

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: *SIKH ŚABAD KĪRTAN AS A MUSICAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY*

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The performance of devotional music in India has been an active, sonic conduit where spiritual identities are shaped and forged, and both history and mythology lived out and remembered daily. For the followers of Sikhism, congregational hymn singing has been the vehicle through which text, melody and ritual act as repositories of memory, elevating memory to a place where historical and social events can be reenacted and memorialized on levels of spiritual significance.

This dissertation investigates the musical process of *Śabad kīrtan*, Sikh hymn singing, in a Sikh musical service as a powerful vehicle to forge a sense of identification between individual and the group. As an intimate part of Sikh life from birth to death, the repertoire of *Śabad kīrtan* draws from a rich mosaic of classical and folk genres as well as performance styles, acting as a musical and cognitive archive.

Through a detailed analysis of the *Āsā Dī Vār* service, *Śabad kīrtan* is explored as a phenomenological experience where time, place and occasion interact as a meaningful unit through which the congregation creates and recreates themselves,

invoking deep memories and emotional experiences. Supported by explanatory tables, diagrams and musical transcriptions, the sonic movements of the service show how the Divine Word as *Śabad* is not only embodied through the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, but also encountered through the human enactment of the service, aurally, viscerally and phenomenologically.

*SIKH ŚABAD KĪRTAN AS A MUSICAL*  
CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY

By

Janice Faye Protopapas.

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all those on the path of *Gurmat Sangīt* and also in loving memory of my Hindustani vocal teacher, Shrimati Mangala Tiwari, who imparted the deep knowledge of *rāgā* and *rasa* to me.

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥  
ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਵਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੀਨੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਭਿ ਦਰਬਾਰੇ ॥  
ਅੰਗੀਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਓ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਭਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਾਰੇ ॥੧॥  
ਸੰਤਨ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਗਲ ਸਵਾਰੇ ॥  
ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਿਧਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਖਸਮ ਹਮਾਰੇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਆਉ ਬੈਠੁ ਆਦਰੁ ਸਭ ਥਾਈ ਉਨ ਨ ਕਤਹੂੰ ਬਾਤਾ ॥  
ਭਗਤਿ ਸਿਰਪਾਉ ਦੀਓ ਜਨ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਾਤਾ ॥੨॥੩੦॥੯੪॥

*Sorat'h, Fifth Mehla:*

*All beings and creatures are subservient to all those who serve in the Lord's Court.*

*Their God made them His own, and carried them across the terrifying world-ocean. ||1||*

*He resolves all the affairs of His Saints.*

*He is merciful to the meek, kind and compassionate, the ocean of kindness, my Perfect Lord and Master. ||Pause||*

*I am asked to come and be seated, everywhere I go, and I lack nothing.*

*The Lord blesses His humble devotee with robes of honor; O Nanak, the Glory of God is manifest. ||2||30||94||*

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This dissertation is a product of many years and many individuals, the names of only a few, which I can mention. I am indebted to all the students and teachers of *Gurmat Sangīt* who I encountered throughout my research both in India and the USA. I would personally like to thank all the students and staff in the *Gurmat Sangīt Department*, Punjabi University, Patiala who opened up their classrooms and homes and assisted me in the field. Special gratitude goes to Dr. Gurnam Singh whose guidance was an invaluable part of this undertaking. I am also indebted to Satguruji and the *Nāmdhārī* community who welcomed me into their *sangat* and offered me privileged glimpses into a truly extraordinary musical community. I would also like to express sincere gratitude to the students and staff at *Jawaddi Taksal*, with whom I blissfully traveled on the mystical journey of *Gurbāñī*.

I am eternally indebted to the Sikh congregation at large; I have been deeply enriched by the wisdom, faith and worship of this community. I offer heartfelt gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Provine whose patience and diligence guided me through the writing and completion of this dissertation. His attention to detail and his critical remarks have made me a better scholar, writer and thinker. My biggest thanks goes to the members of my family who have supported my endeavors throughout my academic career, to my parents through whom I imbibed the *rasa* of sacred music and to John and my two beloved children, Helena and Yiorgo whose musical spirits continue to amaze and delight me.

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\* Sound recordings are provided for these selections in the Appendices

# Orthography

## Terminology, transliteration and translation

### **Terminology and transliteration**

This study relies on a large bank of native terminology, which draws primarily from *Gurbāñī*, the liturgical language of Sikhism. Some explanation on the transliteration and pronunciation of these terms is necessary. A member of the Indo-Aryan language family, *Gurbāñī* contains vocabulary from Sanskrit, regional *Prakrits* and *Apabhramsha*, as well as *Sahaskrit*. It also contains vocabulary of Perso-Arabic origin. It is written in the semi-syllabic script *Gurmukhī*, an evolute from the ancient Brahmi script.

The basic system for transliteration of *Gurbāñī* terms used in this book follows the ISO 15919 international standard on romanization of Indic Scripts. I have attempted to render the transliteration of native terms according to customary usage. Diacritical markings are provided for all native terms except for the transliteration of lyrics in the music transcriptions, for which I have romanized the lyrics without the aid of diacritics.

### **Translation**

For the transliteration and translations of scriptural passages, I have relied primarily on two translated versions of *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*: an online *Gurbāñī* search engine, *Sikhithemax.com*, and also on Manmohan Singh's popular version of

the *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*, both of which provide text in the original script, transliteration and translation in English.<sup>1</sup> These sources are cited in the dissertation as STM and MMS respectively. In some places, I have abbreviated the *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib* as *SGGS* in the text, as well as in the footnotes. Occasionally, I resort to the customary usage of referring to the scripture as the *Ādī Granth*, literally first Scripture, with the abbreviation of *AG*. In most cases, I have provided the text in *Gurbāṇī* with transliteration and translation.

In citing the author of a given hymn, I have also employed the customary practice of the referring to the *Gurū* by the code word *Mahalā*, abbreviated with “*M*” followed by the number of the *Gurū*. The works of Gurū Nānak, Gurū Angad, Gurū Amar Das, Gurū Rām Das, Gurū Arjan, and Gurū Tegh Bahadur are indicated with M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, and M9 respectively.

## **Transliteration**

The *Gurmukhī* script contains forty-two letters with ten vowel sounds and thirty-two consonants. It also includes two symbols for nasal and one for reduplication. The below chart provides a guide for pronunciation.

### Vowels

The line of top of a vowel indicates that it is long vowel sound.  
a (short) as the *u* in *but*  
ā (long) as the *a* in *far*  
i (short) as the *i* in *sit*  
ī (long) as in the *ee* in *sweet*  
u (short) as in the *u* in *put*

---

<sup>1</sup> Manmohan Singh, trans., *Shri Guru Granth Sahib: English and Punjabi translation of the Adi Granth*, 2nd ed., 8 vols. (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 2002); [www.Sikhithemax.com](http://www.Sikhithemax.com)

ū (long) as in the *oo* in *cool*  
ṛ with a dot is a vowel as the *ri* in *rip*  
ē is always a long vowel as the *a* in *mate*  
ai as the *a* in *fat*  
ō is always a long vowel as the *o* in *pole*  
au as the *au* in *caught*

### Nasal vowels

*Bindī*: (.) looks like a period below a letter as in the word *amṛta*.  
*Tippī*: (̣) looks like an inverted half moon and is placed above letter to nasalize it.  
*Adak*: (̣) is a symbol that indicates stress on the consonant that proceeds it: such as in **सरबत्त** would be transcribed by doubling the final consonant “t” in *sarabatt*.  
*Visarga* (: ) and *halant* ( ) are two symbols used to represent a slight aspirate to the following letter.

### Consonants and Nasals

ka as the *k* in *kitten*  
kha is aspirated as the *kh* in a compounded word: *jackhouse*  
ga as *g* in *goat*  
gha is aspirated as the *gh* in a compounded word: *bughouse*  
ṅa is retroflex *n*  
ca is *ch* as in *church* or *cello*  
ccha is aspirated as the *cch* in a compounded word: *churchhouse*  
ja as in *jack*  
jha is aspirated as in *bridgehouse*  
ṅa is a nasal *n* as in *bunyan*  
ṭa is retroflex *t*  
ṭha – is an aspirated retroflex  
ḍa – is retroflex *d*  
ḍha – is an aspirated retroflex  
ṛa - is retroflex *r*  
ṇa - is retroflex *r*  
ta – as the *t* in *tube*  
th – as in *that*  
da – as is *dad*  
dha – is aspirated as in *mudhouse*  
na – as in *night*  
pa – as in *puppy*  
pha – as *f* in *frank*  
ba as in *bank*  
bha is aspirated as in *labhouse*  
ma – as in *man*  
ya – as in *yellow*

ra – as in *right*  
la – as in *lamb*  
ɭa – is a *retroflex l*  
va – as in *velvet*  
śa – as in *shoe*  
sa – as in *sun*  
ha – as in *happy*  
(Sounds borrowed from Perso-Arabic lexicon)  
qa – as in *quick*  
kha – as *coffee*  
ġa – as in *got*  
za – as in *zebra*  
fa – as in *father*



# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## Introduction to this Study

ਭਲੇ ਭਲੇ ਰੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਆ ॥  
ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮਾ ਰਾਮਾ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ॥  
ਛੋਡਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੇ ਧੰਧ ਸੁਆਉ

*bhalō bhalō rē kīrtanīyā ॥  
rām ramā rāmā gun gāō ॥  
chōḍ māiā kē dhandh suāō ॥1॥*

*Blessed and good is such a kīrtanīya, who sings such Praises.  
He sings the Glorious Praises of the Lord,  
And renounces the entanglements and pursuits of Maya [illusion].<sup>1</sup>*

*It is 3:00 a.m. in the cool and tranquil morning at the Dārbār Sāhib (the official title of the Golden Temple) in Amritsar, Punjab. This time period, “amṛta vēla,” (the ambrosial hour) is referred to by devout Sikhs as the most auspicious hour to pray and praise God. Situated in the center of large man made tank of water, this majestic temple illumines golden against the blackness of the night sky. From the inner chambers, heavenly music is broadcasted throughout the religious complex. Sitting in the inner sanctum of the Dārbār Sāhib, the experience of listening to Śabad kīrtan (Sikh hymn singing) is thick with resonance. The vibrant chords on the harmonium and the syncopated tablas accompany melodious voices singing hymns from the Gurū Granth Sāhib, showering the congregation with drops of amṛta rasa (the mood of ecstasy), creating a harmony between revelation and raga. When asked the effects of singing kīrtan, a Sikh musician, Bhai Anup Singh responded: “Ananda. I feel great joy and bliss.”<sup>2</sup>*

The term *Śabad kīrtan* refers to the singing of Sikh hymns from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* (Scripture of the Sikhs). *Śabad kīrtan* serves a socio-religious function to arouse mystical love and ecstasy, to invoke a communal and inherited memory, and to impart teachings from the religious doctrine. While the *rāgīs* and *kīrtanīyā* (trained musicians) act as the ministers of music, congregational singing offers a

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<sup>1</sup> *Ādi Granth*, p. 885 (henceforth abbreviated as *AG*).

<sup>2</sup> Bhai Anup Singh, interviewed by author, *Dārbār Sāhib*, Amritsar, India, April 4, 2007.

tremendous advantage to the devotees, as the following hymn by Gurū Arjan suggests:

Individual recitation is like irrigation by water from the well, which only benefits a small field; while group *kīrtan* singing is like rainfall, which covers a large area and benefits many people at the same time.<sup>3</sup>

During the period of 2007-2008, I traveled extensively throughout Punjab, India witnessing and participating in *Śabad kīrtan* events. The dynamic involvement of the congregation was undeniable. In each and every event, hymn singing acted as the centripetal force, engaging the community of listeners in a sonic experience of togetherness.

This dissertation examines the performance of Sikh *Śabad kīrtan* as a cohesive force that unites the Sikh community of Punjab, India. To understand the role of *Śabad kīrtan* in the construction of Sikh identity and memory, I explore the prescribed musical and textual repertoires and practices and how they are currently being performed at the *Dārbār Sāhib* temple complex in Amritsar, Punjab. *Dārbār Sāhib*, commonly referred to as the Golden Temple, is an ideal site for this investigation. Perceived by Sikhs as both a geographic and spiritual axis of the Sikh universe, much like the Vatican to the Catholic, this location bears witness to many different styles of the *Śabad kīrtan* service as it has evolved over the past 500 years.

Encountering and understanding the *Śabad kīrtan* experience can be a daunting task for a neophyte as it is so deeply interwoven into the ritual fabric of the Sikh worship service. Embedded in the hymns and the rituals surrounding the service

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<sup>3</sup> G.S. Mansukhani, *Indian Classical Music and Sikh Kirtan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press and IBH, 1982), 101.

is a historical consciousness and social and emotional identity that is renewed during each service. Thus, to ascertain the meaning and function of *Śabad kīrtan* requires a familiarity with Sikh history along with the musical and textual framework described in the *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*, as well as the extra-musical functions surrounding the music. Additionally, knowledge of the socio-cultural norms surrounding *Śabad kīrtan* shed insight into its role, function and expression in the Sikh musical experience. To accomplish this task, this dissertation explores *Śabad kīrtan* by (1) placing it within a historical context, (2) investigating it as a music genre, (3) examining the rules and roles that govern a Sikh service, and (4) mapping a process of social interaction between the musicians and the congregation.

### **Essential Questions**

*A kīrtan chaṅkī* (service of *Śabad kīrtan*) may be understood as a narrative of life, the presentation of a reoccurring belief, a personal and collective coherence renewed in the musical events of the service. What roles and functions do *Śabad kīrtan* play in the Sikh service? How does *Śabad kīrtan* act as process of social interaction to promote a space of collective identity? How is *Śabad kīrtan* woven into the fabric of the life of the Sikh? How does presentation affect the listeners and how do listeners shape the performance practice? How is the music embodied and an aesthetics of the congregation cultivated? How is communal remembrance encoded and enacted through a service of *Śabad kīrtan*? How does the language itself perceive and promote the role and function of sacred music and hymn singing? To answer these questions, I will analyze the musical and contextual elements of the service,

along with the process of interaction between the musicians themselves, between the musicians and the audience and between audience and musical performance, employing historical, musicological and ethnographic methods.

My approach is interdisciplinary, drawing on philosophy, cognitive science, linguistics and anthropology, placing emphasis on music and phenomenology, music and cognition, music and emotion and the embodiment of music. I consider Randall McClellan's definition of music a perfect ontological seed within which these key components are embedded:

Music is a dynamic multi-layered matrix of constantly shifting tonal relationship unfolding within time, through which we may experience intensified emotions and an alternation of our state of consciousness. Because of its dynamic quality, our primary attraction to music is both physical and emotional – physical because music travels through the air by means of molecular pressure waves that can be felt bodily, emotional, because music creates mood environments to which we respond on a subconscious and non-verbal level. It is through our physical and emotional response to music that mental and spiritual attitudes develop which create, in turn, the basis of our aesthetic enjoyment.<sup>4</sup>

Phenomenology has been an overarching theoretical lens through which I have explored the *Śabad kīrtan* as a lived experience. This philosophical lens emphasizes the immediate, concrete, sensory-life world, attempting to ground knowledge in the world of lived experiences. I could understand the changing traditions and the social and personal value and role of *Śabad kīrtan* in the lives of the devotee. Participating as more of an insider in the sub-culture, as an active member, learner and worshipper afforded me the opportunities to experience the phenomena I

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<sup>4</sup> Randall McClellan, *The Healing Forces of Music* (New York: Amity House, 1988), 68.

was investigating. Through this method, I could explore more fully the role of time and space in the musical experience.

