

# A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SANDHIPRAKASH RAGAS IN THE CONTEXT OF TIME THEORY: THE VIEWS OF PT. BHATKHANDE

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## ABSTRACT

*The concept of Sandhiprakash ragas It reflects the beauty of dawn and dusk through its melodies, which are the two most sensitive and expressive moments of the day. Morning Sandhiprakash ragas generally belong to Bhairav ang, while evening ragas are mostly from Poorvi and Marwa ang. Another important indicator is Madhyam: shuddha Madhyam suggests morning ragas, and teevra Madhyam suggests evening ragas. This gradual shift of Madhyam through the day beautifully mirrors the movement of nature from dawn to dusk and its reverse phenomenon. Bhatkhande also relates these ragas to Karun and Shant rasa, which suit the peaceful mood of these hours. He clearly describes the rules related to the Time Theory and Sandhiprakash ragas, which do not overlap with each other, and provides an explanation that reflects the unique characteristics of the ragas in a whole day. Thus, Sandhiprakash ragas are not only based on swara structure but also on the emotional and natural atmosphere of the time. Their correct performance time enhances both their beauty and rasa*

**Keywords:** Sandhiprakash Ragas, Time Theory, Pt. Bhatkhande

## Introduction

It is an old tradition in Hindustani classical music that ragas are associated with certain times of the day and seasons of the year. In Hindustani classical music, it is believed that performing a raga at its designated time enhances its emotive and aesthetic impact on both the performer and the listener. This connection between ragas and time is deeply ingrained in the culture and philosophy of Hindustani classical music. The changing qualities of light, temperature, and ambiance throughout the day and seasons are thought to interact with each raga's tonal and emotional characteristics, creating a more profound musical experience. In fact, it is essential to look at the approach of raga and the historical evidence of this concept of time theory. Some associated references regarding this are like that -

In the Chhandogya Upanishad, in a verse, there is a description of five distinct varieties of 'Sam-upasana' that were sung on various occasions throughout the rainy season -

Dr̥ṣṭau pañcavidham sāmopāsita — purāvāto hiṅkāro megho jāyate sa  
prastāvo varṣāti sa udgītho vidyotate stanayati sa pratihāraḥ ।” 1

Trans: There is a provision for the worship of five types of 'sama'. The eastern wind is Hinkar. The cloud that is produced is Prastav. The rain is Udgitha, and the thunders and howls are Pratihara, and when the rain ends, then it is called Nidhan.

In the third chapter of Sangeet Makrand, Narad said -

Evam kalāvidhim jñātvā gavedyaḥ sa sukhi bhavet ।

Rāgavelā pragānena rāgānā hiṅsako bhavet ।

Yaḥ śṛṇoti sa dāridrī āyunaṣṭi yati sarvadā ।” 2

Trans: One who sings the ragas according to their designated times attains peace and prosperity. On the other hand, the person who does not sing the raga at its appointed time and also does not listen to the raga at its proper time destroys not only the beauty of the raga but also his life. The ragas themselves shall become violent and lose their attraction due to singing the ragas at inappropriate times. Such singers become poor and live a short life.

He also mentioned the ragas to be sung at different times of the day are like that<sup>3</sup>-

The 'Suryansh' ragas, which indicate the early morning ragas, include- Gandhar, Devgandhar, Dhanashree, Saindhvi, Narayani, Gurjari, Bengal, Patmanjari, Lalit, Shree, Saurashtra, Malhar, Basant, Shuddha Bhairav, Belavali, and Bhupal.

The 'Madhyaahna-kalin' ragas indicate the ragas performed at midday; these include Shankarabharanam, Barahansha, Deshi, Saveri, Dhobli, Kamboji, Kaishiki, Mukhari, and Mangal Kaishiki.

The 'Chandransh' ragas indicate the night ragas: Shuddha Naat, Salag, Shuddha Varati, Malavgaud, Ramakri, and Kanart Gaud. But Raag Bhairavi can be sung at any time of the day.

Similarly, diverse opinions of numerous other scholars regarding the time theory of ragas can be found in ancient texts, which include different ragas for the different times in a day.

