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PAPER 4

**DETAIL STUDY OF KATHAK, NAUTCH GIRLS,
NRITTA, NRITYA, DIFFERENT GHARANA-S,
PRESENT STATUS, INSTITUTIONS, ARTISTS**



ज्ञान - विज्ञानं विमुक्तये

PAPER 4

MODULE 22

CONTRIBUTION OF THE POETRY OF TORCH BEARERS OF THE LUCKNOW AND JAIPUR GHARANA-S

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ज्ञान - विज्ञानं विमुक्तये

Paper 4 Module 22 Contribution Of The Poetry Of Torch Bearers Of The Lucknow And Jaipur Gharana-s



PAPER 4

Detail Study Of Kathak, Nautch Girls, Nritta, Nritya, Different Gharana-s, Present Status, Institutions, Artists

Module 22 Contribution Of The Poetry Of Torch Bearers Of The Lucknow And Jaipur Gharana-s

When we analyse the contribution of great masters and families to the Lucknow and Jaipur *gharana* of Kathak, we find something that hits us at once. While the Jaipur *gharana* has benefitted from the contributions of many Gurus from different families, spread over a large geographical area, in the case of the Lucknow *gharana*, the most significant contributions have been from only one family- the Maharaj family.

The Lucknow *gharana* of Kathak came into existence in the beginning of the 19th century. The history of the kingdom of Avadh is closely linked with the Lucknow *gharana*. The kingdom of Avadh was established around 1722 AD, during the twilight of the Mughals, with Faizabad being its first capital, but by the time of the fourth Nawab, Asaf-ul-Daula, in 1775, it was moved to Lucknow. The city was North India's cultural capital and its Nawabs, best remembered for their refined and extravagant lifestyles, were patrons of the arts. Under them music and dance flourished, and many monuments were erected. They were the authors of the Ganga-Jamuna *tehzeeb* for

which Lucknow is still renowned. There is a saying: '*Sham-e-Awadh, Shubah-e-Benares*' meaning evening of Awadh and morning of Benares, are unique.

Prakashji came to the court of Nawab Asaf-ul-Daula and was employed as the court dancer. Grandson of Ishwari Prasad, Prakashji had been a Kathak at a temple in Hadiya tehsil near Allahabad. It is believed that the tragic death of his parents compelled him to migrate. When Prakashji came to Lucknow, along with his two brothers, he was appointed the court dancer by Nawab Asafuddaulah. He had considerable skill in '*gat bhava*' and '*artha bhava*'. It is believed that Prakashji had penned a collection of poetry called "*Pothi Prakash*". It is now lost but there was a section of it that was contained in an anthology created by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, called "*Santul Mubarak*" This too is now lost to us. It has been the tragedy of the intangible heritage of India that even when an attempt was made to give it a tangible form, it was lost due to carelessness, a lack of a sense of history and the absence of any value ascribed to the arts.

Prakashji had three sons – Maharaj Durga Prasad, Maharaj Thakur Prasad and Maharaj Maan Prasad. Durga Prasad was a prodigy in *Thumri* dancing but died early. It is said that the King bestowed the title of 'Singh' upon Maanji who then became Maan Singhji. He too was renowned for his skill as a *Thumri* dancer. Maharaj Thakur Prasad was the Kathak Guru of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and it is said that he received four *palkis* full of money as *Guru Dakshina*.

Thakur Prasad called his dance “*natwari nritya*” as it dealt with themes of Radha and Krishna. In the court, Thakur Prasad enjoyed such a senior position that he was allowed appear and dance before the nawab and the court, without his cap. Later, Thakur Prasad relocated to Benares and taught many of the famous courtesans of Benares. Thereafter, two of Durga Prasad’s sons, Kalka Prasad and Bindadin Maharaj were also employed in the court of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, where he was recognized for his exceptional talent.

The Nawab not only enjoyed giving patronage to dancers, but danced himself as well, taught, by Durga Prasad as a ‘*gandabandh shagird*’. The brief reign of Wajid Ali Shah from 1847-1856, is believed to be the golden age of Lucknow’s cultural life. The nawab himself was a great poet, composer and connoisseur of music and dance. His very first drama that he wrote in Urdu and which he directed himself was called “*Radha Kanhai*”. As the “Isht Dev” of the family of Thakur Prasadji and Durga Prasad ji, was Krishna, the Nawab’s interest in the theme of Radha and Krishna, the *Rasaleela*, the *Rahas*, and other aspects of the Radha Krishna love story gelled well together. The Nawab was taught by Durga Prasad but was also influenced by the *Rasadhari* performers and the *Rasleelas* of Vrindavan and Mathura. He himself choreographed a dance, *Rahas*, that he danced himself with the ladies of his court. As a result of this obsession on the part of the patron, with Radha and Krishna, the *abhinaya* sequences of the Lucknow *gharana* are mostly devoted to Krishna.