### **Entering the scene**

Since emerging as a religious community in northwest India in the fifteenth century, Sikhs have undergone waves of discrimination and oppression by India's rulers with the most recent and devastating attacks on this religious community in the 1980s. The Anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and the consequent massacre of thousands of innocent Sikhs by the Indian government deeply influenced Sikh identity and confidence. This gave rise to a wave of efforts in the 1990s by the Sikh community to restore the Sikh spirit.<sup>5</sup> One such initiative was led by group of dedicated Sikh musicians and scholars in Punjab, who, as one of my informants Baba Sohan Singh of *Jawaddi Taksāl* explained, formed a committee (*Rāg Nirnāyak Committee*) to invigorate the community with the rich musical tradition of Sikhism.<sup>6</sup> This team recognized that such an initiative was the key not only to restoring Sikh identity, but also to evoking collective memories of might, unflinching courage and self-sacrifice, determination and mystical union, thus serving as a powerful didactic tool to re-educate the masses about their faith.

I entered this music revival scene in 2002. While my initial investigation took place in several Sikh communities in Pennsylvania and Maryland, my dissertation research on the congregational experience through *Śabad kīrtan* led me

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the Sikh genocide, see Jyoti Grewal, *Betrayed by the State: The Anti-Sikh Pogrom of 1984* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Baba Sohan Singh, interviewed by author, *Jawaddi Taksāl*, Ludhiana, March 10, 2007.

on a journey throughout Punjab, from city to village, *Gūrdwāra* to home, music festival to street festival, in travels by train, bus and even on foot to the highest Himalayan pilgrimage sites.

### **Pursuing the Resonance of Memory**

Examining the impact of sacred word and sound on the formation of self and community has been an area I have been fascinated with for over twenty years, spending a better part of this time studying the classical music and languages in North India.<sup>7</sup> My first encounter with sacred sound occurred in the mid-1980s, when I traveled to India on a study abroad program through the University of Wisconsin. Living in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, I was immersed in the world of the sacred word and sound as I learned Sanskrit and North Indian classical vocal music. A chance trip to Rajasthan took me to the Thār desert, where I first heard the *ravanhata*, a folk bowed instrument played by a traveling bard. The bard played a folk melody that struck a deep chord within me, propelling me on to what would become a twenty-year quest in search of the source of that Rajasthani folk melody.<sup>8</sup>

This search brought me back to India repeatedly, specifically to the city of Varanasi, where I studied Hindi, Sanskrit, Hindustani vocal music and medieval songs, yearning to experience that resonant folk tune once again. In the summer of

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<sup>7</sup> This includes an ethnographic study of Sanskrit education and recitation among Brahmins, Janice Protopapas, “The Changing Face of Sanskrit Education” (master’s thesis, University of Maryland, 1996), classical Indian vocal music training, and a translation (unpublished) of a metaphysical Sanskrit treatise, “*Chidgaganachandrika*” Kalidas (Varanasi: Sampurananda Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, 1980), which explores the properties of sound and consciousness.

<sup>8</sup> I felt that somehow, a deep memory was housed in the sonic structure of this tune and by hearing the tune once again I may be able to recall the memory.

2001, at *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*, a *Nāmdhārī* Sikh community located near Ludhiana, Punjab, India, I encountered this melody once again performed in an early morning prayer service, the *Āsā Dī Vār*.<sup>9</sup> The primary *rāgā* in which this service was sung is *Rāgā Āsā*, which I later found out, was based on folk-based tune from Rajasthan set in *Rāgā Āsā*. Later, I would learn that Sikh music incorporated many local tunes and *rāgās*, such as this folk tune.

My exposure to *rāgā* music was primarily through training in classical Indian vocal music and attending numerous concerts and music functions with emphasis placed on musical virtuosity. Whereas the educated classes had typically patronized Indian classical music as “art music,” Sikh hymn singing combined and incorporated both classical and folk-based *rāgās* in a worship music tradition for the lay congregants where musical virtuosity took a second place to emphasis on the lyrics. This approach towards *rāgā* music for the masses was new to me and an area I was eager to explore.

## **Fieldwork**

Over the next six years, I embarked on study in this topic. First, I met with *rāgīs* and attended Sikh services at local *Gūrdwāras* in the USA, followed by intensive researching in Punjab, India, where I had the occasion to live on the campus of Punjābī University in Patiala and work closely with the staff and students in the Department of *Gurmat Sangīt* (Sikh music system) under the invitation and guidance

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<sup>9</sup> *Āsā Dī Vār* is a poetic ballad in twenty-four sections that is sung and recited daily in the early morning hours by Sikh congregants. See Chapter Eight for analysis of this ballad.

of Dr. Gurnam Singh, Department Head. While I developed a theoretical and practical knowledge of *Śabad kīrtan* on the campus, I was actively engaged within the larger Sikh community, visiting numerous *Gūrdwāras* and participating and documenting a wide variety of Sikh musical events, including processions, festivals, engagement and wedding ceremonies, along with the numerous religious holidays celebrated throughout the Sikh year. From village to village, across the countryside and fertile fields of Punjab, I could hear the singing and recitation of Sikh hymns from the *amṛt vela* (early morning around 4 a.m. when the recitation of *Āsā Dī Vār* commences) to the *Kīrtan Sōhila* (last hymn recital at night).

### **Interviews and Documentation**

During this time, I conducted over eighty interviews with a wide variety of informants who were both directly and indirectly related to *Śabad kīrtan*, as professional *rāgīs*, musicians, and scholars, as well as the lay community. Many of the interviews were audio or video recorded, with lists provided in the appendices. The subjects of the interviews ranged from questions related to the musical system and performance style to psycho-emotional and metaphysical experiences of singing and listening to *Śabad kīrtan*. Many of these interviews were open-ended, enabling me to follow the streams of thought and in-depth experiences that were often unformulated, yet powerful in their lives. While I relied on standard historical sources to validate historical references, I asked my informants about their personal memories. I wanted to understand, the people's memory and how people construct memory from the *kīrtan* events.



To familiarize myself with the *rāgā*-based *kīrtan* tradition and its historical connection and importance, I attended numerous festivals of Sikh music, which commemorated historical events in Sikh history, such as birthdays, martyrdom, and coronation days of the Gurus, or days devoted to the Scripture itself. In addition, the events were held at historical *Gūrdwāras*, which themselves imparted strong memories and emotions.

I documented these events through sound, video and photo media and developed a repertoire of *Śabads*, linking their connections to historical memory. I also attended *Śabad kīrtan* services that follow the *kīrtan maryādā* (code of Sikh conventions), including engagement ceremonies, weddings and death services.

To understand the performance of *Śabad kīrtan* as a dynamic stage where history is experienced, made present and enacted through song and movement, I attended and documented numerous events where audience participation was engaged through processions. Each of these events involves using *Śabad* (word) and *Kīrtan* (song) to excite and activate powerful memories, which are invoked and experienced anew each time. I also engaged in many interviews on the topics of *Śabad kīrtan* and memory with both the lay community and professionals alike.

## **Participation**

Being connected to the *Gurmat Sangīt* department afforded me the opportunity to work intimately with many of the students who would become some of my most dedicated informants and assistants, inviting me to many events, video-audio recording events as I participated, accompanying me in *kīrtan* performances, translating documents or accompanying me on interviews. I am indebted to these

students, because they were responsible for offering me a privileged insider's position.

### **Setting**

This study took me on a phenomenological journey through many places and temporal spaces, ranging from attending numerous *Śabad kīrtan* services in the wee hours of the morning at *Bhaini Sāhib*, Ludhiana, to attending the annual winter festival of *Gurmat Sangīt* at *Jawaddi Taksāl*, Ludhiana, to the day-to-day classes on the campus at Punjabi University. The setting of this research was continuously saturated with the experience of *Śabad kīrtan*. There are three key sites where I gathered most of my information on the musicology of Sikh music and the repertoire: *Bhaini Sāhib* and *Jawaddi Taksal*, both in Ludhiana, and Punjabi University, Patiala. At *Dārbār Sāhib*, Amritsar, I examined the performance practice of *Śabad kīrtan* through an analysis of the daily services conducted daily from 2:45 a.m. to 9:45 p.m.

### **Outline of the Chapters**

Chapter One approaches the complex system of Sikh music through a look at the musical construction and performance of the music in its numerous ritual contexts. The earlier chapters provide a historical overview of Sikhism along with the stages of musical development, followed by an analytical study of the musical system and process of music making. My approach includes a theoretical framework that examines *Śabad kīrtan* from a phenomenological perspective, drawing on significant ethnomusicological studies.

Chapter Two provides an overview of research that has played a significant role in the formation of this dissertation, including studies in music and emotion, music and memory, Sufi music, along with many scholarly materials on Indian classical music and the history and theology of Sikhism. Because there are few resources in English on Sikh music, I relied heavily on both the research and publications of Dr. Gurnam Singh, notably his native transcriptions of hymns and *rāgās*. While studies in the music of India have provided a substantial corpus of ethnomusicological research, the study of Sikh music in a congregational setting is an understudied area.

Chapter Three offers a brief historical tour through Sikh history, examining the socio-political forces that precipitated this religious movement. Additionally, I consider the religious and devotional movements that were concurrent, with special focus on the Hindu *Bhakti* and Muslim *Sufi* movements. This chapter also provides a brief biographical sketch of each of the ten Gurus, who acted as inseparable links to the historical development of Sikhism. Their memories are continuously revisited through the performance of *Śabad kīrtan*.

Chapter Four examines the textual source of *Śabad kīrtan*, the Sikh Scripture. This chapter provides an overview of the compilation, editing, and structural organization of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, touching on the language and composers of the scripture along with the role of the scripture in the daily life of the Sikh. This chapter also introduces the musical system of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, including the *rāgās* and poetic structures of the hymns. I also provide examples of the main types of hymns that were sung.

In Chapter Five, I further pursue the musical system behind Sikh music, by first examining the historical development of musical influences that led to the creation of *Śabad kīrtan*. They include the devotional singing traditions of India and other developments that continue up to the current music revival, *Gurmat Sangīt*.

Chapter Six introduces the system of Sikh music, including its theoretical and structural features of *rāgās* and *rāgā* variations. I trace *rāgā* from its earliest origins in Vedic chant to its incorporation in the Sikh musical system of *Gurmat Sangīt*. I also consider the extra-musical components of *rāgā* followed in Sikh music, including time theory and *rasa* theory along with musical directions provided in the hymns. This chapter also provides a typical layout of a Sikh music service along with transcriptions of song samples that follow both classical and folk singing styles.

Chapter Seven is an exploration in Sikh hymnology. I examine the repertoire of *Śabad kīrtan* and its connection to the folk singing traditions of Punjab. I provide a thematic classification of different hymns along with an examination of their performance styles. I also consider the affective factors in congregational singing, which invoke imagined spaces. They are especially evident in two congregational hymns, which form a part of daily liturgy, the *Anand Sāhib* and the *Rahirās*.

Chapter Eight examines *Śabad kīrtan* from a phenomenological perspective, placing it in a time/space continuum. I examine the schedule of *Śabad kīrtan* services performed as they unfold daily at the *Dārbār Sāhib*, considering both their musical formula and congregational interaction. This chapter also provides a detailed transcription of the early morning *Āsā Dī Vār* Service at *Dārbār Sāhib*, at which the congregation participated. Observing the ways and behaviors of acting associated

with the listening environment has been key to understanding the musical experience and to the connection between *Śabad* and *kīrtan*.

Chapter Nine provides a conclusion. It reviews the results of this study, defines this work's role in the field of ethnomusicology, and suggests directions for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Ethnomusicological and Theoretical sources

#### **Ethnographic Approach**

I have relied primarily on an ethnographic approach throughout the course of this research, employing participant observation and interviews in numerous *Śabad kīrtan* events throughout Punjab during the academic year of 2006-07. This approach, commonly used by ethnomusicologists, allows me to understand how other people not only see their experience, but also embody it. James Spradley, well known for his seminal work on ethnography, emphasizes that “rather than *studying people*, ethnography means *learning from people*.”<sup>1</sup> Exercising a reflexive and discursive process of interaction between the ethnographer and the informant, I became the neophyte, learning from those around me, continuously probing the multiple meanings behind the musical experience.

I accomplished this task by engaging in conversations with a wide variety of informants, including passengers on buses and trains, students and scholars of *Gurmat Sangīt* (Sikh music), professors and priests, and peasants. I participated in a wide variety of events that involved *Śabad kīrtan*, joining in communal processions in the wee hours of the morning (*prabhat phērīs*), and taking part in citywide parades (*nagar kīrtan*). Writers on post-modern ethnography have adopted this eclectic

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<sup>1</sup> James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1980), 3.

approach, allowing the plurality of voices that each played a significant role in the cultural interplay of the *Śabad kīrtan* experience to be heard.<sup>2</sup>

Studies in the fields of ethnomusicology, cognitive studies, psychology, philosophy and neuroscience have been major guiding forces, helping me to navigate as I explored questions surrounding music, emotion, and memory. In her research on ritual laments amongst the Finnish Karelia, Elizabeth Tolbert followed an ethnomusicological approach, drawing on the fields of music cognition, philosophy, linguistics and anthropology.<sup>3</sup> She writes that musical meaning is intimately linked to levels of cognition and embodiment, clarifying that “musical experience is not only meaningful, but feelingfully meaningful because of its reliance on pre-conceptual structure.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, both observing and participating in the *kīrtan* events is key to exploring the musical process and social interaction

### **Phenomenology**

The sonic landscape of Punjab vibrates with Sikh hymns, and the hymns themselves impart images of the landscape and changing seasons. The repertoire and performance of *Śabad kīrtan* can be seen as a sonic chronology, one’s ordering of time, place and self around within the performance of a musical genre. Furthermore, this musical process, understood phenomenologically, is dependent on time and

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen A. Tyler, "Post-Modern Ethnomusicology: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 122-140.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Tolbert, "Theories and Meaning and Music Cognition: An Ethnomusicological Approach," *The World of Music* 34, no. 3 (1992): 7-21.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Tolbert, *The World of Music*, 17.

place, because it unfolds as a series of social interactions and psycho-emotional experiences that both guide and are guided by the musical process.

Phenomenology may be considered a philosophical approach to doing ethnography. In his article on fieldwork Jeff Todd Titon explains “Phenomenology emphasizes the immediate, concrete, sensory lifeworld, and it attempts to ground knowledge in the world of lived experiences.”<sup>5</sup> In this world, both the researcher and the informant are in a continuous reflexive relationship. Through this reflexive relationship, Titon adds “we seek to know one another through lived experience. Through common, intersubjective experience we enter the world of interpretation. Interpretation turns sound into music, be-ing into meaning.”<sup>6</sup> I wanted to under take this research as a personal quest, an “immersion experience,” through which I could explore first hand the very phenomenon that I was investigating.

Phenomenology has received considerable attention among ethnomusicologists. Martin Stoke’s edited volume, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, is a collection of ethnomusicological studies that address the role of music in evoking and organizing collective memories, constructing and reconstructing identity and defining a moral, political and ideological community.<sup>7</sup> In his study of Bulgarian music, Timothy Rice explores the significance of time, place and metaphor in music making. His ethnography uses a three-dimensional model of location, metaphorical understanding and time, all in a dynamic

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<sup>5</sup> Jeff Todd Titon, "Knowing Fieldwork," in *Shadows in the Field*, ed. Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 90.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Stokes, ed., *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994).



state of interaction and change.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Rice employs a participant observer methodology, in which he experiences a first-hand phenomenological space of “being-in-the-world” with Bulgarian musicians. Similarly, this dissertation is a product of my numerous encounters with Sikh musicians and the Sikh lay community as a musician, researcher, and practitioner.

