notes to be played for the Ragas, respectively.
3.5.2 By Using Frets

Jora (string No. 2 and 3) – first of all stretch the string No. 2 up to such a point that it should neither break nor loose. Check the sound of the string with the stroke of mizrab. It will be C (Sa) note of lower octave. Adjust the string No. 3 with the sound of string No. 2. Both these string are called Jora which means basic note for tuning the other strings.

String No. 1: It is tuned on F (Ma) note of lower octave according to the sound obtained from string No. 2 after striking it with mizrab and pressing it on fret No. 5.

String No. 4: This string is tuned on C (Sa) note of double lower octave i.e. half the sound produced with the stroke of mizrab on Jora (string No. 2 and 3).

String No. 5: This string is tuned on G (Pa) note of lower octave according to the sound obtained from string No. 1 after striking it with mizrab and pressing it on fret No. 2.

String No. 6: (Chikari No. 1) This string is tuned on C (Sa) note of medium octave according to the sound obtained from string No. 1 after striking it with mizrab and pressing it on fret No. 7.

String No. 7: (Chikari No. 2). This string is tuned on C (Sa) note of upper octave according to the sound obtained from string No. 1 after striking it with mizrab and pressing it at fret No. 17.

Tuning Chart with the help of frets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>String No.</th>
<th>String No.</th>
<th>Fret No. to be pressed</th>
<th>Indian swaras</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Octave</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Gauge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&amp;3</td>
<td>2&amp;3</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>27/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Help of Jora sound</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Double</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
<td>21/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>30/32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>33/34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>33/34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.3 Tuning of Sympathetic Strings (Tarbs):

The sympathetic strings are 11 in number and all are made of steel. They are fixed under the frets and on the top of the finger board. They are not struck by mizrab but when the player strikes the mizrab on upper main strings, it produces sound. This sound vibrates the sympathetic strings, which automatically produce sound. These sympathetic strings are tuned on the basic notes of the Thatas, which the player wants to play their Gat in any of the Ragas.

### Tuning Chart of Sympathetic strings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>String No.</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Gauge</th>
<th>Swara</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Octave</th>
<th>Sound produced</th>
<th>Str. No.</th>
<th>West Note</th>
<th>Octave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>33/34</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Str. By No on 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>Str. No. 1 Fret No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first string of the Sitar is generally used for Gats and Toras and the other strings are used sometime for Alap (improvisation).

Three Bols of Mizrab are fixed for Sitar, Gat, and Toras – Da, Ra and Dir, other Bols are played with the combination of above three Bols i.e Dar, Rda, Darde.

Da Bol – when the stroke of Mizrab is on the first string from outward to inward, it is called Da

Ra-Bol – When the stroke of Mizrab is on the first string from inward to outward, it is called Ra.

Dir Bol – When the stroke of Mizrab is on the first string rapidly from both sides at a time, it is called Dir.

Note - (1) At the time of stroke of first finger, other three fingers move jointly with the first finger inward and outwards.
(2) The Mizrab should touch the only string, which is to be played on.

(3) At the time of playing Da, Ra and Dir the left hand first finger should remain on fret No 7 on Sa note.

(4) Double Gourd Sitar having seven strings including Chikaries on upper portion and eleven sympathetic strings under frets and one Gourd extra, fixed on the back of the finger board top for responding sound. This sitar is generally used by top players.

Now-a-days sitar is getting more and more popular especially among women players in foreign countries too. Sitar has taken an appreciable place in the society of musicians.

3.6 Styles of Playing on Sitar Baj/Gat

In modern Sitar Majid Khan of Delhi and Ahmad Raza Khan of Lucknow are two prominent figures who have made it more popular and composed different types of Gats (Tune) i.e. Majit Khan and Raza Khan and Toras for playing on Sitar

1. Majit Khani Gats – Majit Khan has composed Majit Khani Gat which is also called Delhi Baj and fixed bols for these Gats are – Dir, Da, Dir, Da, Ra, Da, Da, Ra. These Gats are played in slow and medium speeds

2. Raza Khani Gats – Raza Khan composed Gats according to Thumari style of singing and the bols fixed for these Gats are – Dir, Dir, Dar, Dar, Dir, Dar, Dar, Da. These Gats are played in medium and fast speeds

3. Bol Baj Ki Gats – Another style of Gats in practice now-a-days are called Bol Baj Ki Gat. In these Gats Bols are not fixed. Only according to the tune of songs the player can use the bols.