Maharaj Durga Prasad had three sons – Bindadin, Kalka Prasad and Bhairon Prasad. It is said that Maharaj Kalka and Bindadin were the

architects of the present form of Lucknow *gharana*, which is widely also known as Kalka-Bindadin *gharana*. Bindadin, along with his younger brother Kalka Prasad, born in 1842, were famous as 'Kalka-Bindadin ki jodi' (the Kalka-Bindadin twosome) and gave successful performances all over India. They were also known as 'Ram-Lakshman'. The Kalka Bindadin family provided the form with strength and generations thereafter nurtured their unique style, with the contribution of the Maharaj brothers - Achchan, Shambhu and Lachhu Maharaj, and in our times today, Achhan Maharaj's son, Pt. Birju Maharaj, being paramount.

The Muslim patrons had no patience with mere technical virtuosity. They wanted to see an art which mirrored life in all its moods. This encouraged the birth of new features in music. In Sitar for instance the *Razakhani gat* was created. The then prevalent *Khayal* form, that had replaced the *Dhrupad* in popularity, was found to be too technical and so the *Thumri* was born. This music had the qualities that were needed to support dance, music and drama were. It was simpler, and wordy and thus easy to comprehend. With its use of simpler *Raga* and *Raginis*, it appealed immediately to the heart. Similarly, the Lucknow *gharana* of Kathak came to be characterised as a dance which was graceful, decorative, suggestive, expressive and sensuous. "*Bhava*" became the forte of the Kalka-Bindadin Gharana. In this way their dance became capable of expressing the subtlest nuances of emotion. Thus the *thumri* dance that became popular in the court of Lucknow was artistic but not erotic like the street or *kotha* version of 'Nautch'.

The women, who learnt dance and music at the Parikhana, were trained by the teachers the Nawab brought to his palaces. Among the best dancers were Gulbadan and Sukhbadan who would sing, dance and do '*bhav batana*'. There were also some well-known Naqqals, like Ramzani and Kanhaiya. Kanhaiya it is said used to dance like Wajid Ali Shah himself. There were some Kashmiri *bhands* like Mirza Wahid well known for their graceful dance. They all aided in the expansion of the technical vocabulary, and forming the basis of the Lucknow *gharana*, emphasizing sensuous, expressive emotion. Bindadin Maharaj taught *Thumri* singing to many famous singers and court dancers. The Lucknow *gharana* placed emphasis on the *abhinaya* and *nritya* elements or expressional qualities of the dancing; it was famed for its subtlety and grace (*nazakat*). It is strong in its '*bhav paksh*' largely due to the lyrical pieces called *thumris*, that gave emphasis to the '*abhivyakti*' of the sub-textual meaning, delighting the intellect with its '*dhwani*', '*vyangya*' and richness of '*alankaras*'.

Born in 1830, Bindadin, whose original name was Vrindavan Prasad, was trained from the age of nine, by his father and uncle. He was a stickler for perfection. It is believed that he danced only '*tig dha dig dig thai*' for the first three years, regularly practicing it for twelve hours a day. Bindadin Maharaj proved to be a prolific writer and poet and penned and sang over 1500 *thumris* and other variants of *kavya*, especially crafted for Kathak use. Birju Maharaj is of the opinion that *Bindadin Maharaj* wrote 5000 compositions consisting of *Thumri*, *Dadra*, *Pad*, *Kavitta*, *Bhajan*, etc. Although most have been lost some are compiled by Pt. Birju Maharaj in a book called "*Ras Gunjan*". This immense contribution by Bindadin Maharaj brought in a renaissance

in Kathak that was raised to a high level of stylised, sophisticated and polished dance. The immense interest and patronage extended by the Nawab himself, court etiquette, and the famed ‘*nazakat*’ of Lucknow resulted in the dance of the Lucknow *gharana* having elements like the feet being held close together, glissades or *charis* and *chalans*, or micromovements like the ‘*kask-masak*’, ‘*kamar ka dora*’, ‘*kalai ka kaam*’, ‘*bhavon ka chalan*’, ‘*harkat*’, ‘*haav bhaav*’ etc.