Ethnomusicologist Steven Friedson also employs a phenomenological approach to his research in Ghana on the Tumbuka and their healing practices.<sup>9</sup> In his study, he considers the inter-subjective reality that is created within the community binding people together in a commonality of experiential space and time. Likewise, in many of my interviews with Sikh congregants, they report that the practice of listening to and singing hymns channeled them into an imagined time and space.

### **Psychology of Sound**

A serious study of *Śabad kīrtan* should include an examination of the psycho-physical aspects of the listening experience. Ethnomusicologists have mapped both the physical and musical sequence and extra-musical emotional features of music events. Qureshi’s map of musical experience during Qawwali performances charts out the psycho-physical responses in the listener.<sup>10</sup> Both Qureshi and Danielson analyze staged performances of song as “scripted liturgy,” in which sound, infused into the listeners, produces a series of emotions, thought and anticipated responses

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<sup>8</sup> Timothy Rice, “Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography,” *Ethnomusicology* 47, no. 2 (2003): 151-179.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Friedson, *Dancing Prophets: Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> Regula Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 168-175.

from the audience.<sup>11</sup> Becker refers to this as the “habitus of listening,” a process of listening as a series of socially constructed and semiotically ascribed, psycho-physical responses to sonic stimulus around us which she considered an “historically enacted ontology” of sound and meaning.<sup>12</sup> Paul Connerton describes the power of ritualized speech as an intoned, rhythmical speech, which distances itself from everyday language.<sup>13</sup> Through this performative utterance, *kīrtan* creates a place in which community is constituted and in which selective memories are re-enacted.

### **Music and Emotion**

Exploration of the meta-cognitive levels of musical meaning has received much attention in recent ethnomusicological literature. Becker developed an emotion-based theory of trance and deep listening that examines the sequences of feelings and emotions that are musically aroused as embodied liturgies.<sup>14</sup> Aesthetic feelings are associated with these primary structures. Studies on the aesthetic experience, such as Jihad Racy’s examination of aesthetics in the music of Cairo and Virginia Danielson’s study of the life of Umm Kulthum in *Voice of Egypt*, explore the aesthetic principle of *tarab*.<sup>15</sup> Qureshi offers an in-depth analysis of the musical

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<sup>11</sup> Qureshi, *Sufi Music*, and Virginia Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999)

<sup>12</sup> Judith Becker, “Anthropological Perspective on Music and Emotion,” in *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, ed. Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 135-160.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion and Trancing* (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 2004), 127.

<sup>15</sup> Jihad Racy, “Musical Aesthetics in Present-day Cairo,” *Ethnomusicology* 26 (1982), 391-406, and Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt*, 11-12.

aesthetics and structure of the Qawwali gathering and its emotional impact and spiritual arousal *hāl*.<sup>16</sup>

In the above-mentioned studies, the mystical union with the Divine is stimulated through a musical framework and is analyzed through the sound system of music and the norms, behaviors and beliefs surrounding the music system, along with musical and extra-musical elements. Similarly, in her study of the Lubavitcher Hasidim, a group of ultra-orthodox Jews, Ellen Koskoff explores how words and sounds themselves are the vehicle for intoxication, exhilaration and transcendence, producing states of ecstasy and joy.<sup>17</sup> This elevation of consciousness has been discussed in many fields and is becoming a fertile area for current studies.

*Gurmat Sangīt* (Sikh music), music and poetry are significant factors in producing the sentiments necessary to evoke deep spiritual experiences. Consequently, each hymn is assigned a *rāgā*, which is understood to possess an affective power that can arouse emotion and stimulate memories. Because religious emotion is a key component of *Śabad kīrtan*, I will examine emotion as central to the function, ontology and meaning of *Śabad kīrtan*. When the memory is invoked, how does the listener experience it? Or rather, what type of affect does the memory carry on the listener's emotional level? The aesthetic power of music on emotion and memory has been the source of much research as is shown by a variety of studies over the past two decades.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Qureshi, *Sufi Music*, 119-122.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen Koskoff, *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

<sup>18</sup> Detailed studies of this area include Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners*; Virginia Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt*; and Mark Kligman, *Maqam and Liturgy: Ritual*,

The aesthetic feelings associated with the musical situation activate pre-conceptual structures. Qureshi examines relationships between musical practice and desired emotional states of physical ecstasy among Sufis, which stem from both ideological and symbolic systems enacted through a habitus of listening. In his article on music of the Arab world “Musical Aesthetics in Present-day Cairo,” Jihad Racy examines various aspects associated with Arab music including the basic learning processes, musical inspiration, emotionally-charged lyrics, ecstasy, the relationship between performers and listeners, and the influence of technology and globalization on this genre.<sup>19</sup> Both authors acknowledge the important principle of affect in music listening. Likewise, the importance of affect in *Śabad kīrtan* is continuously expounded in the hymns of the *Ādī Granth*. The devotee, through deep participatory listening to *Śabad kīrtan*, should be aroused to a state of devotion (*bhaktī rasa*) or religious ecstasy (*amṛta rasa*). Furthermore, hymns of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* encourage the devotee to embody the messages by listening to, tasting, smelling, touching and singing the words and becoming emotionally intoxicated by them.

Several significant studies focus on the habitus of listening and the behaviors and ways of acting associated with the listening environment, as keys to

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*Music, and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2009); Ellen Koskoff, *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Randall McClellan, *The Healing Forces of Music*; June McDaniel, "Emotion in Bengali Religious Thought: Substance and Metaphor," in *Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy*, ed. J. Marks and R.T. Ames (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 39-63; Regula Burckhart Qureshi, "The Indian Sarangi: Sound of Affect, Site of Contest," *Yearbook of Traditional Music* 29 (1997): 1-38; Jihad Racy, "Musical Aesthetics in Present-day Cairo;" John Sloboda, *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

<sup>19</sup> Jihad Racy, "Musical Aesthetics in Present-day Cairo," *Ethnomusicology* 26 (1982): 391-406.

understanding the musical experience.<sup>20</sup> Participation in a habitus of listening includes accepted psycho-emotional behaviors and responses to music, which are embodied experientially. Through participation in this sonically activated memory, the listener achieves a heightened psycho-emotional state of being referred to by Suzel Ana Reily and Victor Turner as “enchantment” or “liminality.”<sup>21</sup> The Namdhari Sikh “*musti*” (ecstatic) *kīrtan* service is a site where one can witness ecstatic outward expression (similar to Sufi *Qawwali* gatherings), in as much as audience participation and emotional expression are encouraged in these gatherings. Becker calls these expressive acts “embodied liturgies,” scripted performances infusing the participants of the liturgy with affective responses.<sup>22</sup>

## Memory

Does the repetition of listening to and reproducing the musical patterns in *kīrtan* affect memory on a neurological level? Research on words as psycho-neuro stimulators provides fascinating discussions of this question.<sup>23</sup> *Gurbāñī kīrtan* and hymn singing in general possess a transformational power to awaken spiritual forces of memory. This aligns with Michel de Certeau’s theory on the impact and

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<sup>20</sup> Amy Caitlin-Jairazboy, "Sacred Songs of the Khoja Muslims: Sounded and Embodied Liturgy," *Ethnomusicology* 48, no. 2 (2004), 251-270; Jihad Racy, *Making Music in the Arab World*; Regula Qureshi, *Sufi Music*; Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners*.

<sup>21</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 94-130; Suzel Ana Reily, *Voices of the Magi: Enchanted Journeys in Southeast Brazil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 3-4.

<sup>22</sup> Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners*, 26.

<sup>23</sup> Marvin Minsky, "Music, Mind and Meaning," in Manfred Clynes, ed., *Music, Mind and Brain: The Neuropsychology of Music* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1982), 1-19.

transformational power of memory on colonized people.<sup>24</sup> The hymns of *Gurbānī kīrtan* become a crucible where the recollection of suffering and oppression which the Sikhs endured throughout their history, ignites a deep spiritual energy. This inherited memory of spiritual resilience is today the memory kernel with which all Sikhs identify with on some level and may act as pedagogical memory.

A performance of *Śabad kīrtan* may be understood as a musical and choreographic archive, acting as vehicle to bring to mind a collective memory, uniting community to a common past. Both the hymns themselves and the services in which they are sung invoke memories.

Studies such as Wallace's essays on ballads and their effects on memory and the effect of melody on recall of text address and support the impact of melody on memory.<sup>25</sup> In her research on *pizmonim*, semi-liturgical songs amongst the diasporic community of Syrian Jews, Kay Shelemay addresses the power of religious music to evoke different levels of collective memory.<sup>26</sup> Her study weaves together sociology and psychology of sound and its powerful role in helping listeners to remember places of the past that shaped their present. She considers the musical construction of remembrance and of how songs encode memories of places and events, which produce a cognitive archive that activates different domains of memory.

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<sup>24</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> Wanda Wallace, "Characteristics and Constraints in Ballads and Their Effects on Memory," *Discourse Processes* 14 (1991): 181-202; and "Memory for Music: The Effect of Melody Recall of Text," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* (1994), 927-957.

<sup>26</sup> Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance Amongst Syrian Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 182-206.

Memories may be broken up into several broad categories related to historical consciousness, and personal and social memories. What cultural themes and group values are encoded in the *Śabads* and how do they activate and promote them? I consulted Paul Ricoeur's 2004 monumental work on memory and forgetting and Daniel L. Schacter's work on explicit and implicit memory, which both offer comprehensive theoretical models and typologies of memory.<sup>27</sup> To determine the types and domains of memory stimulated by *Śabad kīrtan*, I also drew on a variety of case studies on music and different types of memory, including ritual memory,<sup>28</sup> inherited memory and collective memory,<sup>29</sup> episodic and flashback memory,<sup>30</sup> and nostalgia, commemorative and selective memory.<sup>31</sup> John Chernoff's study of the Dagbamba of Ghana examines how music is used to act out and articulate images of history through participatory social interaction.<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Ritter, writing on inherited memory in his ethnography on ritual and revolution and memory in the Andes, explores Peruvian revolutionary song performances in which political and

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), and Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> Michael David McNally, *Ojibwe singers: Hymns, Grief, and Native Culture in Motion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), and Paul Stoller, "Sounds and Things Pulsation of Power in Songhay," in *The Performance of Healing*, ed. Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman (New York: Routledge, 1996), 115-41.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathon Ritter, "Siren songs: Ritual and revolution in the Peruvian Andes," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 11, no.1 (2002), 9-42, and Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down*.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel L. Schacter, *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>31</sup> Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down*.

<sup>32</sup> John Chernoff, "Music and Historical Consciousness Among the Dagbamba in Ghana," in *Enchanting Powers: Music in the World's Religions*, ed. Lawrence E. Sullivan (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for the Study of World Music, 1997).

ideological attitudes and memories are created, debated and transformed.

Anthropologists Thomas J. Csordas and Paul Stoller, whose interests lie in medical and psychological anthropology, each investigate how religious healing is engaged through embodiment, imagination and memory. They both explore ritual healing through the power of sound, which brings the culturally configured past into an active state of present.<sup>33</sup>

While traditionally semiotics has been associated with the auditory/vocal mode of communication (the primary subject of linguistics), ethnomusicological research has adopted a broader definition to include the importance of visual and physical modes of behavior communication (kinesics) and interpersonal movement (proxemics) in the study of music. Sounds themselves, imparted with many levels of signification, are often ingredients of a trained set of behaviors. Sounds such as the blowing of the *Nārāsimha*, (large tuba-like instrument) announce the arrival the *Gūru Granth Sāhib*, alerting the congregants to their beloved scripture as it is brought into the inner chamber of the *Gurdwāra*, just as a doorbell announces the arrival of a dear friend. British musicologists Nicholas Cook and Nicola Dibben explore the concept of “musemes,” units of musical meaning that like linguistic phonemes are assigned values through cultural context.<sup>34</sup> Swiss ethnomusicologist Regula Qureshi, in her

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas J. Csordas, *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), and Paul Stoller, "Sounds and Things Pulsation of Power in Songhay".

<sup>34</sup> Nicholas Cook and Nicola Dibben, “Musicological Approaches to Emotion,” in *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, ed. Patrik N. Juslin, and John A. Sloboda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 45-70.



study of the Indian *sarangi*, also discovers the cultural meaning imparted on the *sarangi*, associated with preconceived, contested values.<sup>35</sup>

The reliance on preconceived structures in meaning making is nowhere more evident than in songs that employ *contrafactum* (tune borrowing). Songs and texts encode memories of places, people, and events of the past. Studies such as Shelemay's study on Sephardic Jews, explore the impact of song and text on the listener.<sup>36</sup> She considers *contrafactum* a key component in memory: in this case, old Arabic melodies are performed with new lyrics drawn from sacred texts, in Hebrew. She states that this transformation of sound invokes a transformation of belief, while still carrying with it an echo of the source melody. *Contrafactum* constructs and stimulates different levels of meaningful experience and memory and is intimately linked to pre-conceptual structures of feeling. *Contrafactum* is a common practice of Sikh hymn composition and a fascinating area in which to explore multi-dimensional layers of memory, which are activated through borrowed tunes.

### **Performance of Memory**

Not only the hymns themselves, but also the very performative act of singing hymns is a way of re-enacting historical events of great significance, thereby of engaging in a negotiation of social identity. Michael Nijhawan's anthropological study of *Dādhīs* (hereditary musicians of Sikh balladry), examines the role of these

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<sup>35</sup> Regula Burckhart Qureshi, "The Indian Sarangi."

<sup>36</sup> Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down*.

cultural performers in acting as agents of a socio-political forum.<sup>37</sup> As they narrate famous events and conquests, they also transport the listeners to places of collective memory.

While the hymns themselves may contain references to certain events, places and people, the performative act of singing is an essential component of collective memory. Musical processions of *Śabad kīrtan* are prevalent within this community. Music as a performative act invoking memory has received considerable study in ethnomusicology. Paul Connerton examines how memory is both encoded and presented through commemorative ceremonies, tying collective memory to the act of group participation.<sup>38</sup> Suzel Ana Reily's research on musical processions in Southeastern Brazil reveals the remarkable power of performance and re-enactment to invoke memories that both form and re-form the participants.<sup>39</sup> The act of remembering at the annual drawing of community members into a ritual body invokes a shared communal space and phenomenological encounter, which ignites a communal identity, *communitas*, where values are reaffirmed and reinforced. Walking in processions is both a popular and pervasive way during which the Sikh congregation celebrates together through hymn singing.

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<sup>37</sup> Michael Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar: Religion, Violence, and the Performance of Sikh History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> Connerton, *How Societies Remember*.

<sup>39</sup> Suzel Ana Reily, *Voices of the Magi*.

## **Resources for the Study of Indian Music**

Investigation on sound and music has preoccupied Indian scholarship for nearly two millennia, with the earliest treatises of Indian music and dance, “*Nāṭyaśāstra*” dating back eighteen hundred years.<sup>40</sup> The past century has produced a significant amount of writing on Indian music theory and performance by Indians and non-Indians alike, contributing to the wealth of knowledge and reference materials in this area. I have consulted a wide variety of publications on Indian classical music and Sikh music by both native and non-native scholars.

