

7.13 **Laya** or **Gathi** (speed)

The *Laya* is the speed of music in which it is supposed to be sung or played. There are three types of *Layas* - *Bilambitha* (slow), *Madhya* (medium) or *Dhhima* and *Drootha* (fast). But in practical field, there are some more variations, such as - *Aathi* (very) *Bilambitha*, *Bilambitha* and *Eesath* (slightly) *Bilambitha*, *Eesath-Bilambitha Madhya*, *Madhya* and *Aathi-Drootha Madhya*, *Eesath Drootha*, *Drootha* and *Aathi-Drootha*. It is very difficult to explain *Laya* of a song without practical demonstration and requires proper training to identify those rightly.

Although the instrument like metronome is not very suitable to measure the speed of Indian music, Jyotirindranath Tagore, one of the older brothers of Rabindranath Tagore, conducted some research in this direction and was able to find some appropriate approximate metronome settings which are listed in the following table : -

<i>Laya</i> or <i>Gathi</i>	or speed	Metronome settings
<i>Aathi Bilambitha</i>	or very slow	50
<i>Bilambitha</i>	or slow	60
<i>Esath Bilambitha</i>	or slightly slow	80
<i>Dhhima</i> or <i>Madhya</i>	or medium	100
<i>Esath Drootha</i>	or slightly fast	132
<i>Drootha</i>	or fast	160
<i>Aathi Drootha</i>	or very fast	200

Sometimes to keep the track of speed of the music, clapping in regular interval seems helpful but in the event of *Bisamapadee Thaals* it is not very easy to follow with.

7.14 **Use and Interpretation of the Alphanumeric Notations (Swara-Lipi)**

Unlike the symbolic pattern of notations of Western music, the notations used for Indian music completely depend upon the letters of alphabets of one or the other of many Indian languages. There are more than one set of musical notations in use in present day India. The set of notations - **Aakaar-Maathrik Swara-Lipi** (a set of notations in which the sign of vowel "aa" has been taken as one *Maathra* or unit of time), invented by Jyotirindranath Tagore, is most scientific and easily acceptable to computer keyboard. The notations used in this book mainly based on this *Aakaar-Maathrik* notations, of course with some changes and modifications to make it suitable for computer keyboard and easily accessible to the singers of the West.

The followings are the set of the signs and symbols of this new computer oriented notations with elaborate description and explanation. These are sufficiently suitable to represent any type of Indian music - *Hindustani* or *Karnatakee* (North or South Indian) - vocal or instrumental.

Swars - S - Sarhja	r - Komal Risav	R - Risav
	g - Komal Gaandhaar	G - Gaandhaar
M - Madhyam	m - Theebra Madhyam	
P - Pancham	dh - Komal Dhaibath	DH - Dhaibath
	n - Komal Nisaad	N - Nisaad

Sapthak - Mandra Sapthak (with a comma) = **S, R, G, M, P, DH, N,**
Madhya Sapthak (without a sign) = **S R G M P DH N**
Thaar Sapthak (with an apostrophe) = **S' R' G' M' P' DH' N'**

Maathra - "A" = one *Maathra*
": " = half *Maathra*
"." = quarter *Maathra*

Example - SRA = S - 1/2 *Maathra* and R - 1/2 *Maathra*. In this case there is no need of writing as S:R:, but S:RG: - means S - 1/2 *Maathra* and RG - together 1/2 *Maathra*. SRGMA - each note has 1/4 *Maathra*; so no need of writing S.R.G.M. Again S:.R. - means S has 3/4 *Maathras* and R has 1/4 *Maathra*.

"I" = This sign indicates the beginning and end of a *Thaal*.

"|" = This sign divides the *Thaal* in different *Pods* or feet.
Example - *Daadra Thaal* - I A A A | A A A I

"II" = This sign is placed at the beginning and the end of *Sthaayee* and *Aanthara*, and beginning of *Sanchaari*. It also indicates returning to *Sthaayee*.

"II II" = This sign is placed at the end of *Aavog* and indicates returning to *Sthaayee*.

" " = part of music outside the *Thaal* sign II...II is to be sung only once and never be repeated. So in case the part is to be repeated, it is put inside " " at the end of *Sthaayee*, *Aanthara* and/or *Aavog*.

Example - *Sthaayee* SA SA -A II.....SA SA -A II
aa mi . "aa mi ."

Aanthara or *Aavog* II.|.. SA SA -A II II
"aa mi ."

"#" = A sign like this over a *Maathra* in *Sthaayee* indicates at this point, *Aanthara* and/or *Sanchaari* part should be sung and the song will end here.

"{ }" = part of the notes in "{...}" to be sung twice.

"()" = part of notes inside "(...)" to be omitted while repeating the notes in "{...}"

"[]" = notes in "[...]" over the notes in "{...}" to be used while singing the part in "{...}" for the second time.

"I[]I" = an alternative tune of *Sthaayee* in "[...]" to be sung while repeating *Sthaayee* after *Sthaayee* or after *Aanthara*.

"II[]II" = In case of *Aavog* [or when song finishes at *Sthaayee*, after *Sthaayee*] the sign is "II[]II" with significance exactly as above.

Example - I{SA RA GA | MA (PA NA)}I NA PA I - while repeating the part in "{...}", omit the part in "(...)" and go over the part after next "I" [i.e. instead of

[NA PA]

singing PA NA sing NA PA. Eventually, I{SA RA GA | MA PA NA}I has exactly the same significance as above. But if the change is needed at the beginning of *Sthaayee* or in a part in "{...}" or in the middle of the part in "{...}", then "[...]" are used.

[SA SA]

[MA | PA]

Examples - II{SA RA GA | MA PA DHA}I or II{SA RA GA | MA PA DHA}I

"-" = continuation of previous note and/or vowel. Examples -

SA -A or SA -RA or SA -A -A -A or SA -RA -GA -MA
ga an ga an ga . . an ga . . an

When there is no "-", there is no continuity. Example -

SA RA GA MA
tho maa paa ney

" " = **Meerh** : a rolling on motion of one note to another touching all the *Shroothies* in between. Example - n -g or P -S'

Sparsha-Swar or **Kawn** = Touching note - while singing a note another note could be sung as if touching it slightly before or after. Examples - ^RGA ^MGA or GA_R GA_M