Bindadin interpreted one line of kathak from dawn to dusk without repeating the imagery. The linguistic landscape of Bindadin Maharaj was multilingual and it included- Hindi, Urdu, Braj and Maithili. This synthesis resulted in a remarkably rich language tradition and a “*ganga-jamuni*’ *tehzeeb* for which Lucknow was celebrated. Reputed singers like Gauhar Jaan and Zohra Jaan would come from distant cities to Lucknow, not just for doing *Mujras*, but also to learn from Maharaj Bindadin whose disciples they were. In his history of Lucknow, called “Guzishta Lucknow” Abdul Halim Sharar wrote that “while dancing his feet touched the ground so lightly, that he used to dance sometimes on the edges of the sword and come to no harm”. After 1857, when the kingdom of Avadh ended, he went to the court of the king of Nepal and then Bhopal. He was warmly received in both places. When he danced he looked every inch the court dancer that he was, dressed in an *angarkha* or *achkan*, *churidar* and *dopalli* cap.

A perusal of the ‘*thumris*’ written by him reveal certain characteristic traits. Firstly, they were written for dance, as whatever the composition, due care was taken to embed the literary idea in a matrix of music that was suitable for dance and created spaces for

‘badhat’. For instance, in the *thumri* “*Aavan lachak lachak Braj nari, Mukh damini si chamkat chalein matvari*”, allowed an unending treatment of *chaals* to suggest a multitude of Braj *naris*. Further, this composition concludes with the words- “*Shyam lachak chale mukut dhar bansuri*” allowing for some exploration in male *gats* and *chalans* as well. The composer and singer dancer would himself demonstrate all these *chaals*.

Secondly, all the poetry penned by Bindadin, demonstrate a multitude of themes. Radha Krishna was the most popular idea in the poetry. “*Jhoolat radhe Navaal kishore*” is an example of a devotional piece addressed to the *yugal murti*. He also covered issues like Holi which was celebrated with great pomp in the court and it was required of him to come up with something new each time-“*Jasoda ke lal, khele hori, dhoom machyori*” is an example of how Bindadin attempted to marry the folk imagery with courtly requirements. The relationship between Radha and Krishna was also a significant aspect of his writings -- their longing, meeting union, parting and separation, all spilled forth from his quill. The yearning of the Gopis for Krishna, *Panghat* scenarios, *raas* dance, *nayika bhed*, and the emotional states of all types of *nayikas* in their relation with each other and with Krishna, *jhoolas* and much more was also covered.

Thirdly he did not write only *thumris* as is popularly believed but also other forms like *dhrupad*, *horis*, *khayals*, *tappas*, *bhajans*, *dadra* and *keherwa*. In many cases he had identified the *raga* and in most the *tala* was noted. Sometimes he wrote in ‘*joras*’ or pairs in which the *tala* and the *raga* remained constant. For instance, in the *thumri* “*Aavan lachak lachak Braj nari*” the *raga* is Hamir and the *tala* is

tritaal. Its '*jora*' is "*moh Chhedat Mohan banvari*" also in the same *raga* and *tala*. In some cases, the '*jora*' was essential as the two together gave a more complete picture of the emotions at play. For instance, in one poem Krishna could be the aggressor, with the *gopis* being a worried lot, constantly threatening to complain against him, while in the '*jora*' the Gopis may have the upper hand and we would see how Krishna was troubled. The *dadra* "*Rokat dagar pyare, Nandlal hamare*" had as its *jora* "*Dagar chalet dekh, Shyam man leeno*".

As a rule, his poetry was feminine in voice and touch. Whether it was the *thumri* set in the context of the '*panghat*'- "*Jal Jamuna bharan kaise joon aaj*" or in this *Khandita nayika* piece- "*Kahe ko mereghar aaye ho?*" That Bindadin could nuance feminine emotions is evident from this unusual trio set in the context of Holi. It uses the *Deepchandi taal* that he identifies with the word '*Chanchar*'. The first of this set is -- "*mein to kheloongi unhi se hori guiyaan*", its second variant – "*Kanha khelo kahan aise hori guyaan*" and its third variant that has a *viraha* – or separation, orientation- "*Ka se kheloon piya ghar nahin.*"

One of his most interesting compositions is the *Prahekika* which was in the nature of a guessing game in which the court of Wajid Ali Shah was challenged to guess why the new bride's hand was burnt. Bindadin came up with the composition- "*Naiy abla ras reet na jane, sej chadhi jiya mahe dari, rasa baat kahi tab chaunk padi, ...*" suggesting that it was the shock of the love play in which her clothes came undone, that made her snuff out the lamp with her bare hands- hence the burn!