American, British, and European scholars including Bonnie Wade, Stephen Slawek, Daniel Neuman, Paul Warnock, Joep Bor, Alain Daniélou, Wayne Howard, Walter Kauffman, James Kippen, and Guy Beck have investigated a wide range of topics on Indian music, from its metaphysical and sonic sources to the instructional styles in the *tabla* tradition of Lucknow.<sup>41</sup> I consulted the publications by both Walter Kauffman and Joep Bor, whose publications provide notes and musical transcriptions of Indian *rāgās* in Western staff notation.<sup>42</sup> The British scholar, Richard Widdess’s publications on early Indian music notation and the *dhrupad*

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<sup>40</sup> Kapila Vatsyayan, *Bharata: The Natyasastra* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996).

<sup>41</sup> Bonnie C. Wade, *Music in India: The Classical Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979); Stephen Slawek, “Popular Kīrtan in Benaras: Some ‘Great’ Aspects of the Little Tradition,” *Ethnomusicology* 32, no. 2 (1988), 77-92. Daniel Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Paul Warnock, “The Sikh Experience of Music,” *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society* 35 (2004); Joep Bor et al., *The Raga Guide: a Survey of 74 Hindustani Ragas* (Nimbus Records, 1999); Alain Daniélou, *The Ragas of North India* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1968). Walter Kauffman, *The Ragas of North India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968).

<sup>42</sup> Walter Kauffman, *The Ragas of North India*, and Joep Bor, *The Raga Guide*.

singing tradition were valuable sources on the early development of *Śabad kīrtan*.<sup>43</sup> While scholarship on Sikh music by western scholars is quite sparse, two articles on Sikh devotional music by Joyce Middlebrook and Paul Warnock are worth noting.<sup>44</sup> More recently, Sarah Van Doel produced a master's thesis on Sikh music, providing a much needed comprehensive introduction to this area of study.<sup>45</sup>

I have also consulted publications by Indian scholars pertaining to both the musical systems of Indian classical music and more specifically, Sikh music. In the twentieth century, musicological study of *Gurbāñī* has been pursued in the publications of Dr. Charan Singh and his grandson, Bhai Vir Singh, whose theoretical work on *Śabad kīrtan, Par Hun Tak Mili Khoj*, is considered seminal in this subject.<sup>46</sup> Other important works in this field are Gobind Singh Mansukhani's *Indian Classical Music and Sikh Kīrtan*, Gyani Dayal Singh's *Gūrmāt Sangeet Sikhīya* and Sārdār Harmandir Singh's *Gurmat Sangeet* (first volume), which are also highlighted in my study.<sup>47</sup>

I have also examined a variety of texts and song books that provide transcriptions of hymns in either native and western notation. One of the earliest attempts to transcribe Sikh hymns into western notation is available in comprehensive study of the Sikh scripture by Max Arthur Macauliffe (1841-1913). Renowned for his

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<sup>43</sup> Richard Widdess, *The Ragas of Early Indian Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); and Richard Widdess and Ritwik Sanyal, *Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>44</sup> Joyce Middlebrook, "Punjab," in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: South Asia: The Indian Subcontinent*, vol. 5 (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 650-658, and Paul Warnock, "The Sikh Experience of Music."

<sup>45</sup> Sarah Van Doel, "Sikh Music: History, Text, and Praxis" (Tufts University, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Bhai Vir Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Par Hun Tak Mili Khoj* (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, 1958).

<sup>47</sup> Gobind Singh Mansukhani, *Indian Classical Music and Sikh Kīrtan*.

scholarship in Sikhism, Macauliffe published a six-volume English translation of the Sikh Scriptures, which provided musical transcriptions of the *rāgās* of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* in staff notation.<sup>48</sup> While this attempt has been commented upon for its limitations in both scope and accuracy, it provided some of the earliest musical transcriptions of Sikh hymns. The majority of hymns with notation follow the native notation system invented by Indian musicologist Pandit Vishnu Narayana Bhatkande (1860-1936), who collected and compiled hundreds of *rāgā*-based music compositions into six volumes of work written in Indian notation. This work, while criticized for its lack of accuracy, has become an inseparable part of Indian music education for Indian classical music.<sup>49</sup> Bhai Gian Singh from Abbotabad, borrowing Bhatkande's notational system, published a collection of seminal melodies he learned over his lifetime, documenting 309 popularly sung Sikh hymns.<sup>50</sup> Bhai Avatar Singh has published two volumes of traditional hymns that are believed to date back several centuries.<sup>51</sup> Bhai Giani Dyal Singh and Professor Kartar Singh have written other collections of hymns.<sup>52</sup> The Sikh music expert, Dr. Gurnam Singh has written and published extensively on the topic of Sikh music. One of his most popular texts, *Sikh Musicology* covers 285 pages with detailed articles on the thirty-one main *Rāgās* of *Gurbāñī* along with analyses of compositions and theoretical observations about Sikh

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<sup>48</sup> Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors* vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 333 – 351.

<sup>49</sup> Pandit Vishnunarayana Bhatkande, *Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati Kramika Pustak-Malika*, 4 vols. (Haras, U.P.: Sangeet Karyalya, 1955).

<sup>50</sup> Bhai Gian Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Saagar* (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandak Committee, 1961).

<sup>51</sup> Bhai Avtar Singh and Bhai Gurcharan Singh, *Gurbani Sangeet Praacheen Ratnavali*, 2 vols. (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1997).

<sup>52</sup> Gyani Dayal Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Saagar*, 4 vols. (New Delhi: Guru Nanak Vidya Bhandaar Trust, 2003).

music.<sup>53</sup> Bhai Baldeep Singh, of Anād Society, has worked extensively to research and collect the earliest recordings of *shabad kīrtan*.<sup>54</sup> The past twenty years have produced an insurgence of interest in documenting and preserving the history of this sacred music tradition with unprecedented public exposure to it through electronic media.

This chapter has provided an overview of the sources I have consulted throughout the research. These include musicological sources pertaining to Indian classical music in general and Sikh music, more specifically. I have also considered numerous studies that examine the extra-musical components of music making: music and memory, music and emotion, music and embodiment and the performance of memory.

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<sup>53</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Sikh Musicology: Shri Guru Granth Sahib and Hymns of the Human Spirit* (New Delhi: Kanishka, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> [www.anadrecords.com/congregation.htm](http://www.anadrecords.com/congregation.htm).

## CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SIKHISM

### *Socio-Political Background of Sikhism*

To understand the role of *Śabad kīrtan* in both the development and practice of this faith, some familiarity with the history of Sikhism and the socio-political and geographic climate during the time of its formation is necessary. This chapter will pursue this topic.

Sikhism, the youngest world religion, has evolved during the last 500 years. Born at a time of great socio-political unrest, Sikhism emerged as part of a sub-continent-wide reform movement against the prevailing social inequities of medieval India. Gurū Nānak (1469-1539), the founder of this faith, envisioned the unity of humanity through a socio-mystical, musical and spiritual path, at a time when there was growing hostility and dissension between the Hindu majority and their Muslim rulers in India. He spread the message of universal love across the sub-continent of India and Central Asia through singing his hymns of divine love. Followers of Gurū Nānak's theology were called Nānak *panthīs* (followers of Nānak's path) who performed worship through hymn singing and meditation (*nām simran*) and adhered to the teachings of the Gurū.<sup>1</sup>

Sikhism originated in the Northwest corner of India, which is present day Punjab and eastern parts of Pakistan. [Figure 3.1] Called the land of the five rivers (Per: *panj āb*), this fertile region has endured countless incursions by many invaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Harbans Singh, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 2002), 4:185.

Geographically situated as the northwestern gateway into India, Punjab has acted as both the battlefield and first home for invaders who brought their languages, religion and culture. From the Greek, Alexander the Great (326 BCE), to the Mongol, Taimur (1398), invaders attacked, ruled and left behind a kaleidoscope of cultural, social and linguistic influences.<sup>2</sup> Out of the mixture of bloodshed and bravery were born the Punjabi people and their culture, the progeny of many ethnic groups and religions.

In this brief survey of the historical development of Sikhism, I will consider five distinct periods: The Pre-Nānak Period, the Period of the Gurūs (which include Mughal Rule), The Period of Sikh Imperialism, The Colonial Period and the Contemporary Period.

**Figure 3.1. Map of Punjab Territory Before and After Partition<sup>3</sup>**

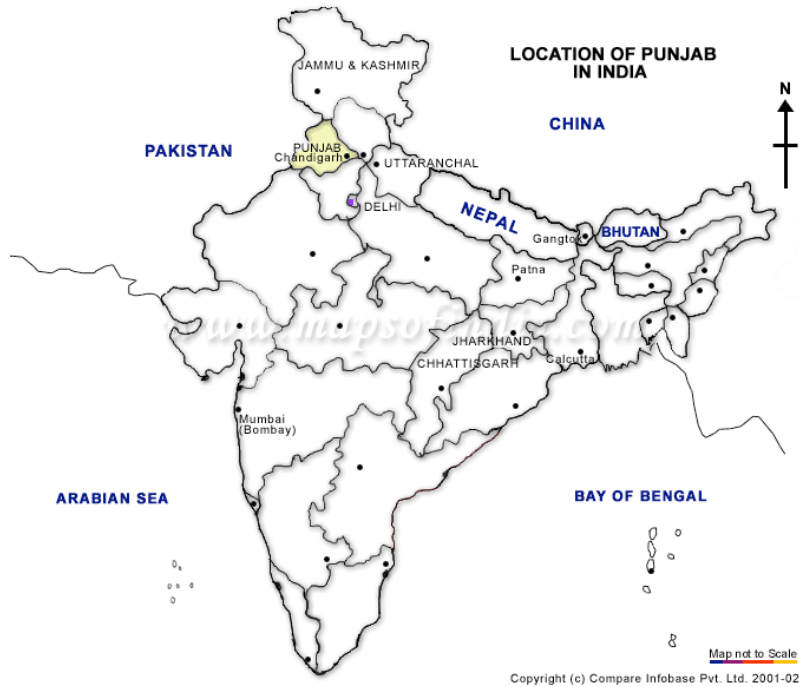


<sup>2</sup> Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, Volume 1: 1469-1839*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17-30.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from <http://sonoffiverivers.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Map-of-Punjab-Before-and-After.pn> (accessed March 3, 2011).



**Figure 3.2. Map of Punjab within India**<sup>4</sup>



### **The Pre-Nānak Period**

The centuries leading up to the birth of Sikhism (in the fifteenth century) involved the development and cultivation of three major religions in India: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Hinduism, whose roots were laid following the Aryan invasion into India in the second millennium BCE, involved: 1) worship of a polytheistic system of Gods and Goddesses, (2) adherence to a rigid social system (caste system), and (3) a sophisticated corpus of Sanskrit texts and philosophical treatises.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [www.mapsofindia.com/maps/punjab/punjab-lcoation-map.gif&imgre](http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/punjab/punjab-lcoation-map.gif&imgre) (Accessed March 3, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> For more on ancient Indian history, cf. A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (London: Sidwick & Jackson, 1967), 232-250.

Hinduism remained the dominant socio-religious system, until Gautama Buddha (fifth century BCE), reacting against the highly stratified orthodoxy of Hinduism, introduced Buddhism, a socio-religious path of personal enlightenment open to all people. Buddhism flourished throughout India for over a millennium, losing its popularity to the Bhakti Movement of medieval India and the mounting attacks by Mughal invaders.<sup>6</sup>

The Muslim conquest in the seventh century was the first iconoclastic invasion of Islamic culture in India, challenging the polytheistic practices of Hinduism. While Arab merchants initially introduced Islam peacefully, later invasions and forced conversions by Muslim armies initiated a resistance and irreversible tension between the Muslim newcomers and Hindu-dominant India that would carry on throughout the following centuries. By the tenth century, Islam was firmly established as a political force.<sup>7</sup>

This period of Indian history, considered the Medieval Period (550-1526) witnessed countless incidents of foreign rule by Turks, Arabs and Afghan invaders, due to the instability of the feudal system of petty Indian kingdoms.<sup>8</sup> During this period of growing political tension in India, a fervent religious spirit arose amongst the masses throughout India, out of which the Bhakti movement issued forth. This reformation movement reacted against orthodox Hinduism, embracing all people regardless of caste or creed. Influenced by the Alvar and Adyar Hindu saints of South India and popularized in the North by the fourteenth-century Hindu saint and

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<sup>6</sup> Kushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald James Larson, *India's Agony over Religion* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 102-110.

<sup>8</sup> Basham, *The Wonder*, 69-78.

social reformer, Rāmānanda, many saints (both Hindu and Sufi) spearheaded this protestant movement, placing emphasis on devotion and practice over ritualism and spiritual hierarchy. The teachings, presented to the masses in their vernacular languages, stressed recognizing a oneness of God, submitting to His Will, worshipping Him through meditation, chanting and praise, and receiving guidance from a spiritual mentor, a guru.

Likewise this movement of personal devotion was felt among the Muslim brotherhood. While the Muslim invaders attempted to use their political power to attract their subjects to Islam, Muslim missionaries, the Sufi brotherhood peacefully brought the gospel of Mohammed to the Indian subcontinent. Learned in the religious philosophies and approaches already existing in India, the Sufis offered a mystical approach to worship, while adhering tightly to the Islamic beliefs, dogma and practice of Qur'an Hadith, and Sharia.<sup>9</sup> Sufism was open to all as a pure mystical experience with God by repeating His name (*dhikr*), praising God through song and dance, and surrendering to His Will. This mystical interpretation of orthodox Islam coincided with the Bhakti movement. Both of these movements, which relied on a direct and intimate experience with the Divine through singing hymns of adoration, were able to draw inspiration from each other while maintaining loyalty to their parent tradition.<sup>10</sup> Thus a Hindu-Islam syncretism and common ground was forged through the movements of Hindu-Bhakti and Muslim-Sufism.

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<sup>9</sup> Sunita Puri, *Advent of Sikh Religion: a Socio-Political Perspective* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1993).

<sup>10</sup> Patwant Singh, *The Sikhs* (London: John Murray Publishers, 1999).

Addressing the Hindu-Muslim syncretism in medieval India, S.T.

Lokhandwalla comments:

The Sufi and Bhakti movements blurred the differences between the two religions so much that it was very common till very recently to have a *sadguru* (true guru) or a *pīr* (Sufi saint) having a common following of Hindus and Muslims...The medieval age was the period when Sufi and Bhakti thought and practice blended and coalesced at many points.<sup>11</sup>

From a socio-religious standpoint, a syncretism of religious tolerance had been achieved and would continue over the next centuries, however, as Muslim conquest and control intensified, social and political turmoil began to weaken the spirit of the masses. Punjab was an active recipient of both the religious renaissance (where there was a strong presence of the both the Bhakti movement and Sufism) and socio-political instability. Sikhism was its progeny.