Now, according to the modern classification of the time theory of raga, the whole day is comprehended as the '*prahar*', which is one-eighth of a whole day, or with a time span of three hours (8/24 hours). Although it has been the conventional unit for measuring time since ancient times. The beginning of the day has traditionally coincided with the arrival of morning, which, in accordance with Indian Standard Time (IST), is based on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), and occurs at 4 a.m. That means the 1st *prahar* starts at 4 a.m. All existing ragas in Hindustani music have a specified time for performance, which can be any one of the following eight *prahars*-

4 a.m. – 7 a.m. (pratahakalin Sandhiprakash)

7 a.m. – 10 a.m. (1st *prahar* of the day)

10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (2nd *prahar* of the day)

4. 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (3rd *prahar* of the day)

4 p.m. – 7 p.m. (sayankalin Sandhiprakash)

7 p.m. – 10 p.m. (1st *prahar* of the night)

10 p.m. – 1 a.m. (2nd *prahar* of the night)

8. 1 a.m. – 4 a.m. (3rd *prahar* of the night)

In this way, 24 hours in a day are divided into two parts: i) 12 a.m. to 12 p.m. is called Uttaranga, and ii) 12 p.m. to 12 a.m. is called Purbanga. The ragas sung at this time are termed accordingly 'uttar-raga' and 'poorva-raga'. Here, those are both the 'jawab' or answer to each other. Examples are the evening answer to Bilawal being Kalyan, that of Sarang being Kanhada, and Poorvi being the answer to Bhairav. In uttar-ragas, the vadi swara is mostly anyone from the uttranga (from Ma to Sa). In poorva-ragas, any one swara from the poorvanga (from sa to pa) is vadi. That is why, uttar ragas are called uttarangavadi ragas and poorva ragas are called poorvangavadi ragas. Sa, Ma, and Pa being present in both the angas, those ragas where these notes are vadi, are considered to be sarvakalik<sup>1</sup>. In the morning ragas, there is a strong use of komal Re and Dha, whereas in the evening ragas, the dominance of suddha Ga and suddha Ni is evident.

It is noteworthy to mention that while the 'thata-raga' categorization and the raganga-raga classification overlap in many cases. E.g., Bilaskhani Todi is a Todi anga raga, but not a Todi thata raga; it belongs instead to the Bhairavi thata. Keeping this factor in mind, the categorization of ragas, based on their performance time, can be categorized like that<sup>4</sup> –

#### **4 a.m. - 7 a.m. (Pratahakalin Sandhiprakesah) – There are three categories –**

- Ragas of Bhairav thata and the Bhairav anga, e.g., Bhairav, Ramkali, Ahir Bhairav, Bhirav, Nat Bhairav, Prabhat Bhairav, Anand Bhairav, etc.
- Ragas of Poorvi thata, e.g., Lalit.
- Ragas of Marwa thata, e.g., Bhatiyar.

#### **7 – 10 a.m. (First prahar of the day) –**

- Ragas of Bilawal thata and Bilawal anga, e.g., Alhaiya Bilawal, Yamani Bilawal, Devgiri Bilawal, Kukubh Bilawal, Deshkar, etc.

#### **10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Second prahar of the day) – There are three categories –**

- Ragas of the Todi thata and Todi anga, e.g., Miyan ki Todi, Gurjari Todi, Bilaskhani Todi, Bhupal Todi, Bahaduri Todi, etc.
- Ragas of Asawari thata and Asawari anga, e.g., Asawari, Jaunpuri, Komal Rishabh Asawari, Dev Gandhar, Gandhari, etc.
- Kafi thata oriented sarang anga ragas, after 12 p.m., e.g., Vrindavani Sarang, Madhamad Sarang, Badahans Sarang, etc.

**1 p.m. - 4 p.m. (Third prahar of the day) –**

- Ragas of the Kafi thata, e.g., Bhimpalasi, Patdeep, Dhanashree, etc.

**4-7 p.m. (Sayankalin Sandhiprakash) – There are two categories –**

- Ragas of Poorvi thata, e.g., Poorvi, Puriyadhanshree, Shree, etc.
- Ragas of Marwa thata, e.g., Marwa, pooriya, Pooriya-Kalyan, etc.

**7 p.m. - 10 p.m. (First prahar of the night) – There are two categories –**

- Ragas of the Kalyan thata and Kalyan anga, e.g., Yaman, Bhupali, Kedar, Kamod, Chhayanat etc.
- Bilawal thata oriented Bihag anga ragas, e.g., Bihag, Bihagda etc.
- Ragas of the Khamaj thata, e.g., Khamaj, Des, Jhinjhoti, Rageshri etc.

**10 p.m. – 1 p.m. (Second prahar of the night) – There are four categories –**

- Ragas of Kafi thata, e.g., Kafi, Bagrshree, etc.
- Kafi thata oriented Kanhada anga ragas, e.g., Nayaki Kanhada, Shahana, Suha etc.
- Asawari thata oriented Kanhada anga ragas, e.g., Darbari Kanhada, Kaunsi Kanhada etc.
- Ragas of the Bhairavi thata, e.g., Malkauns, Jog Kauns etc.

**1 p.m. – 4 a.m. (third prahar of the night) –**

- In which a few uttranga Pradhan ragas are sung, e.g., Sohini, Adana, etc.