However, almost all poetry was underpinned with a philosophical and spiritual bent, reflecting the eternal longing of the '*jivatma*' for the '*paramatma*'. The poem set in *Kaharwa*- "*Jasoda ke lal...*" ends with the following line- "*Raah taakat hoon mein nek najariya, tadpat hoon mohe kalna parat hai, Binda kahat yoonhi beeti umariya*". The poetic signature that Bindadin carried was "*Binda kahat*". Yet possibly his best known writing, called the *Lakshana geet* of Kathak is "*Nira tat dhang*" which in its poetic description, detailing the *sringar*/dance of Krishna with Radha and the *gopis*, with technical terms and *bols* visualising the dance, epitomises Kathak. Great teachers like the late Shambhu Maharaj taught this inseparable part of the training repertoire as a '*lakshan-geet*' of the dance, yet it stands apart as it does not contain his poetic signature.

Dancer Rani Khanum draws our attention to Hakim Md. Imam who in "*Madaran Mausaki*", has described '*Bhav Batana*', as follows "...in fact Benares is a center where a style of singing, dancing and *Bhava Batana* flourishes, a style most favoured by the present generation." "*Sangeet Kaladhar*" written by a state musician of Bhavnagar in the 18th century, describes several aspects of *Bhava Batana*. This shows how the art of "*Bhav batana*" was flourishing in the Royal courts of the medieval period. Apart from the Maharaj family, Beni Prasad and Prasadoo Kathak of Benares were also talented and known in that time for proficiency in dancing and *Bhava*. Bindadin Maharaj, was famous for *Bhava Batana* in sitting posture. In recent memory, the most experienced was Shambhu Maharaj known for *Sanchari Bhava* and hailed as a superb exponent of *Abhinaya* with spontaneity and excellence, who excelled

in the surprising twist of '*bol baant*' and '*bol banana*'. As an example of *Sanchari bhava* Shambhu Maharaj's treatment of "*Kaun gali gayo Shyam*" is oft cited, where he showed the '*gali*' via the parting in the hair, the eyes and even the nostrils. The treatment of '*Mohe chhedo na*', is cited as an example of *bol baant* for in the last refrain he changed the emphasis to pause after "*chhedo*" and make the '*na*' come across as an appeal to continue the '*chhedna*'. Shambhu Maharaj would not hesitate to perform bhav to ghazals like "*Tane mariz mein gham ka sumar baki hai*" or to songs very closely associated with the stigmatized *tawaif* culture- "*Atariya pe chadhi to ho gayi badnam*".

Many of Bindadin's *thumris* are used in films. Possibly the first was the use of the use of the *Lakshan geet* of Kathak, "*Niratata Dhaang*" which was used in an unexpected and somewhat humorous manner in the film – '*Chandan Ka Palna*' 1967, with music direction by R.D. Burman. In the film "*Shataranj ke Khiladi*", directed by Satyajit Ray, the *thumri* '*Kaanha main tause haari*', was sung and choreographed by Pt. Birju Maharaj and picturised on a young Saswati Sen. In more recent times, in '*Devdas*' certain parts of the song "*Kahe chhed chhed mohe garva*", choreographed by Pt. Birju Maharaj employs a mosaic of Bindadin's composition marked by the signature of '*Binda*' as in *Binda Shyam manat naahin*.

Kalka Prasad too was well known for his singing, but it was for his *layakari* and sense of rhythm that he was famed. Extremely handsome with beautiful dancing skills, he was proficient in playing the table and *pakhawaj*. Living a life of simplicity dedicated to the arts on the banks of the Ganga, he fathered three sons -- Achhan

Maharaj, Lachhu Maharaj and Shambhu Maharaj, whose real names were Jagannath Prasad, Baijnath Prasad and Shambhunath Prasad. Achhan Maharaj received training from both his father, and his uncle. Regrettably after his father's death Achhan Maharaj was trained exclusively by Bindadin Maharaj. On his death in 1918, Bindadin Maharaj who had been able to teach Lachhu Maharaj, for about ten years, entrusted young Achhan to teach his two brothers as well and as thoroughly as he had been taught himself. Like Bindadin Maharaj, Achhan Maharaj served as a court dancer in some of the north Indian states, including Rampur and Raigarh. True to the traditions of his *gharana* he was adept at *abhinaya*, and also *nritta* aspect even though his portly figure would not suggest it.