### **The Period of the *Gurūs***

The history of the *Gurūs* commences with *Gurū Nānak* and continues through a succession of nine more *Gurūs* for two centuries.<sup>12</sup> They are as follows: *Gurū Nānak* (1469-1539), *Gurū Angad* (1539-1552), *Gurū Amar Dās* (1552-1574), *Gurū Rām Dās* (1534-1581), *Gurū Arjan* (1581-1606), *Gurū Hargobind* (1606-1675), *Gurū Hari Rai* (1645-1661), *Gurū Har Krishnan* (1661-1664), *Gurū Tegh Bahādur* (1664-1675), and *Gurū Gobind Singh* (1675-1708). Each *Gurū* played an intrinsic role in

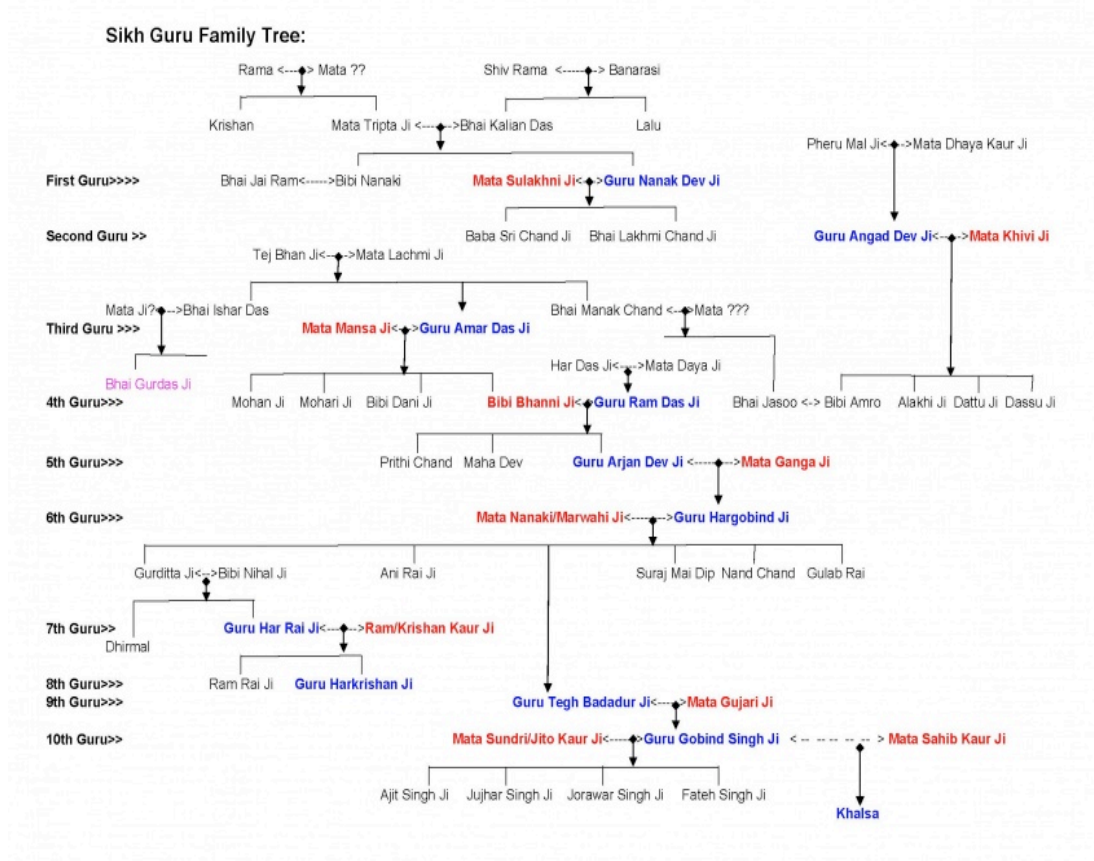
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<sup>11</sup> S.T. Lokhandwalla, "Indian Islam: Composite Culture and National Integration," in *Composite Culture of India and National Integration*, ed. R. Khan (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1987), 121.

<sup>12</sup> Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History* (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 2005), 13-79.

the growth and establishment of the Sikh faith. [Figure 3.3] The period of the Gurūs coincided with the Mughal Empire (1526-1858), which over time encompassed a large portion of India (though never succeeding in its entire rule). [Figure 3.4] The tenure of each Gurū and the direction in which Sikhism developed was deeply influenced by the personality of the prevailing Mughal ruler. [Figure 3.5]

**Figure 3.3. Genealogy of the Sikh Gurus**<sup>13</sup>



<sup>13</sup> Image taken from: [www.sikhphilosophy.net/attachments/new-to-sikhism/36d1215433528-what-name-grandfather-guru-nanak-dev-850px-sikhgurusfamilytree9-1-.jpg](http://www.sikhphilosophy.net/attachments/new-to-sikhism/36d1215433528-what-name-grandfather-guru-nanak-dev-850px-sikhgurusfamilytree9-1-.jpg). (Accessed October 15, 2010).

Figure 3.4. Map of Mughal India, 1526-1707<sup>14</sup>



Several reliable sources, which provide information on the Gurū's lives are the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the *Vārs* (Ballads) of Bhai Gurdas and the most popular, yet less historically reliable source, the *Janam-Sākhīs* (life accounts of Gurū Nānak written by various authors after his demise).<sup>15</sup> The period of the Gurū's may be divided into two phases: The birth of Sikhism (first through fifth Gurū) and militant Sikhism (sixth through tenth Gurū).

<sup>14</sup> Map taken from: <http://media-2.web.britannica.com/eb-media/07/1607-004-23030BA5.gif> [accessed June 5, 2010]

<sup>15</sup> The *Janam-sākhīs* (biographies of Gurū Nānak written after his lifetime) are considered by scholars to be highly unreliable sources as their historical validity is very questionable. Cf. McLeod, *Sikhs and Sikhism*, 7-34.

## The Birth of Sikhism

The political situation in northwest India was not stable during the lifetime of Gurū Nānak. Poor administration and political chaos caused a degeneration of the social, moral and spiritual situation. Born into an orthodox Hindu family in the village of Talwandi, near Lahore, Gurū Nānak lived during the reign of the Lodi Dynasty (1451-1526), which eventually fell to the hands of Central Asian Muslim invader, Babur (1483-1530).<sup>16</sup> A visionary, mystic and revolutionary, Gurū Nānak despaired over the great social inequities within the Hindu communities due to the Brahmin hierarchy, caste system, oppression of the poor and woman and the violent and forced conversions of the Muslim rulers.

Drawing from the Hindu devotional (*Bhakti*) movement and Sufism, he taught a devotional monotheism, propounding a vision of love, humility and brother/sisterhood for all, regardless of caste, creed, religion or gender. However, unlike both the *Bhakti* movement and Sufism that gave precedence to asceticism and renunciation of the world, Gurū Nānak placed emphasis on ameliorating the socio-political conditions of the people. He introduced a new order by intermixing equal portions of religious, social and political responsibilities into a composite whole.<sup>17</sup>

Gurū Nānak wrote about the turbulence of the socio-political times in his hymns in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, composing a collection of verses that referred to the invasions by Bābur.<sup>18</sup> In the hymn titled *Mājh kī Vār*, he addresses:

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<sup>16</sup> First Mughal emperor of India invaded the country and seized control in 1526.

<sup>17</sup> Sunita Puri, "Socio-Political Content of the Teachings of Guru Nanak," *Studies in Sikhism and Contemporary Religion* 7, no. 1&2 (April-October 1988), 17.

<sup>18</sup> This collection of four verses, referred to as *Bāburbāni* (hymns about Bābar) describes Bābar's tyrannical rule, which imposed countless brutalities on unarmed

“The dark-age is the scalpel. The kings are the butchers. Religion hath taken wings and flown. In this no-moon night of falsehood, the moon of truth is not seen to rise anywhere. In my search, I have become bewildered.”<sup>19</sup>

In another hymn in *Rāg Tilang*, he commented on Bābur’s corrupt rule and the general decay of society:

“Friend, Lalo! Babar with the wedding-party of sin from Kabul rushed down, and forcibly demanded surrender of Indian womanhood. Then went modesty and righteousness into hiding, and falsehood was strutting in glory. Set aside were the Kazis (Muslim priests) and Brahmin (Hindu priests), and Satan went about solemnizing marriages.”<sup>20</sup>

Gurū Nānak traveled widely throughout and beyond India on four separate trips (*udāsīs*) over the course of twenty-eight years, preaching his doctrine of unity and love [Figure 5]. Using the common language of man, he composed and shared his message through hymns, accompanied by his Muslim disciple, Bhai Mardana. During the final twenty years of his life, he settled down in Kartarpūr (presently in Pakistan), where he established the first Sikh community on the principles of common land ownership, farming and meals, with daily prayer and worship. Here he also started two sessions of daily prayer services (*kīrtan chaunkīs*) as recorded in the writings of Bhai Gurdas. Before his demise, he appointed his most devout devotee, Bhai Lehna (renamed Gurū Angad, “blessed inseparable part”) to be his successor.<sup>21</sup>

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civilians. Three of the hymns are in *Rāg Āsā* (pages 360 and 417-18) and the fourth is in *Rāg Tilang* on pages 722-23 of the standard recension of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

<sup>19</sup> Manmohan Singh, *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*, 482-483.

<sup>20</sup> Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Shri Guru Granth Sahib*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Patiala: Publication Bureau Punjabi University, 2001), 2:1502.

<sup>21</sup> Patwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, 17-28.



**Figure 3.5. Gurū Nānak’s Four Journeys from Mecca to Tibet<sup>22</sup>**



Gurū Angad, the second Gurū, maintained the throne (*gurgaddī*) for thirteen years. He moved to Khadur where he lived with his family. During this period, he was actively involved in spreading the faith, opening more centers and distributing copies of Gurū Nānak hymns. He developed and standardized a liturgical script, “*Gurmukhī*,” for writing the divine hymns, providing a distinct written language for the Sikhs. He collected Gurū Nānak’s hymns in a small hymnal to which he added his own compositions. He also instituted a free community kitchen (*langar*). With the assistance of one of his most devoted disciples of twelve years, Gurū Amardās, who would become his successor, he established an important Sikh community at Goindwal, on the banks of the river.

The third Gurū, Amardās, was responsible for organizing the growing Sikh community by setting up twenty-two parishes (*manjīs*) that could both provide instruction and training and also collect revenue for the new faith. Goindwal became

<sup>22</sup> Image taken from <http://www.sikhinterfaithvic.org.au/images/map.jpg> [Accessed October 6, 2009]

the center for the growing Sikh community. He trained 146 apostles, called *masands*, of which fifty-two were women, and sent them to various parts of the country to spread the message of Sikhism. He declared festival days for the Sikhs to gather and celebrate the faith.<sup>23</sup> He also institutionalized *langar* as part of communal worship, instructing that worship and eating together (*sangat* and *pangat*) were an essential part of the teaching. He envisioned building a Sikh shrine, and instructed his son-in-law, Jetha, to purchase land and dig a tank for the purpose of designing a pool of water that would surround the temple. Prior to his death, he appointed Jetha as his successor, renaming him Rām Dās.

Gurū Rām Dās, fourth Gurū, designed and founded the holy city of Rāmdāspūr, later known as Amritsar, which would become the religious capital of Sikhism. He also began construction of the *Harmandir Sāhib* (Golden Temple). Assigning his youngest son as his successor, he started a new trend whereby future Gurūs would be selected by direct descendents.

Gurū Arjan was the third son of Gurū Rām Dās. Both a saint and a scholar, Gurū Arjan compiled the Sikh scriptures into the first anthology of sacred poetry, the *Ādī Granth*, which included the words of the first five Gurūs, along with Hindu and Muslim scholars and saints. Upon the completion of the *Harmandir Sāhib*, he installed the *Ādī Granth* in the temple in 1604. Accused of blasphemy and refusal to convert to Islam, Gurū Arjan became the first Sikh martyr, who would die standing firm to their religious beliefs, thus setting the course for a new Sikh identity.

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<sup>23</sup> *Baisakhi* (April 13), *Maghi* (1st day of Magha, mid January) and *Diwali* (festival of lights in October/November).

During the period of the first four Gurus (1469-1606 A.D.), the Mughal Empire was at its peak of glory, and the environment was harmonious. Akbar the Great, so-called because of his military achievements and his tolerant and inclusive policies towards religion and patronage of the arts, provided a forum for inter-religious dialogue and adopted an administrative policy of peace by integrating Hindus into high positions. He demonstrated a great regard for the growing Sikh faith, and consequently, the first four Gurūs produced spiritual poetry and hymns predominantly about selfless love, submission and service.

However, Akbar's successors (Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb) supplanted his religious tolerance with Islamic fundamentalism and political domination. Following the brutal martyrdom of the fifth Gurū, Arjan, in 1606 at the hands of Akbar's successor and son, Jahangir, the tables turned, and the Sikh followers became the victims of persecution and harassment by the Mughal rulers.

### **From Passive Sikh to Militant *Khalsa***

Over the next century (1606 -1708), and under the next five Gurūs (the reigns of Gurū Hargōbind, Gurū Harkrishan, Gurū Har Rāi, Gurū Tēgh Bahādur and Gurū Gōbind Singh), tension increased between intolerant Muslim rulers, and the growing Sikh community. An urgent need for a strong and politically reactionary Sikh image became apparent.

The sixth Gurū, Hargōbind, succeeded his father to the throne at the age of eleven. Rule under Jahangir had become oppressive, and Gurū Hargōbind saw the need to build military strength amongst his disciples. The historian Patwant Singh

remarks how Gurū Hargobind “transformed the passive Indian mood of servility into one of confident defiance of autocratic rulers, and a fierce pride in Sikh prowess.”<sup>24</sup> He accomplished his task, “of canalizing the burning rage of the Sikhs into a formidable military community” by asserting a new image of saint soldier (*sant sipāhī*).<sup>25</sup> He built up the Sikh’s military power by implementing the principles of *mīrī pīrī* (being devoted to both temporal/spiritual authority) and establishing the *Akāl Takht* (the administrative seat) at *Dārbār Sāhib* as the seat of temporal authority, which to this day remains the highest political institution of the Sikhs.

The new responsibilities of the Sikhs were to serve and protect the civil liberties of all people (*mīrī*) and respect the spiritual authority and mission of their five predecessors (*pīrī*).<sup>26</sup> This new injunction met more and more resistance by the Mughal Emperors, however, resulting in more drastic and aggressive measures to destroy the growing Sikh community, including Gurū Hargōbind’s seven-year imprisonment at Gwalior Fort.<sup>27</sup> Subsequent Gurūs were persecuted by the rulers and condemned to death for refusal to convert to Islam.

Gurū Hārī Rāī, the seventh Guru, was peacefully installed following his father’s (Gurū Hargōbind) demise. He maintained his father’s military tradition in building an army of over 2,200. Known for his policy of non-violence and benevolence, he continued his missionary activities and fostered peaceful relationships with the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan. However, Shah Jahan’s son and

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<sup>24</sup> Patwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, 41.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>26</sup> Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, 3: 89-91.

<sup>27</sup> Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History* (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 2005), 37-41.

successor, Aurangzeb, who held great contempt for Sikhs, had Gurū Hārī Rāī poisoned at the age of 31.<sup>28</sup>

Gurū Harkrishan, Gurū Hārī Rāī's son, was installed as the eighth Gurū. The youngest Guru at the tender age of eight, his tenure was also the shortest, four years. On a visit to Delhi, he fell ill to smallpox and before death, passed on his succession to his uncle, the ninth Gurū, Tegh Bahādur.

Gurū Tegh Bahādur was the youngest son of Gurū Hargōbind. During his tenure as Gurū, he continued to spread Sikhism and compose hymns. He established the city of Ānandpūr in the foothills of the Himalayas. Revered for defending the religious rights of Hindus, he was condemned to death and beheaded in public in Delhi by Emperor Aurangzeb for refusing to convert to Islam. Before his death, he named his then nine-year-old son, Gōbind, as his successor.