Here also include the seasonal ragas-

In the rainy season, the Kafi thata oriented Malhar anga ragas like Megh Malhar, Mia ki malhar, Sur Malhar, etc. are presented. In the springtime, the Kafi that-oriented Bahar, Poorvi that-oriented Basant, and Marwa that-oriented Hindol and their admixtures like Basant-Bahar, and Hindol-Bahar are presented.

**The concept of Sandhiprakash ragas:**

The term 'Sandhiprakash' is a combination of two words - 'sandhi' and 'prakash'. We can start by interpreting the word 'sandhi' literally. According to the Manak Hindi Kosh<sup>5</sup>, the meaning of the word 'sandhi' is - matching, pair, reconciliation, or combination of two letters in grammar, and the transformation caused by it, etc.

On the other hand, the term 'Prakash' means light. So, combining both, we get the term 'Sandhiprakash', which means - the conjunction of the light with the dark. In other words, it refers to the periods of the day, when the darkness starts to leave, and the light of the sun starts to illuminate the sky, or its reverse phenomenon. It begins from the dawn of the day and goes on until the sky is completely bright. On the other hand, it also refers to the time following the afternoon, i.e., evening, when the sun begins to set and the brilliance of the day gradually fades. This continues right up until the remaining bit of the gray sky in the west turns completely black. Thus, the phenomenon in the morning is called 'Pratahakaleen Sandhiprakash', while the reverse phenomenon in the evening is called 'Sayankaleen Sandhiprakash'. Consequently, ragas sung during these times are respectively called 'Pratahakaleen Sandhiprakash' ragas, and 'Sayankaleen Sandhiprakash' ragas.

According to the Time Theory of raga, the performing time of the Sandhiprakash raga covers six hours in a day. Pratahakalin Sandhiprakash is performed between 4 a.m to 7 a.m and Sayankalin Sandhiprakash raga covers 4

p.m. to 7 p.m. As we can see, the timing of sunrise and sunset differs because of the geographically spread area of India, and also varies a lot between summer and winter. As a result, the dawn and dusk times can be different area-wise. So, we can consider that time as an indicative time. When it comes to the performance of its constituent ragas, the artist must make use of his /her wisdom and local conditions to determine what is the best-suited time to perform a certain raga, especially regarding the Sandhiprakash ragas, as it is a changing phenomenon of nature.

**The views of Pt. Bhatkhande:**

Pt. Bhatkhande has spoken in detail about the Time Theory of raga in the fifth part of his book – 'Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati Kramik Pustak Malika'<sup>6</sup>. Some facts he has described regarding the Time Theory and Sandhiprakash ragas are given below –

1. There are three categories of all the ragas of the Hindustani system based on their notes –

- The ragas having komal Re and komal Dha (Sandhiprakash ragas).
- Ragas having shuddha Re, Ga, and Dha.

- Ragas with komal Ga and komal Ni.

So, according to the 1st point, the Sandhiprakash ragas, whether it be pratikaleen or sayankaleen, these ragas have either komal Re or Dha or both together. 'Either komal Re or komal Dha' in the sense – there are one or two exceptions, such as Bhatiyar and Lalit (suddha Dha variant) in pratahakaleen Sandhiprakash raga and Marwa and its *janya* ragas in sayankaleen Sandhiprakash raga. Thus, based on the presence or absence of the komal rishabh and dhaivat, the pratahakaleen and sayankaleen Sandhiprakash ragas can be categorized thus-

- Pratahakaleen Sandhiprakash ragas i) Having both komal Re and Dha – Bhairav, Ramkali, Vibhas, Shivmat Bhairav, Lalit (komal Dha variant), etc.
- Having only Komal Re–Ahir Bhairav, Anand Bhairav, Bairagi, Bhatiyar, etc.
- Having only komal Dha – Nat Bhairav.

Sayankaleen Sandhiprakash ragas i) Having both komal Re and Dha – Purvi, Pooriyadhanshree, Shree, Jaitshree, etc.

ii) Having only Komal Re–Marwa, Pooriya, Pooriyakalyan, etc.

So, the majority of the pratahakalin Sandhiprakash ragas belong to Bhairav thata, except Lalit and Bhatiyar, and the sayankaleen Sandhiprakash ragas belong to two thatas – Poorvi and Marwa. The most popular and major ragas of the morning and the evening Sandhiprakash, come under the category of having both komal Re and Dha. But there are not many ragas that use komal Re and Dha in isolation.

Now, there are three *thatas* have come under the Sandhiprakash group: Bhairav, Poorvi, and Marwa. Bhairav and Poorvi use both komal Re and Dha, and Marwa thata uses only komal Re with suddha Dha.