During the time that the Lucknow *gharana* flourished was also the same time that the Benaras *gharana* was created. During this period, Kathak was also extensively performed by *tawaifs*, who themselves developed the art in parallel to its refinement in court. They frequently performed *abhinaya* on lighter classical music of such as the *dadra*, *kajri*, *tappa* as well as *thumri*. Given the *tawaifs'* environment, their performance style of Kathak also differed from the court style, involving more of what in Kathak is termed *nakhra* (mischievous playfulness). As the dance teachers of these *tawaifs* were also often the dance teachers of the court dancers, there was a fairly free interchange of ideas between the two milieus, and this helped consolidate the repertoire of Kathak.

However, with the advent of British rule, things changed, and sent Kathak into a sharp decline. The Victorian administrators publicly pronounced it a base form of entertainment, despite often privately enjoying the pleasures of the *tawaif*. Indeed, by associating Kathak

solely with the *tawaifs* and then associating the *tawaifs* with out-and-out prostitution, Kathak acquired an unwholesome image: the entirely British concept of the '*nautch*', designed solely for the purposes of seduction. During these times of cultural hardship, the role of the *tawaifs* in preserving the art forms should not be underestimated. Famous *tawaifs* such as Gauhar Jan were instrumental in the maintenance and continuation of Kathak, even as it was officially castigated by the prevailing political opinion. Kathak first received world's attention in the early 20th century through Achhan, Lachhu and Shambhu Maharaj and their lineage, that went on carry forward the tradition for the next generation, both as dancers and later as dance gurus.

Few people realize that Sundar Prasadji, the erstwhile doyen of the Jaipur *gharana* trained with Bindadin Maharaj and as such he was adept at both Jaipur and Lucknow *gharanas*. Such inter-*gharana* training was unheard of till then.

In contrast to the scenario in Lucknow, the in the Jaipur *gharana* of Kathak, there were mostly male dancers. The first girl from a traditional family to be trained and allowed to dance was Jaykumariji, daughter of Jai Lalji, who was herself known to dance a rather vigorous dance. They danced a very virile version of Kathak. Their dance was marked by strong footwork, complicated *layakari*, stamina oriented '*tayyari*' of performing '*lamjhad parans*' and multiple '*palli*' compositions. The Kathak practitioners cannot be traced back to just one family, or one centre. Many of the principalities had their own dancers of great merit. In Jaipur there was a *Gunijan Khana*, the centre for the distinguished artistes,

patronized by the king, that had a monthly salary bill of over 1.5 lacs of rupees. Most artistes had to perform daily to receive their emoluments, but there were certain senior and special artistes who were known as *Mangalmukhis*, who were expected to perform only on certain auspicious days. In Udaipur the equivalent of the *Gunijan Khana* was known as the *Sangeet Prakash*. Even during the last years of Maharaja Madho Singh, as many as eight families of Kathak dancers were on the payroll of the *Gunijan Khana*.

Then there was the fact of the religious sentiments of the patron. As all patrons of the Jaipur *gharana* of Kathak were themselves Hindus and religiously inclined with some like Pratap Singh, a poet and devotee of Radha-Govind, whose ‘*darshan*’ and presentation of a self-composed ‘*pada*’ was a daily practice with him. These ‘*padas*’ which he composed all his life, were set to ragas and *raginis* by his musicians. Under him, *Ras-Leela* was staged in the temples of Govind-Dev and Brajnidhiji, the latter built by him, and music concerts were frequent. Like Nagridas, the poet-prince of Kishangarh, he composed devotional ‘*padas*’ and set them to music. He sang them in his devotional ecstasy. Thus poets and dancers at the durbars were also encouraged to compose on the themes of the Hindu Gods. That is how the fecund tradition of Ganesh *Vandana*, Ganesh *Kavitts*, etc. began in the Jaipur *gharana*.