In these Gats the Tunes of songs are the base and the player is free to use bols according to the Tuner of Songs.19

3.7 Baj

The style and technique of playing instrumental music is called Baj – or style e.g., Dhrupadi style, Khayaliya style, Thumri style, Masidkhani Baj, Rezakhani Baj, Purvi Baj, Imdakhani Baj etc

19 Learn to play on Sitar by Ram Avtar
Technique is a word, which includes a number of things, one of which is the sequence of playing a Raga through the medium of an instrument. For this sequence there are conventional rules. Whenever these rules are absent, such playing cannot be properly known to have any style or Baj and should rather be called a freelance playing, pleasant or unpleasant depending upon the artiste's personal talent. This type of instrumental playing does not represent any Gharana or tradition and cannot be strictly called 'Classical.' Sometimes the style or Baj is called Cala or Calana. The present author recommends the word 'Vadaki' for instrumental music similar to the word 'Gayaki' for vocal music.

3.7.1 Masidkhani or Masitkhani

Masid Khan was the grandson of Karim Sen who himself was a grandson of Bilas Khan, the son of Miyan Tansen. It was Masid who thoroughly renovated the Sitar by adding two more strings and by introducing a particular style of playing which has proved to be a lasting gift to the world of instrumental music. The style of Sitar playing prevalent before Masid Khan had been devised by Amir Khusro. At present, in almost all musical instruments, the style devised by Masid Khan is followed. Masid Khan taught his son Bahadur Khan (according to some Bahadur Sen) and from Bahadur Khan the Jaipur Gharana (cultural lineage) (q.v.) was established. Masidkhani style was created after the pattern of slow tempo Khayala and Jod. Toda and Vistara were used in this style. Amit Sen, the famous Sitar player of Jaipur was the great grandson of Bahadur Sen. Amrta Sen's nephew (sister's son) Amir Khan was the court musician of Mysore. This, in brief, is the history of the Jaipur Gharana.

Bahadur Sen has another pupil named Qutub Bukhsh, later known as Qutubuddaula. He had composed innumerable Sarangamas (q.v.) and Gats. Amir Khan's pupil was Prof. Barkat U'llah, the famous Sitar player of the Mysore Court. The recital of his Sitar had been recorded in the Gramophone disc in the Raga Bhupakalyana (Bhupali). This is the only representative record of Jaipur style of Sitar playing. Barkat U'llah's pupil was Ashiq Ali Khan, father of Mushtaq Ali Khan, one of the foremost Sitar players of contemporary India.

---

20 The Dictionary of Hindustani Classical Music by Bimalakanta Roychaudhuri
Masid added two more strings to the Sitar of three strings, as known to Amir Khusro, but he did not add Tarapha or Strings for sympathetic vibrations. Later, when the Seniyas of Jaipur used Tarapha strings, the Cikaris were not added, these were added around 1930.

We are describing in a nutshell, the Amir Khusro style and the Masidkhani style of Gats.

1. Amir Khusro Baj or playing style: In this Baj the Gats had only one stanza (Tuk) and some Todas (q.v.) were also used. The famous Gat composition of Amir Khusro is still in currency although further stanzas have been added subsequently by different composers. It is in the Raga Kaphi –

\[ S R R R \hat{g} - M P M P - P M g R S' n \]
\[ Da \ D e r e \ D a \ R a - Da \ R a \ D a \ R a - Da \ R a \ D a \ R a \ D a \ R a \]

The Bolas are very simple, to be played in medium tempo.

According to Pandit Sudarsanacarya Sastri, a pupil of Amrta Sen of Jaipur, Masid Khan’s father was Firoz Khan and the latter’s father was Amir Khusro who was responsible for the name ‘Sitar’. This theory is not admitted by all, rather it goes against the current view. The original Amir Khusro, who is supposed to have given the name Sitar to Tritantri Vina, lived in the transition period of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries A.D. Firoz Khan’s father Amir Khusro must have been a different person. The only reason to give credence to Sudarsanacarya’s theory is that there is no mention of any Sitariya in the Court of Akbar, so Amir Khusro, the Sitar-protagonist, might have come later.

