

Why not all the 72 Melakarta ragas?

Sightseeing vs Practice

Real Music Practice Isn't About Covering Ground

Many enthusiastic learners get fascinated by the idea of "learning all 72 Melakarta ragas.

It's like tourists on a bus tour. They take a photo at every famous site, never leaving the sidewalk. "Look, I've *seen* the Eiffel Tower, the Colosseum, the Taj Mahal!". They were there, but were they really there?

The checklist style learning of ragas is the same. You pass through many. But you don't really know any.

Real practice is more like cultivating a garden — it requires returning to the same patch of soil every day, noticing subtle changes, and learning to care for it deeply.

In Indian tradition, even members of the audience are considered to be of two kind: a *rasika* (one who tastes deeply) and a *drishta* (one who just sees).

Layers beneath the notes

The goal isn't just to "play the notes correctly." That's the beginning. We must:

- Remove the delay between notes, so that the music is played in time.
- Develop optimal phrasing and fingering — to remove the delays

- Develop the feedback loop between your playing and how the music is meant to be - to play the music with *bhava* (emotion) and presence.

Remember that changing a note of a scale pattern may give a new scale pattern with a new name. That doesn't mean much to a practising musician. In the case of raga playing, ragas require the specific raga rules to be added to the scale to start playing the raga. Changing a note on a scale will not give you the new raga. Raga is not the same as the scale.

Exposure vs Mastery

The fallacy: *If I've heard it, read about it, or tried it once, I know it.*

But as a practising musician, you need to be able to build the music from the notes, including the raga slides — in real time, with your voice or instrument. Knowing the pattern or notes and the associated name will not enable you to do this. Don't fall for this "illusion of comprehension". The map is not the path.

What's Practical, What's Rare

In reality, only a few ragas are widely used and known deeply. Instead of skimming all 72, take a few foundational ragas and:

- Learn their compositions slowly.
- Understand their characteristic phrases (*prayogas*).
- Practice the physical moves and skills to play them in real time

You can slowly move to improvisation. In our method, you can also try to find chords for the ragas, to sing in time along with rhythm and chords, to build real musical fluency.

Quality Before Quantity — Always

Even among the rare musicians who can truly say they know all the 72 Melakarta ragas or a few 100 ragas, quality still came first. Mastery is not about covering ground quickly — it's about digging deep.

Pick a few raga phrases or short compositions. Sit with it. Let it teach you. Let it grow within you.