Reeti kaal poets were patronised by the rulers. Their “*Kavit Savaiyan*” have made it into the repertoire of Jaipur *gharanas* Kathak. None of these *kavitts* and *vandanas* were known for their evocative poetic content but all of them translated well into a powerful dance. *Kavitts* are poems set in rhythmic cycle, liberally

using the percussive *bols* of the *tabla*, *pakhawaj* and dance along with the poetic word while narrating mythological episodes like “*Kaliya daman*”, “*Govardhan lila*”, etc. The dancer expresses the words of the *kavita* with appropriate hand gestures and symbols the words had a tendency to come out fast and there was no chance of exploring any spaces for the languorous creation of *rasa*. Yet *Kavits* upto 50 *taal* cycles were danced. The dancers would recite them very fast and would dance them as fast too, making it less a poetic and more of a thrilling experience.

The Kathak dancers of Jaipur had developed their own style distinct from the Lucknow and Banaras *gharanas* because of its footwork. Kathak was the name of a community living in the Shekhawati area of the erstwhile Jaipur State. When the Shekhawat chiefs joined imperial service of the Mughals, the Kathak dancers also went with them and performed there. When the Mughal empire crumbled, musicians and dancers also left Delhi and Agra and shifted to provincial capitals. Jaipur was a very favourable *darbar*. It was due to this interchange that by the 18th century the art of *thumri* singing reached Rajasthan’s courts, and became a part of Kathak’s repertoire. Till then, according to dancer and scholar Puru Dhadhich, dancing would happen to ‘*maand*’, ‘*jhula*’ and ‘*phag*’ songs.

In the Jaipur *gharana* too one comes across dancers with a command over both the *nritta* and the *nritya* aspects of dance. Pt. Narayan Prasad was one among them. *Shringar* was his strong point. A devotee of lord Krishna he was an accomplished composer and dancer of *thumris* and *kavitts* that had Krishna Lila as the theme. Narayan Prasad’s father Hanuman Prasad, who along with his

brother Hari Prasad formed the '*Dev-Pari ka Jora*', was a master of the *lasya ang* of Kathak. He was an ardent devotee of Govindjee and never failed to perform there at the Phagutsav. He would wait like a besotted lover outside for the gates to open.

Most of the distinguished dancers of the Jaipur *gharana* were creators of lovely pure dance pieces or *Kavitts* that had words but were not really *abhinaya* pieces in the strict sense of the word. For instance, "*tandavgatimundan pe nacahat girdhari*" was a popular "*Kaliya daman Kavitt*", but it did not allow for any *abhinaya*. Most of the *abhinaya* pieces that the Jaipur Kathaks danced were pieces that had been written traditionally in Krishna *bhakti*, that came to Rajasthan when, in the wake of Muslim invasions, the sacred idols were moved from the Gangetic plains to the Rajput kingdoms for safe keeping. Along with them came the ritual specialists and the traditional songs that formed part of their worship. The rulers and the people of Rajasthan embraced Krishna *bhakti*, and the literature in the nature of *bhakti shringara* became popular. One unique aspect of the patronage was that the rajas supported the painting of *ragas* and *raginis* often as dancers.

The traditional ritual specialists like the *rasadharis* used the poetry arranged musically in the *Dhrupad* and *Prabandha* forms. The *bhajans* and *padas* were often of the *ashtachhap kavis*, using the *bols* of dance as part of the poetry. Even in the famous Ganesh *vandana* of this *gharana*, the words are a mix of words with meaning and words with mnemonic value- "*Gan Gan Ganpati Gaj mukh mangal, git gita gida thun thun tat tat thai, jai jag vandan, vakratund vidhata...*"

The poetic imagery was actually even part of the pure dance sequences. For instance, Narayan Prasadji's '*Nav ki gat*' was a wordless piece that made all onlookers feel that they were riding the waves. The Jaipur Kathaks were more inclined towards the '*khula*' or unstructured nature of Kathak and to the underlying *tala* awareness. That is why they were against itemization, which *bhavarthak* poetry tends to do, and even in the poetry that they did use, often taken from folk forms, they were conscious about the beats of the rhythm and the *chhand*. Even today, Urmila Nagar dances folk songs like "*Sajan aaya hai sakhi*", while Prerana Shrimali has used the poetry of Guru Gobind Singh for its weightiness and strong *chhand* treatment.

As the Jaipur *gharana* Kathaks moved far and wide, they incorporated many elements. In fact, they were quite open to new influences and Sunder Prasadji's going to learn from Bindadin Maharaj is an example of their catholic approach.

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