The tenth Gurū, Gōbind Singh inspired solidarity amongst Sikhs. Versed in both letters and warfare, he created a highly visible and militant Sikh identity, coupled with a rigorous discipline that set Sikhs apart from others. He directed the ultimate consummation of the principle *sant sipāhī* (saint soldier) by creating the *Khālsā panth* ("pure" Sikhs) through an initiation ceremony (*Kandē-dī-pahul*) with a double-edged sword.<sup>29</sup> The initiates were instructed to don a militant and highly visible identity and adhere to a strict code of conduct and practices. The establishment of the *Khālsā panth*, the collective body of the baptized Sikhs, completed the developmental stage of the Sikh faith.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 48-50.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 66-67.

The *Khālsā Mahima* (praise to the *Khālsā*), composed by Gurū Gōbind Singh, reflects his unwavering faith in the collective Sikh spirit:

The *Khālsā* is a reflection of my form,  
The *Khālsā* is my body and soul,  
The *Khālsā* is my very life...  
For the many battles won, I am indebted to the *Khālsā*.  
Sikhs owe their spirit of compassion to the *Khālsā*.  
The inspiration for my learning came from the *Khālsā*.  
Our enemies were vanquished by the steadfastness of the *Khālsā*.  
Unlike countless others, we are adorned by the *Khālsā*.  
*Khālsā Mahima* from the *Dasam Granth*<sup>30</sup>

Gurū Gōbind Singh was a prolific writer and scholar of many languages. He compiled the final version of the *Ādi Granth Sāhib*, including his father's hymns. His own writings were collected and compiled into a separate volume titled the *Dasam Granth* (book of the tenth Gurū), and form a core of collected hymns recited daily (*nitnem*).

Prior to his death, he conferred final spiritual authority to the *Ādi Granth Sāhib* scripture itself (renamed the *Shrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*) and instructed his disciples to consult the Sikh community on all practical matters and recognize the scriptural Gurū, the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* as the eternal teacher. His close disciples recorded his order (*hukam*) as the *dōhara* (stanza) recited at the closure of the every Sikh service.<sup>31</sup>

I have established the *Khālsā* by God's command  
To all the Sikhs, this then is the commandment:  
Accept the *Granth* as the *Gurū*.  
Acknowledge the *Gurū Granthjī*  
As the visible form of the *Gurūs*.

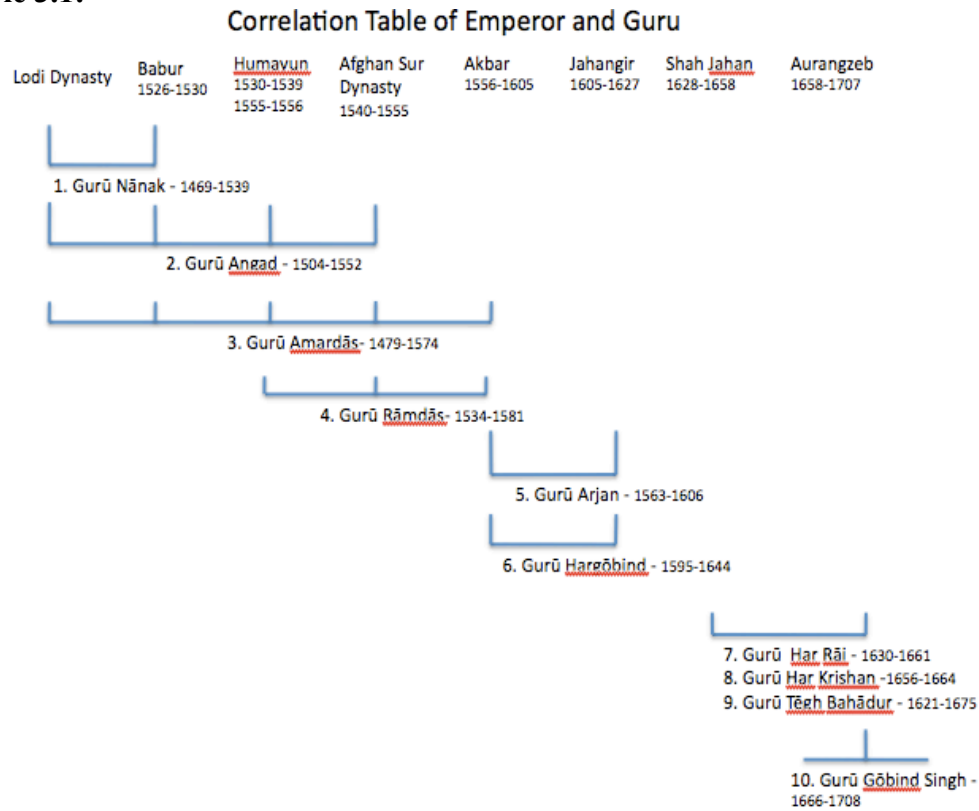
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<sup>30</sup> Patwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, 65-66.

<sup>31</sup> Referred to as the *Dōhara* (Hindi or Punjabi "order to repeat or recite"), this prayer is recited at the closure of the evening prayer.

Those with disciplined minds will find what they seek in it.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 3.1:**



### **The Period of Sikh Imperialism (1708-1849)**

Before his assassination, Gurū Gōbind Singh assigned leadership of the Sikhs to Banda Singh Bahadūr (1670-1716). A Hindu hermit turned Sikh warrior, Banda was appointed as a military lieutenant with the assignment to punish the Mughal's heinous exploits by initiating a process of political change and reform.<sup>33</sup> Banda retaliated aggressively, using powerful strategies and tactics he was able to establish

<sup>32</sup> Patwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, 65-66.

<sup>33</sup> Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs in History*, 81.

Sikh sovereignty. However, following his martyrdom, Mughal persecution towards Sikhs escalated, forcing the community to take refuge in the jungles and Himalayan foothills. They soon organized themselves into a single body called the *Dāl Khālsā* composed as a confederacy of eleven military units “*misls*” (a brigade of Sikh warriors) to resist Mughal oppression.<sup>34</sup> After a period of three and a half decades, they successfully formed the Sikh empire (1799-1849) under Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), who ruled 1799-1820.<sup>35</sup> His empire, weakened through internal divisions, political mismanagement, and irreligiousness, created an opportunity for the British Empire to take control of India, ultimately resulting in the annexation of Punjab into the British territories (1849).

### **The Colonial Period (1947-present)**

Under the British Raj and colonization, Sikhs were pacified and brought under its control, changing the swing of the pendulum of the Sikhs once again, from the poverty and oppression under Mughal rule to the sovereign opulence and decadence of the Sikh Empire, to the subjugation under a foreign power. The colonial period inspired socio-religious reform efforts amongst various Sikhs factions.<sup>36</sup> In 1873, the Singh Sabha, a reformist movement, was organized to restore the credibility of Sikhs

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 93-111.

<sup>35</sup> He expanded the Sikh Empire that straddled parts of India, from Kashmir and parts of Tibet and China, in the north to the Kyber Pass, in the west, to Multan, in the South.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History*, 123-171, and Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994); Joseph T. O'Connell, Willard G. Oxtoby, W. H. McLeod and J. Grewal, *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto, Ontario: Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Toronto, 1988), 136-191.



during a time when political and social instability wrought decline and the decay of Sikh identity. The Singh Sabha focused on recovering Sikh values in the face of increasing influence from Christian missionaries and Hindus. This organization eventually divided into two groups: the *Sanātan* Sikhs (conservative Sikhs) and the *Tat Khālsā* (radical Sikhs), with the later radical group gaining dominance in the early twentieth century.

### **The Contemporary Period**

Independence from the British in 1947 resulted in the partition and a new era of struggle for the Sikhs that would continue well into the 90s. The Sikh homeland of Punjab would be permanently severed, divided between Pakistan and India, causing a massive exodus of Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus from West Punjab and a similar migration of Punjabi Muslims from East Punjab. Their state was further divided on linguistic grounds in 1968 into three states: Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The new Indian government's neglect of this minority community's needs, along with unfulfilled promises, resulted in an outbreak of Sikh fundamentalism in epidemic proportions that wreaked havoc and led to terrorism and widespread violence in North India over the next two decades, reaching a pinnacle of violence during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.<sup>37</sup>

Since the mid-nineties, there has been relative peace and growing prosperity amongst the Sikh community, with a massive migration of Sikhs to Europe, the US and Canada. The Sikh religion today has a following of over twenty-five million

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<sup>37</sup> Grewal, *Betrayed by the State: the Anti-Sikh Pogrom of 1984*.

people worldwide and is ranked as the world's fifth largest religion. Some eighty percent of Sikhs live in Punjab, where they form the majority (approximately two thirds) of the population, while the remaining twenty percent make up a growing global diaspora. The principles of honest work, charity and worship (*kirt karna, wand chhakna and nām japna*) have enabled Sikhs to become economically successful and generous in establishing and supporting active religious communities abroad.

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of Sikh history, drawing from a collection of reputable sources acknowledged by both the academic community and the Sikh community at large. In this survey, I have considered the significant socio-political factors surrounding the birth of this new religion along with furnishing a brief biographical sketch of each Gurū and of their place in the history of Sikhism.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE *GURŪ GRANTH SĀHIB*

ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਕਲਮ ਧੰਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਭਾਂਡਾ ਧਨੁ ਮਸੁ  
ਧਨੁ ਲੇਖਾਰੀ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਲਿਖਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

“Blessed is the paper, blessed the pen. Blessed is the pot, which contains the blessed ink. The scribe is blessed, O Nanak, who writes the true divine name.”

*Gurū Nānak, Vār Malhār*<sup>1</sup>

“If my body were to become the paper, O Beloved, and my mind the inkpot; and if my tongue became the pen, O Beloved, I would write, and contemplate, the Glorious Praises of the True Lord. Blessed is that scribe, O Nanak, who writes the True Name, and enshrines it within his heart.” *Gurū Nānak, Rāgā Sōrath*<sup>2</sup>

### **The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and the Written Word**

The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* plays a central role in the life of the Sikh. The importance of written scripture is evident in the above hymns of Gurū Nānak composed over 500 years ago. In fact, throughout India’s history of religion, there has been a preponderance of thought and commentary on the power of the divine Word, both sonically transmitted through singing and chanting and as embodied in written language.<sup>3</sup>

Sikhism arose between the cushions of two powerful traditions, each purporting to represent the power of the Word: Hinduism with its Sanskrit scriptures and Islam with the holy Qur’an. Indologist Fritz Stahl describes Sikhism as “a Janus head” with one face looking in the Indian direction with respect to the sacredness of

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<sup>1</sup> *AG*, p. 1291.

<sup>2</sup> *AG*, p. 682.

<sup>3</sup> Guy Beck, *Sonic Theology* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1995), 1-20.

sound and the other face looking in the direction of Western monotheistic religions, particularly Islam in respect to emphasis on written text.<sup>4</sup> Pashaura Singh points out that the creation of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* was also a way to legitimize the newly forming Sikh theology as unique against the background of the hegemony of the written texts of Hinduism and Islam.<sup>5</sup> He adds “the primary intention of Gurū Arjan was to create an authoritative text for the Sikh community through which it could understand and assert its unique identity. By doing so he could affix a seal on the sacred word to preserve it for posterity and also frustrate any attempts by schismatic groups to circulate spurious hymns for sectarian ends.”<sup>6</sup>

This chapter, beginning with a remark on the hermeneutics surrounding the Word in Sikhism, provides an overview of the compilation, editing, and structural organization of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. It also touches on the language and composers of the scripture along with the role of the scripture in the daily life of the Sikh.

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<sup>4</sup> Frits Staal, "Comments: The Concept of Scripture in the Indian Tradition," in *Sikh Studies: Comparative Perspectives on a Changing Tradition*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer and N. Gerald Barrier, (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1979), 121-124.

<sup>5</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sahib, Canon, Meaning and Authority* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 21.

## The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* as the Living *Gurū*

The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* may be considered the largest hymnal used in any religious tradition, as an anthology of 5,894 religious songs composed, collected and compiled over a period of 300 years.<sup>7</sup> Pashaura Singh describes four formative stages in the creation of this Sikh doctrine: (1) the primary experience, (2) sung liturgy, (3) small hand-written hymnals (*pōthīs*), and (4) the canon including its first version, referred to as the *Kartarpur Bīr*, prepared by Gurū Arjan in 1604, and its final version, the *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*, prepared one hundred years later in 1708 by Gurū Gobind Singh.<sup>8</sup> [Figure 4.1]

**Figure 4.1.** A Standard Version of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*<sup>9</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, Gregorian chant has similar features of hymn organization. For lists of the pieces in the repertory, see John R. Bryden and David G. Hughes, *An Index of Gregorian Chant*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

<sup>8</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 126.

<sup>9</sup>

[http://image28.webshots.com/29/2/53/71/2485253710098039743tZUGym\\_fs.jpg](http://image28.webshots.com/29/2/53/71/2485253710098039743tZUGym_fs.jpg) [accessed March 3, 2011]

The first stage refers to Gurū Nānak's primary experience in which he composed hymns reflecting the social and emotional setting of his time. In the second stage, the hymns, sung as Sikh liturgy, were transmitted orally with the hymns remaining as a predominantly oral text. In the third stage, these compositions were then copied into small hymnals or *pōthīs* to be used by congregants. These hymnals were handwritten collections of hymns of Gurū Nānak, Gurū Angad and Gurū Amardās, which included selected poems of Hindu and Sufi saints.<sup>10</sup> Pashaura Singh refers to this stage as the theological redaction, because these collections contributed to the shaping of a solid and comprehensive theology, which was now written down and accessible to a broad populace.<sup>11</sup>

The final stage, marking the creation of the canon known today as the *Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib*, involved three phases. The initial phase began with the first edition of the scripture compiled by Gurū Arjan, who collected these *pōthīs* and after authenticating the hymns, included hymns of his father, Gurū Rām Dās and himself. His maternal uncle, Bhai Gurdās, wrote down the hymns. A manuscript, bearing the date of 1604, exists in Kartarpur, Punjab, and is believed to be the copy dictated by Gurū Arjan to Bhai Gurdās. Consequently, it is commonly known as the *Kartarpūr bīr* (recension).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> These small hymnals (*pōthīs*) are popularly considered the *Mohan Pōthī* or *Goindval Pōthī* because they were compiled in the city of Goindval, and held by Mohan, son of Gurū Amardās. They were organized and ordered by *Rāgā* and author, a tradition that Gurū Arjan continued in his compilation.

<sup>11</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sahib*, 126.

<sup>12</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 119.

One hundred years later, in 1706, the tenth Gurū Gōbind Singh added the hymns of his father, Gurū Tēgh Bahādur, to the second and final edition of the Granth. Bhai Mani Singh, a classmate of Guru Gobind Singh, was the scribe of this volume. The third and final phase took place in 1708, during which the scripture itself was designated by Gurū Gobind Singh as the final and permanent *Gurū* and renamed as the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, “the sacred volume which is the *Gurū*.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the Gurū, as Divine authority was transferred from an incarnate human form to the Scripture itself. Singh refers to this stage as the “significant completion of a matrix of revelation for the Sikh community.”<sup>14</sup> This matrix of revelation transformed the Sikhs into a textual community thenceforth, tying their social and religious activities to the teachings of the Scripture. Only hand-printed copies of this edition were available before the first copy was printed with a press in 1864. The standard edition of 1,430 pages, which includes an index, was finalized in the early twentieth century by the *SGPC*, (*Shiromani Gūrdwāra Prabandhak Committee*) in Amritsar. This committee, the “mini-parliament” of Sikhs, has exclusive and legal rights over the editing and publication of the *Granth* throughout the world. The official title by which the scripture is popularly addressed is the *Ādi Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhibjī*.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> McLeod, *Historical Dictionary*, 22.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 22.