2. Masidkhani Baj or playing style: This is also called Pachava Ka Baj (Pachava is West). Masid Khan composed slow-tempo Gats after the slow Khayal songs and he used to play Sitar in the style of Khayal songs, as sung in his time. These Gats were also embellished with Tana, Toda and Vistara in the Khayal style. Here are given some sequences of Masidkhani Gat composed in Dhima Tritala and without any complex Bolas. Only Bolas are given without the melody since Masidkhani Gat composition is chiefly recognized by the composition of Bolas:
The first cycle or Avarada (q.v.) of the foregoing Gat is called Sthayi stanza and the second is now-a-days known as Mamjha, being the middle portion between Sthayi and Antara. Mamjha means "One in the middle".

Antara:

After Sthayi, Mamjha and Antara have been played, Vistara is done around the Amsa (q.v.) note of the Raga, then the same thing i.e., Vistara is done around the Samvadi (q.v.) note of that Amsa note. After these have been played, particular phrases belonging to the same Raga are taken and around those phrases Vistara is done. Then small and large Tanas are played. Most of the Tanas end on the 3rd beat of Visama symbolised in notation by 'O' and the Gat is resumed from the next beat i.e., the 4th beat of Vasma. In percussion instruments, Tabla and Bamya, only Thekas (q.v.) used to be played as an accompaniment; Paranas (q.v.) were not played in those days. Nor was Jhala (q.v.) played since there were no Cikari strings. Masidkhani Gat used medium and fast Jod (q.v.) as played in Alapa (q.v.) and that was the ending piece of Masidkhani Gat.

Gholam Mohammad Khan invented the Surabahar and added Cikari strings to it copying this the Cikaris were added to the Sitar also Gholam Mohammad and his son Sajjad Mohammad used to play Surabahar mainly and all the techniques of Vina-playing were applied in that instrument Gholam Mohammad also composed many Gats for the Sitar, some of which are still in currency. Sajjad Mohammad also used to play the Sitar - but both the father and the son were chiefly Surabahar players Imdad
Khan using the twelve stages of Alapa (q.v.) in Masidkhani Gats, vastly changed the playing technique of Sitar and also vastly improved upon the Masidkhani Baj. Hitherto Masidkhani Gats were chiefly in the Khayal style, but Imdad Khan added the Dhrupada style through the twelve stages of Alapa. This was a bold step on the part of Imdad Khan to mix Khayal and Dhrupada styles which remarkably enriched the playing technique of Sitar with due importance to Jhala (q.v.). Imdad Khan added the Khayaliya style in Surabahar also; as a result the technique of Surabahar playing improved greatly in the use of Tanas and Paltas (q.v.). Since the playing technique of both Surabahar and Sitar has been so much improved and enriched, it cannot be called pure Masidkhani any longer. As such, some have called it 'Modern Masidkhani'. However, the present author named it 'Imdadkhani Baj' in 1940 A.D. and this name Imdadkhani Baj has been accepted by the musical intelligentsia (vide Imdadkhani).

3.7.2 Razakhani (Rezakhani)

Gats composed after the tarana style are called Rezakhani. Some hold that the Rezakhani style was created by one Gholam Reza, a pupil of Masid Khan of Miyan Tansen Gharana, while others think that it was masid Khan himself who composed the Rezakhani Gats and named them after his devoted pupil Ghoma Rexa. Masid Khan's own generation did not know the Rezakhani Gats; they knew Masidkhani style only. Rezakhani Gats are also known as Purvi Baj or the eastern style since Gholam Reza's home was to the east of Delhi i.e., Patna. Likewise, Masidkhani Gats are also known as Pachavi or Pachaha Baj or the western style since Jaipur is to the west of Delhi. Unlike Masidkhani Gats, which are composed in simple Bolas and in slow tempo, Rezakhani Gats use complex Bolas and in a faster tempo. In truth both Masidkhani and Rezakhani are complementary to each other. After playing the Masidkhani Gat in slow tempo one has to play a Rezakhani fast tempo Gat, as it is the practice with vocal music wherein a slow Khayal is followed by a fast Khayal or a Tarana. In Masidkhani Gats, no particular importance is given to the Bolas whereas in Rezakhani Gats the Bolas play more important part. We are comparing a Tarana Vani with a Rezakhani Bola. The melodic notations are not given, as they are redundant in this context.
Imdad Khan was born in Etava in Uttar Pradesh in India. His father sahabdad Hyusayn Khan was a son of the brother-in-law of Haddu Khan, the famous Khayal singer and was brought up under his roof. Sahabdad learnt Khayal and also played on the Sitar. Imdad Khan also learnt songs and Sitar from his father. After the death of Sahabdad, Imdad Khan learnt Sitar from different Sitar players and evolved his own style of Sitar playing greatly, improving on the then Sitar and Surabahar playing techniques. Since about 1920 it is his style of Sitar playing that has been holding the musical field firmly and predominantly. Sitar players of different Gharanas and styles have since been greatly influenced by this style. After Imdad Khan's death, his sons the late Inayat Khan and the late Wahid Khan became famous by following their father's style. Inayat Khan remained the foremost Sitar player of India for a quarter of a century till his death in 1938. His sons Vilayet Khan and Imarat Khan are very well-known instrumentalists and Vilayet is undoubtedly one of the best Sitar players of India today. Vilayet has also evolved a style of his own, suiting the demands of the lay public and obviously with modern trend and less classical in character. Four generations of Sitar players have certainly established a classical style which we call Imdadkhani style of Sitar playing.21