So, it can be concluded in a general sense that komal Re is a more compulsory swara in the Sandhiprakash raga as compared to komal Dha.<sup>7</sup>

Now, an interrogation is coming out in this sense: is the presence of komal Re and Dha the only criterion for qualifying as a Sandhiprakash raga? Suppose this is the case, then why are the ragas like - Todi, Asawari, and Bhairavi not considered as Sandhiprakash ragas? And how do the ragas of Marwa thata fit in this category?

In this case, Bhatkhande ji mentioned it as follows<sup>8</sup>: "The ragas having komal Re and suddha Ga are Sandhiprakash ragas." This guideline is applied to the Bhairav, Poorvi, and Marwa thatas. This explains how the ragas like Marwa and Pooriya belong to this category. This also explains why Todi, Asawari, and Bhairavi, and their *janya* ragas do not qualify as Sandhiprakash ragas despite having komal Re and/or komal Dha both. Additionally, it can also be said that Asawari and Bhairavi thata ragas include Ga and Ni komal, that's not fulfill the criteria of the Sandhiprakash category. Also, according to the time theory, such ragas are performed in the second prahar of the day and night.

Bhatkhande Ji also mentioned that the teevra madhyam (m'a) comes in the evening sandhi group and continues into the next group.<sup>9</sup> i.e., this indicates that teevra madhyam begins in the evening, Sandhiprakash group, and continues into the ragas of the first prahar of the night between 7 - 10 p.m. A majority of Kalyan anga ragas have the prominence of teevra madhyam. So, another prime reason for Marwa is to be considered in the group of Sayankalin Sandhiprakash raga because it has at least komal Re with teevra madhyam.

Bhatkhande Ji also said about the rasa related to the Sandhiprakash ragas in the fifth part of his book 'Kramik Pustak Malika'. According to him, Sandhiprakash ragas evoke Karun and *Shant rasas*, and their associated *rasas*. He said ragas with suddha Re, Dha, and Ga are associated with *Shringar*, *Hasya*, and their associated *rasas*, while the ragas with komal Ga and Ni are associated with *Veer*, *Raudra*, and *Bhayanak* rasa.

He also said about the role of Madhyam, in a verse of his book Shreemallyakhasangeetam, like that – 'In the evening, there is the prominence of teevra madhyam, and in the morning, there is the prominence of suddha madhyam'.<sup>10</sup>

He also said - for both the morning and evening Sandhiprakash ragas, based on madhyam, it is easy to find out whether the Sandhiprakash ragas are Pratahakaleen or Sayankaleen. Generally, suddha madhyam prevails in the morning Sandhiprakash ragas, and tivra madhyam prevails in the evening Sandhiprakash ragas. Bhairav, Kalingara, Jogia, etc., are sung in the morning Sandhiprakash raga with suddha madhyam, and on the other hand, the ragas like Shree, Marwa, Pooriya, etc. are sung as the evening Sandhiprakash raga with tivra madhyam. However, in the evening, Sandhiprakash raga Poorvi, both the madhyams are definitely used. But in that, the tivra madhyam is more prominent compared with the suddha madhyam. Similarly, in the early morning, Sandhiprakash raga Ramkali, and Lalit, tivra madhyam is secondary, and suddha madhyam is prominent.<sup>11</sup>

In this way, in a whole day, in the ragas from morning to evening, the effect of suddhya madhyam progressively declines and tivra madhyam gains prominence. In the evening, ragas, tivra madhyam become dominant, while suddha madhyam remains secondary. Thus, there is a predominance of tivra madhyam in the evening ragas. It progressively declines as the hours pass into the night, and suddha madhyam becomes more significant. That's why madhyam is called 'Adhva-Darshak' swara; here 'Adhva' refers to the path, and 'Darshak' means demonstrating.

## Conclusion

The concept of Sandhiprakash ragas is deeply connected with the time theory of Hindustani classical music. It reflects the beauty of dawn and dusk through its melodies, which are the two most sensitive and expressive moments of the day. Morning Sandhiprakash ragas generally belong to Bhairav ang, while evening ragas are mostly from Poorvi and Marwa ang. Another important indicator is Madhyam: shuddha Madhyam suggests morning ragas, and teevra Madhyam suggests evening ragas. This gradual shift of Madhyam through the day beautifully mirrors the movement of nature from dawn to dusk and its reverse phenomenon. Bhatkhande also relates these ragas to Karun and Shant rasa, which suit the peaceful mood of these hours. He clearly describes the rules related to the Time Theory and Sandhiprakash ragas, which do not overlap with each other, and provides an explanation that reflects the unique characteristics of the ragas in a whole day. Thus, Sandhiprakash ragas are not only based on swara structure but also on the emotional and natural atmosphere of the time. Their correct performance time enhances both their beauty and rasa. Therefore, the Time Theory and ragas stand as one of the finest examples of the deep bond between music, time, and nature in Hindustani classical tradition.

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