<sup>15</sup> Denoting that it is *Ādi* (the first and primary), *Śrī* (Beloved), *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, and suffixed with “*jī*” (a term of respect and endearment).

## The Language of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*

The language in which the hymns of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* are composed is referred to as *Gurbāñī*. This term refers to both the *Gurūs*' hymns recorded in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and also in the *Dasam Granth*, a scripture with writings attributed to the tenth guru, Gurū Gobind Singh. Additionally, *Gurbāñī* can also refer to the hymns of the Hindu and Sufi *bhagats* (saints).<sup>16</sup>

The language of the scripture is a purely poetic, inspired language, a result of an epiphany in which Gurū Nānak received direct communication of the divine reality. Sikh scholar Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh explains in *The Name of My Beloved: Verses of the Sikh Gurus*, “Gurū Nānak celebrated the [favour] of receiving the Name through a song of praise; and a song was to be the medium of his divine inspiration ever after.”<sup>17</sup> Like other saint poets of his time, he used the language of the people, a simplified, early form of Hindi known as *Sant Bhāsha* or *Sādhukārī* as the medium to express his praise songs. This language, widely used throughout medieval northern India for popular devotional poetry, had a wide range of variants depending on location, poet and audience. Nirmal Das, in the *Songs of the Saints in the Ādi Granth* explains that the scripture was written in several languages with dialectical variants, including Sanskrit, regional Prakrits; western, eastern and northern *Apabhramsha*, and *Sahaskrit*.<sup>18</sup> The table below provides a list of the languages and their composers found in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. [Figure 4.2]

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<sup>16</sup> Some scholars delimit the term *Gurbāñī* as exclusively “*bañī* of the *Gurūs*” while *Bhagat Bāñī* denotes the hymns of the *bhagats*.

<sup>17</sup> Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Names of My Beloved: Verses of the Sikh Gurus* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 18.

<sup>18</sup> Nirmal Dass, *Songs of the Saints from the Ādi Granth* (Albany: SUNY, 2000), 13.



## Figure 4.2. Languages found in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*

*Punjābī* - many Sikh Gurūs, Bhagat (saint) Sheikh Farid and others

*Sindhī* – Gurū Arjan

Sanskrit – Gurū Nānak, Gurū Arjan and others

*Lehndī* or *Western Punjābī*– Gurū Arjan

*Gujarātī* and *Marathi* - Bhagat Namdev and Trilochan

*Western Hindī* - Bhagat Kabir

*Western Hindī* - Court poets

Eastern *Apabhramshas* - Bhagat Jaidev

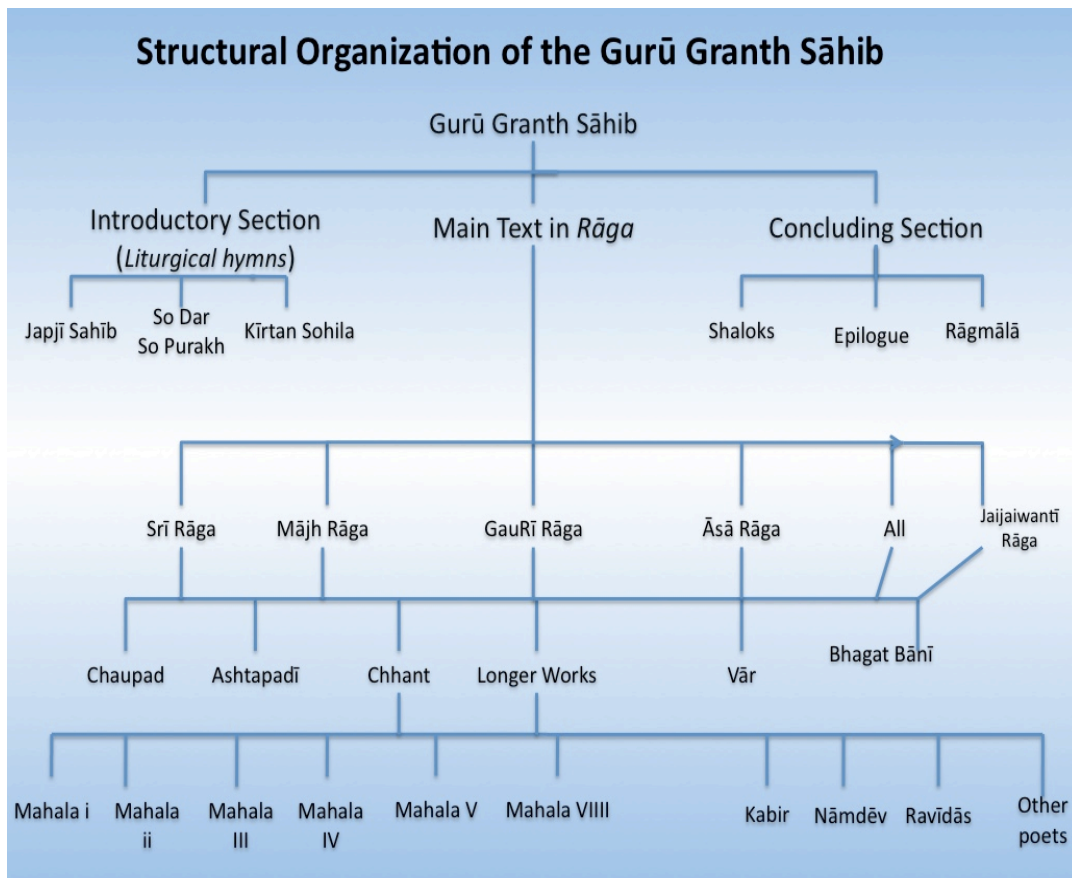
Arabic and Persian - Bhagat Namdev, Gurū Nānak

### Structural Organization of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*

The collection of *Gurbānī* fills 1,430 pages and is organized by its music and poetry. A musical anthology, it is divided into three sections: the introductory section, the musical section, and the conclusion or epilogue. [Table 4.1 and Figure 4.3]. The first thirteen pages contain liturgical works all dedicated to the compositions of Gurū Nānak. The hymns on these pages form a collection of prescribed daily hymns (*nitnem*), commencing with the *Mūlmantra* (Sikh statement of faith), followed by the *Japjī Sahib*, the *Sō Dar* (a collection of nine hymns) and *Kirtan Sōhila* (a collection of five hymns). Pages 14 through 1,353 contain hymns assigned with musical instructions. These hymns are organized into 31 chapters by *Rāgās* and further subdivided by the particular type of poetic composition, by the author, and finally by the *ghar*, a musical sign to be discussed later.

The final section, pages 1,353-1,430, consists of several styles of poetic compositions: *Śalōks* and *Swaiyyas*, the *Mundāvanī* (an epilogue to the scripture) and a *Śalōk* composed by Gurū Arjan. The scripture concludes with the *Rāgmālā*, a composition of twelve verses that provides an index of *rāgās*.

**Table 4.1. Structural Organization of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib***



### **Figure 4.3. Index of sections and items**

#### Section One: Liturgical/Prayers:

*Japjī* (Morning); Page 1 to 8  
*Sōdar* (Evening); Page 8 to 10  
*Sō Purakh* (Evening); Page 10 to 12  
*Sōhila* (Bed Time); Page 12 to 13

#### Section Two: Musical Section:

Musical hymns - Pages 14 - 1,353

#### Section Three: Concluding Section:

*Ślōkas Sahskriti* - Pages 1,353 - 1,360  
*Gatha* - Pages 1,360 - 1,361  
*Phanhas* - Pages 1,361 - 1,363  
*Chaubolas* - Pages 1,363 - 1,364  
*Ślōkas* of Kabir; Pages 1,364 - 1,377  
*Ślōkas* of Sheikh Farīd; Pages 1,377 - 1,384  
*Swaiyas*; Pages 1,385 - 1,409  
*Ślōkas* of the Gurūs; Pages 1,410 - 1,426  
*Ślōkas* of Gurū Tegh Bahādur; Pages 1,426 - 1,429  
*Mundāvānī*; Page 1,429  
*Rāgmālā*; Pages 1,429 - 1,430

The following section provides a summary of each section with examples of the hymns.

### **Liturgical/Prayers**

Liturgy plays a principle role in Sikh devotional practice, providing an established formula for public worship and a prescribed ritual, which Sikh congregations follow in their services and in their ceremonial rites. Initiated Sikhs are required to recite a series of daily prayers and hymns. Many whom I met had memorized these hymns in childhood and were able to recite them upon request. Even those who were perhaps illiterate had memorized these hymns by heart. The

*nitnem* hymns form the daily corpus of the canon, and portions of these hymns are often sung in congregational response. Below is a brief summary of the principal hymns recited daily.

(1) *Mūlmantra*

The *Mūlmantra* appears at the beginning of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Considered the statement of faith by Sikhs, it houses the principle ideology and belief in one non-anthropomorphic God who is self-realized.<sup>19</sup> It is popularly believed that Gurū Nānak recited this statement of faith after he returned from his three-day disappearance in the Kali Bein River.

<i>Ēk Ōngkār</i>	There is only one universal creator God
<i>Sat Nām</i>	His name is Truth
<i>Kartā Purakh</i>	Creative Being Personified
<i>Nirbhau</i>	He is without fear
<i>Nirvāir</i>	He is without hate
<i>Akāl Mūrat</i>	He is timeless and without form
<i>Ajūni Saibhang</i>	He is beyond birth and death, self-illuminated
<i>Gūr Parsād</i>	By Guru's Grace

(2) *Japjī Sāhib*

The *Japjī Sāhib* follows the *mulmantra*. This daily Morning Prayer is recorded on pages one through eight. *Jap*, a Sanskrit word meaning to recite with the tongue, refers to the tradition of reciting this early Morning Prayer. This lengthy hymn, broken up into thirty-eight *Paurīs* (Stanzas) and one *ślōka* (couplet), is attributed to Gurū Nānak, who is believed to have composed this prayer when he was thirty-eight

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<sup>19</sup> Hardev Bahri, "A Linguistic Analysis of the Mul-Mantra," in *Journal of Sikh Studies* 2 (February 1975), 24-34.

years old.

(3) *Sō Dar Rahirās*

The title *Sō Dar*, “That door” are the beginning words to a collection of five hymns in the liturgical section (pages 8-10) recited at sunset. Referring to the entrance through which to meet the Lord, this supplication commences with: “Where is the place where you dwell, with its door (*sō daru*) where you sit keeping watch over all”.<sup>20</sup> This set is followed by a group of four hymns “*Sō Purakh*” (literally “That person”, pages 10-12). Both collections of hymns, assigned to be sung in *Rāgā Āsā* are also repeated under their appropriate *rāgā* section of the *GGS*.

These evening prayers have been sung by devout Sikhs since the time of Gurū Nānak (when he started services at Kartarpur) as has been recorded in the *Vārs* of Bhai Gurdās.<sup>21</sup> Pashaura Singh comments “the morning prayer, *Japujī*, is a contemplative hymn and is meant for recitation during the ambrosial hours (*amṛta vēla*) of the last watch of the night before dawn... The evening prayer, *Sō Dar Rahirās*, on the other hand, is meant for congregational worship.”<sup>22</sup> This hymn collection is musically performed in the evening *kīrtan* session titled *Sō Dar dī chaunḱī* (service of *Sōdar*) at many *Gūrdwāras* throughout India and will be referred to later in this dissertation.

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<sup>20</sup> *AG*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>21</sup> Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas: Text, Transliteration and Translation*, 2 vols. (Patiala: Vision and Venture, 1998), 1.

<sup>22</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sāhib*, 97.

#### (4) *Kīrtan Sōhilā*

The liturgical section concludes with a set of five hymns on pages twelve and thirteen. These hymns are recorded in the liturgical section as well as under their appropriate *rāgā* section. This collection of hymns is sung and chanted by Sikhs before retiring at night and is also recited at the conclusion of the *antim ardās*, the funeral ceremony.

### The Musical Section

The musical section is the most substantial section consisting of a large collection of hymns that are organized under *Rāgā* chapters.<sup>23</sup> Scholars recognize the importance of music in this scripture by the sheer volume of hymns with *rāgā* prescriptions. The thirty-one main *rāgās* that appear in the musical section are listed below in their serial order. [Table 4.2]

**Table 4.2. *Rāgās* of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*: Main *Rāgās***

1. <i>Śrī</i>	9. <i>Sōrath</i>	17. <i>Gōṇḍ</i>	25. <i>Basant</i>
2. <i>Mājh</i>	10. <i>Dhanāsarī</i>	18. <i>Rāmkalī</i>	26. <i>Sarang</i>
3. <i>Gaurī</i>	11. <i>Jaitsrī</i>	19. <i>Nat</i>	27. <i>Malār</i>
4. <i>Āsā</i>	12. <i>Tōḍī</i>	20. <i>Mali Gaurī</i>	28. <i>Kānarā</i>
5. <i>Gūjarī</i>	13. <i>Bairārī</i>	21. <i>Mārū</i>	29. <i>Kalyāṇ</i>
6. <i>Dēvagandārī</i>	14. <i>Tilang</i>	22. <i>Tūkhārī</i>	30. <i>Prabhātī</i>
7. <i>Bihāgarā</i>	15. <i>Sūhī</i>	23. <i>Kēdārā</i>	31. <i>Jaijāvantī</i>
8. <i>Waḍhans</i>	16. <i>Bilāwal</i>	24. <i>Bhairō</i>	

Along with the 31 principle *rāgās* are added 31 *rāgā* variations. These *rāgās*

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<sup>23</sup> For similarities with the Byzantine liturgy organized by the oktoechos See Peter Jeffery, ed., *The Study of Medieval Chant: Paths and Bridges, East and West: in Honor of Kenneth Levy* (Woodbridge/Cambridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 153-193.

are derived from the main forms (a combination of two or more *rāgās*). [Table 4.3]

**Table 4.3. *Rāgās* of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*: *Rāgā* Forms**

1. <i>Gaurī Guārērī</i>	9. <i>Gaurī Mālā</i>	17. <i>Tilang Kāfī</i>	25. <i>Mārū Kafī</i>
2. <i>Gaurī Dakhañī</i>	10. <i>Gaurī Mājh</i>	18. <i>Sūhī Kāfī</i>	26. <i>Basant Hiṇḍōl</i>
3. <i>Gaurī Mālawā</i>	11. <i>Gaurī Sōrath</i>	19. <i>Āsāwarī Sudhang</i>	27. <i>Kalyān Bhōpālī</i>
4. <i>Gaurī Bairāgañī</i>	12. <i>Āsāwarī</i>	20. <i>Bilāwal Dakhañī</i>	28. <i>Prabhātī Bibhās</i>
5. <i>Gaurī Pūrabī Dīpakī</i>	13. <i>Sūhī Lalit</i>	21. <i>Bilāwal Mangal</i>	29. <i>Bibhās Prabhās</i>
6. <i>Waḍhans Dakhañī</i>	14. <i>Āsā Kāfī</i>	22. <i>Bilāwal Gōṇḍ</i>	30. <i>Prabhātī Dakhañī</i>
7. <i>Gaurī Dīpakī</i>	15. <i>Dēvagandār</i>	23. <i>Rāmkalī Dakhañī</i>	31. <i>Naṭ Nārāyan</i>
8. <i>Gaurī Chētī</i>	16. <i>Gaurī Pūrabī</i>	24. <i>Mārū Dakhañī</i>	