---

21 The Dictionary of Hindustani Classical Music by Bimalakanta Roychaudhuri
3.7.4 Jafferkhani Baaj:

"The emotional content of a 'piece of music' cannot be translated into words, not because music is vaguer and more indefinite, but because it is so exact that it cannot be defined by anything so ambiguous as language" Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Music is the only universal language of mankind. Lullabies, chorus, march and so on are typical musical expressions found in all cultures of the world. If the diversity of language is ignored, one can easily understand and appreciate the true underlying unifying concept of music throughout the world. The psyche of a people, tempered by many factors like the seasons and the climate of the region, imparts the special flavour of that region to their music.

Indian classical music has indeed evolved over centuries of tradition, handed down through oral teaching by great masters. Like Indian culture, it has absorbed along the way, the richness and the diversity of the music of other cultures, while retaining its soul, which is essentially Indian. Musicologists have attempted to understand this diversity in Indian classical music and have formulated a grammar to explain it. But just as a child learns to speak a language first and then the grammar, it is my belief that for the serious student of sitar, the appreciation of its various techniques and their practice must come first.

For over 50 years now, it has been my endeavour to impart the technique of playing the sitar through practical demonstration. During my years of sadhana, of committed and disciplined pursuit of sitar, I have always marvelled at the limitless possibilities afforded by the unique design of the instrument. Through painstaking research and practice, I have been able to synthesis and perfect the techniques, which enable the fullest expression of the bewildering varieties of sound from the sitar. The collective synthesis of such techniques and ideas came to be known as Jafferkahi Baaj, named after my father.

As mentioned before, the subtle nuances of Jafferkhani Baaj have so far been handed down to my students through training in 'guru-shishya' tradition. However, I have realized that it is also necessary to communicate to both the curious seekers as
well as serious learners by way of written exposition of Jafferkhani Baaj. This book is an attempt to fill this need. It is also the purpose of this book to define some of the long-lost or vaguely used terms and to distinguish the finer nuances of Jafferkhani Baaj from other techniques in vogue. By no means is it claimed that just by reading this book, one will be able to master Jafferkhani Baaj.

Jafferkhani Baaj has evolved out of an urge to change in order to make the music of the sitar more complete and beautiful. Later in this book, I will explain some of the basic techniques used in playing the sitar, and then discuss in detail the characteristics and the finer nuances of the Baaj. However, I just want to give a general definition here. Simply put, Jafferkhani Baaj incorporates finer divisions within a beat and creates multiple notes, keeping in mind the structure of the raga and its characteristic melodic pattern.

Jafferkhani Baaj tries to explore and tap the potential inherent in the physical structure of the sitar in a way that responds to the demands of the raga. It tries to harness the tremendous variety that the sitar offers by way of finger movements and tonal variations. It involves new techniques, innovative and distinct ways of using existing techniques, as also certain skills of playing which enhance the effect of these techniques. Moreover, the techniques have to be imaginatively deployed, and judiciously combined in keeping with the raga and taal structure, to bring out the beauty of the Baaj. Because of its close connection to the rhythmic structure, Jafferkhani Baaj flowers out to its full extent in the vilambit gat, which is a composition in slow tempo. But it is not restricted to this and leaves its imprint variously in the different parts of a performance.

The Baaj also includes certain stylistic dimensions. Thus the features listed under Jafferkhani Baaj could be categorized as comprising of techniques, skills and style. These categories are not watertight, and do overlap often. To do justice to Jafferkhani Baaj, one has to display at least the bare minimum of the features discussed in later chapters. The techniques involved are described in this book in their fullest form for the first time.
The need for Jafferkhani Baaj initially arose because of certain limitations of the Maseetkhani Baaj. Most sitarists when playing in the vilambit, use standardised combinations of finger movements of the right hand: the Maseetkhani Baaj. In the vilambit mode, while I broadly follow the Maseetkhani bol patterns, I have made some modifications since the gats of certain ragas do not fit well within a fixed pattern of bol. The full form of some ragas do not find expression within the Maseetkhani gat and this is an inadequacy of this style. For example, the following note pattern is characteristic of Raga Nayaki Kanada: ni pa ga ma pa ma re sa re-sa. But this does not fit in the standard mizrab strokes dir da dir da ra. So, to enhance the face of the raga, I have adopted the method of creating fractions of beats and filling them within the bol of the mizrab.

In Maseetkhani Baaj, there is usually one note for one beat corresponding to one stroke of the mizrab with the right hand. In Jafferkhani Baaj, 6, 8 or 12, sometimes even up to 16 notes are created within one beat. This is unique to my Baaj. This method of playing means that the work of the left hand is increased, much more than is usual among sitarists, who normally tend to emphasize the right hand play. Right hand play is relatively simple, and one can impress people easily. But focus on the left hand is tougher to achieve.

Thus the finer division of one beat or matra into multiple fractions is one of the most important characteristics of Jafferkhani Baaj. This is the main point of distinction from the conventional Maseetkhani Baaj. In fact, this is at the heart of Jafferkhani Baaj. All the basic techniques described in this book, such as zamzama, gada, khatka, uchhat, meend, kan, gamak are incorporated into the finer divisions of the beat or what one may call fractions of matras. The effect is one of embellishment and addition of depth and colour. How much of embellishment, depends on the demands of the raga and the moods and needs of the moment. The techniques require speed and skill in bringing them to fruition. The effect is more than that of a deployment of techniques; it gives a characteristic stamp to the sitar play. The main focus is on the beat, and that is why Jafferkhani Baaj as a whole is elaborated best in the slower tempo vilambit gat, and in thumri ang.
In other styles of sitar play, the left hand movement fills in the boi of mizrab. In my Baaj, it is the other way around. Here, the boi is set according to the needs of the left hand movement. This synchronization of the right hand following the left hand is my innovation in sitar play. I have developed a synthesis of the techniques of the right hand and left hand in interplay with the rhythmic structure. One could call it Jafferkhani Baaj or Jafferkhani Gat, or Jafferkhani Ban. But this is the core feature, the essence.

3.8 Gat

Derived from Gati or motion. However, it is not precisely known how a particular composition for instrumental music has come to be known as Gat. Many say that the Gat has motion, but so have other musical compositions such as Dhrupada, Khayal, etc. It appears likely that there could not be found any other name for such compositions for instrumental music and so the name Gat has been used as in case of Sruti. Gat is a melodic composition bound by rhythm using Varnas (notes) and Bolas (strokes) to be used in instrumental music. Originally such Gats were composed in pursuance of Khayals and Taranas (vide). There are mainly two types of Gats: (1) Masidkhan (2) Rezakhani (Vide Masidkhan and Rezakhani). Masidkhan Gats follow the style of slow and medium Khayals and Rezakhani Gats the style of Taranas, which are usually fast in tempo. In Gat composition the presence of the stanzas viz. Sthavi and Antara can be found as in Khayals. In modern times another stanza named Manjha i.e., ‘Middle’ has been added between Sthayi and Antara which takes the form and scope of Sancan Tuk or Stanza. Compositions for percussion instruments commonly known as Thekas (vide) are also called Gats. Some hold that Kayada (Queda) (vide) of a Theka is also known as Gat and some again consider long compositional phrases for percussion instruments without Tihai as Gats e.g.,

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ghena | Kata | Gheghe | Nak | Tag | Gheghe | Nake | Dhin 
| 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Dhage | Trikit | Tuna | Kata | Gheghe | Nak | Gheghe | Nak 
| 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Tag | Gheghe | Nak | Dhene | Dhage | Trikit | Tuna | Gheghe 
| 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Nake | Trikit | Tuna | Gheghe | Nake | Trikit | Tuna | Kata 
```

22 Jafferkhani Baaj by Ustad Abdul Halim Jafferkhan

23 The Dictionary of Hindustani Classical Music by Bimala Kant Roy Chaudhary.