Metrical format also played a significant role in the organization of the hymns. All set in varying lengths of *padās* (verses), the hymns are sequentially organized by the nature of the meter. [Figure 4.4]

**Figure 4.4. Metrical Formats Found in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib***

1. *Chaupadas*: an average of four verses each.
2. *Aṣṭapadīs*: an average of eight verses each.
3. Special longer poems
4. *Chhants*: six line verses
5. Special short poems
6. *Vārs*: consisting of two or more paragraphs (*Ślōkas*) followed by a concluding stanza (*Paurīs*)
7. Poems of *Bhagats* (various saints)

The following chart provides examples of the indexing for hymns set in *Rāgā Śrī* and *Rāgā Gaurī* respectively, presenting the sequence of the hymns within a given *rāgā*. [Table 4.4 and 4.5]

**Table 4.4. Index of Hymns in *Rāgā Śrī***

***Rāgā Śrī***

<b>Type of Composition:</b>	<b>Page/s: 14-93</b>	<b>Composer/s:</b>
<i>Gurbāñī</i>	14-53	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan
<i>Aṣṭapadī</i> (Octets)	53-71	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Arjan
More <i>Gurbāñī</i>	71 to 74	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Arjan
<i>Pahreī</i> (The Hours)	74 to 78	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan
<i>Chhant</i> (Lyrics)	78 to 81	Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan
<i>Vanjara</i> (Merchant Songs)	81 to 82	Gurū Rām Dās
<i>Śrī Rāgā Kī Vār Mahalla IV</i>	83 to 91	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Rām Dās,
<i>Bhagat Bañī</i>	91 to 93	Bhagat Kabīr, Bhagat Trilochan



**Table 4.5. Index of Hymns in *Rāgā Gauṛī***

***Rāgā Gauṛī***

Type of Composition:	Page/s: 14-93	Composer/s:
<i>Gurbānī</i>	151 to 346	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās , Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan , Gurū Teg Bahadur, Bhagat Kabir, Bhagat Namdev, Bhagat Ravi Dās
<i>Chaupade</i> and <i>Dūpade</i> (Quartets and Couplets)	151 to 185	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās , Gurū Rām Dās , Gurū Arjan
<i>Aṣṭapadī</i> (Octets)	220 to 234	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās
<i>Karhalei</i> (Camel Driver's poem)	234 to 235	Gurū Rām Dās
<i>Aṣṭapadī</i> (Octets)	235 to 242	Gurū Arjan
<i>Chhant</i> (Lyrics)	242 to 249	Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās , Gurū Arjan
<i>Bawan Akkhari</i> (Acrostic)	250 to 262	Gurū Arjan
<i>Sukhmaṇī</i> (Jewel of Bliss)	262 to 296	Gurū Arjan
<i>Thittin</i> (Lunar Dates)	296 to 300	Gurū Arjan
<i>Vār</i>	300 to 323	Gurū Amar Das, Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan
<i>More Baṇī</i>	323 to 330	Bhagat Kabir, Gurū Arjan
<i>Aṣṭapadī</i> (Octet)	330 to 340	Bhagat Kabir
<i>Bawan Akkhari</i> (Acrostic)	340 to 343	Bhagat Kabir
<i>Thitīn</i> (Lunar Dates of Fortnight)	343 to 344	Bhagat Kabir
<i>Vār</i> - Seven Days of the Week	344 to 345	Bhagat Kabir

Each hymn is a complete unit itself and is to be presented in the exact format in which it is written, commencing with an announcement of its title. Most hymns consist of a refrain (*rahāō*) and several verses. The example given below, an *aṣṭapadī* (verse of eight stanzas) in *Rāgā Dhanāsarī*, provides an idea of the arrangement of a typical hymn. [Figure 4.5] A more in-depth study of the hymns in the musical section will be discussed in Chapter Six: *Rāgā* and Revelation.

Figure 4.5. Example of a *Śabad* “*Gurū Sāgar Ratanī Bharpūrē*” layout in *Rāgā Dhanāsarī*

Gurmukhī script:

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਘਰੁ ੨ ਅਸਟਪਦੀਆ  
 ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
 ਗੁਰੁ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਰਤਨੀ ਭਰਪੂਰੇ ॥  
 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸੰਤ ਚੁਗਹਿ ਨਹੀ ਦੂਰੇ ॥  
 ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਚੋਗ ਚੁਗਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਵੈ ॥  
 ਸਰਵਰ ਮਹਿ ਹੰਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਾਨਪਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥੧॥  
 ਕਿਆ ਬਗੁ ਬਪੁੜਾ ਛਪੜੀ ਨਾਇ ॥  
 ਕੀਚੜਿ ਡੂਬੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥<sup>24</sup>

Transliteration:

*Dhanāsarī mahalā 1 ghar 2 Aṣṭapadī*  
*ik oankār satigur prasād ||*  
*gur sāgar ratanī bharapūrē ||*  
*amṛta sant chugehi nehī dūrē ||*  
*har ras chōg chugehi prabh bhāvai ||*  
*saravar mahi hans prānapati pāvai ||1||*  
*kiā bag bapurā chhaparī nāi ||*  
*kīchar ḍūbai mail n jāi||1|| rahāō ||*

English:

*Dhanāsarī, First Mahala, Ghar 2, Aṣṭapadī* = (Title: *Rāgā Dhanāsarī, Gurū Nānak, Ghar 2, poetic style: Aṣṭapadī*)

*One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Gurū = Invocation*  
*The Guru is the ocean, filled with pearls.*

*The Saints gather in the Ambrosial Nectar; they do not go far away from there.*  
*They taste the subtle essence of the Lord; they are loved by God.*  
*Within this pool, the swans find their Lord, the Lord of their souls. ||1|| = (First Verse)*  
*What can the poor crane accomplish by bathing in the mud puddle. It sinks into the mire, and its filth is not washed away. ||1||Pause|| = (Refrain)*

Figure 4.6. Page 685 from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*: “*Gurū Sāgar Ratanī Bharpūrē*”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *AG*, p. 685.

<sup>25</sup> Photo by author, taken at *Mastuana Sāhib Gūrdwāra*, October 19, 2006.



### The Concluding Section

The concluding section of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* consists of non-*rāgā* hymns, composed in a variety of poetic styles, followed by a closing hymn, the *Muṇḍāvanī* and a compendium of *rāgās*, the *Rāgāmālā*. The *Muṇḍāvanī* literally “seal” is a metaphorical hymn composed by Gurū Arjan as an epilogue to the volume. It is commonly accepted that this hymn “sealed” the scripture as a way of precluding any unwanted additions to the scripture.<sup>26</sup> The *Muṇḍāvanī* and the *Śalōk* that follows are both integral parts of the scriptural text and are recited at the end of both services and full readings of the Holy Book. The *Muṇḍāvanī* is also recited as the conclusion of the *Rahirās*, the daily evening prayer.

#### *Muṇḍāvaṇī:*

<sup>26</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sāhib*, 211.

*Upon this Plate, three things have been placed: Truth, Contentment and Contemplation. The Ambrosial Nectar of the Nām, the Name of our Lord and Master, has been placed upon it as well; it is the Support of all. One who eats it and enjoys it shall be saved. This thing can never be forsaken; keep this always and forever in your mind. The dark world-ocean is crossed over, by grasping the Feet of the Lord; O Nānak, it is all the extension of God. ||1||<sup>27</sup>*

**Śalōk, Gurū Arjan:**

*I have not appreciated what You have done for me, Lord; only You can make me worthy. I am unworthy - I have no worth or virtues at all. You have taken pity on me. You took pity on me, and blessed me with Your Mercy, and I have met the True Gurū, my Friend. Nānak, if I am blessed with the Nām, I live, and my body and mind blossom forth. ||1||<sup>28</sup>*

**Rāgmālā:**

This composition is found at the conclusion of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

*Rāgmālā* literally meaning “a garland of *rāgās*” appears after the *Mundāvaṇī* and *Śalōk* of Gurū Arjan. The *Rāgmālā* is a compendium of eighty-four *rāgās* classified into six groups. While scholar’s opinions differ on the intent and inclusion of the *Rāgmālā* in *The Gurū Granth Sāhib*, there is general agreement that its presence at the close of the Scripture may act as a tribute to the importance of *rāgās* within it.<sup>29</sup>

**Contributors of the Gurū Granth Sāhib**

The contributors to the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* fall into four categories: (1) the Sikh Gurūs, (2) the pre-Nānak saints (*bhagats*), (3) the poet saints of the time and (4) other contributors. The first five Gurūs and the ninth and tenth Gurū have all been contributors. Included are the hymns of sixteen *bhagats* (Hindu and Sufi saints) from

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<sup>27</sup> AG, p. 1429.

<sup>28</sup> AG, p. 1429.

<sup>29</sup> Winand M. Callewaert and Mukund Lath, *The Hindi Padavali of Namdev* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1989), 127.

different parts of India spanning four centuries.<sup>30</sup> The third category of contributors includes *Bhagats* and *Bhaṭṭs* who were contemporaries of the Gurūs. The *Bhaṭṭs*, who served as bards in the courts of the Gurūs, composed mostly panegyrics of the Gurūs.<sup>31</sup> The fourth category of contributors includes people like Mardāna (Gurū Nānak's Muslim companion and disciple), Sunder (the author of an elegy), and the minstrel duo, Satta and Balwand. The table below provides a list of the number of hymns written by the Gurūs and others. [Table 4.6]

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<sup>30</sup> Placed here in chronological order, they are Jaidev from Bengal; Farīd from Punjab; Nām Dēv, Trilōchan and Paramānand from Maharastra; Sadhnā is a Sindhi; Bēnī and Rāmānanda from Uttarpradesh; Dhannā belongs to Rajasthan; Pīpā, Sain, Kabīr and Ravidās from Uttarpradesh; Bhikhan from Uttarpradesh; and Sūr Dās.

<sup>31</sup> The bards are the following: Bhalhau, Bhikā, Dās, Gangā, Haribans, Jalan, Jālap, Kal, Kalasu, Kalasahār, Kiratu, Mathurā, Nal, Rad and Sal.

**Table 4.6: Number of Hymns by Author**

<b>Composer: Gurū</b>	<b>Number of hymns</b>	<b>Composer: <i>bhagat</i></b>	<b>Number of hymns</b>
Gurū Nānak	947	Bhagat Kabir	541
Gurū Angad	62	Nāmdēv	60
Gurū Amar Dās	907	Ravidas	41
Gurū Rām Dās	697	Rāmānand	1
Gurū Arjan	2,218	Jaidēv	2
Gurū Tēgh Bahādur	115	Trilōchan	4
Dhanna	4		
Sheikh Farīd	134		

### **The Role of Scripture in the Daily Life of the Sikh**

For the devoted Sikh, the Scripture is always inseparable from daily life.

Harbans Singh explains:

“It was central to all that subsequently happened in the Sikh life. It was the source of their verbal tradition and it shaped their intellectual and cultural environment. It molded the Sikh concept of life. From it the community’s ideals, institutions and rituals derived their meaning. Its role in guaranteeing the community integration and permanence and in determining the course of its history has been crucial.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, 4: 247.

The intimate and continuous connection with the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* in the daily life of the Sikh is evident when one observes the daily routine at the Sikh. From birth to death, all ceremonies commence and conclude with observances surrounding the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. From the early morning hours to the late evening, the Sikh's life is guided by a prescription of daily hymns, readings and observances. Recognized as the embodiment of the Gurū, it presides over all religious functions each day after it is ceremonially installed in the *Gūrdwāra*. In the evening, it is returned to its resting quarters.<sup>33</sup> The *Granth* is placed on a throne (*manji-sahib*), over, which is, draped a colorful canopy. A devotee, who waves a whisk over the scripture, continuously tends it. [Figure 4.7]

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<sup>33</sup> Every *Gūrdwāra* must contain a room with a bed. Each night, the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is ritually taken from the *Takht*, the raised platform in the prayer hall, and carried into the bed. Every morning, the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is taken from the bed and carried back to the *Takht*. This shows the respect that Sikhs have for the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*.

Figure 4.7. Sikh Service at *Dārbār Sāhib*, Amritsar<sup>34</sup>



Contact with the Scripture in the form of carrying it from one place to another, arranging it on the *manji* sahib with colorful scarves, opening and smoothing the pages, reading, listening to and singing the words are all connected to the multi-sensory and extra-musical experience surrounding the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Receiving the daily *hukamnāma*, the Gurū's order, is the pivotal ritual event around which the daily services take place. The scripture is randomly opened and the hymn located on the upper left page is read as the *hukam* for the day. This hymn is to be contemplated

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<http://forum.sikhsangeet.com/v/Gurudware/Harmandir+Sahib/goldentemple1.jpg.html> [accessed March 8, 2011]



throughout the day as a spiritual roadmap. Imprinting these Divine words on the mind the devotee becomes saturated with their emotional message as instructed by Gurū Rām Dās in the first stanza of the famous morning hymn the *Āsā Dī Vār*.

*Āsā Mahala 4, Chhant Ghar 4//  
(My) eyes are wet with God's Nectar and my mind is dyed with love of God, O Supreme King//  
God has applied his touch-stone (of love) to my mind and it has become (most pure and valuable like) the most pure gold//  
I have been dyed by the Gurū; with (ever-lasting Divine) color and my mind and body have been drenched in it//  
The slave (of God), (Gurū) Nānak, has been perfumed with the divine musk (of His love) and his birth (life) is (now) supremely blessed.*<sup>35</sup> AG, p. 448.

The oral-aural and written experience of the Scripture has played a significant role for the Sikh from the beginning of this faith. The oral experience of *Gurbāñī* through recitation, singing, chanting and listening to it transforms one's consciousness and purifies one's mind, thereby neutralizing negative thoughts. Gurū Arjan in *Rāgā Kānarā* comments: "The false thinking of both performers and listeners is destroyed when they participate in devotional singing." Through continuous encounter with *Gurbāñī*, the devotee personalizes the scripture. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith comments: "To memorize, to recite, even to hear have always been deeply personal ways of relating to the meaning of words than to look at them on the page."<sup>36</sup> The *Japjī* itself expresses this very thought, instructing the devotee to: "*Gaviye, suniye man rakhiye bhao, dukh parhar sukh ghar le jaye*"

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<sup>35</sup> *The Sacred Āsā Dī Vār*, ed. Harbans Singh Doabia (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1988), 16.

<sup>36</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What Is Scripture?* 166.

(Sing, listen to and keep the scripture in your heart, then you shall destroy your pain and live in peace).<sup>37</sup>

This oral dimension can be aptly explored by examining the actual practice of encountering *Gurbāṇī* in Sikh daily life. Both receptive and productive approaches are strongly built into the devotional activities surrounding the scripture.

Memorization maintains a high place in both learning and performing *Gurbāṇī*.

William Graham observes: “Memorization is a particularly intimate appropriation of a text, and the capacity to quote or recite from memory is a spiritual resource that is tapped automatically in every act of reflection, worship, prayer, or moral deliberation, as well as in times of personal and communal decision or crisis.”<sup>38</sup> To memorize, *kanṭhastha* (Sanskrit), literally translated “to establish in the throat,” implies both the receptive and active elements of memorizing through speaking, singing or intoning the words.

In this chapter, I have conducted an analysis of the musical and textual organization of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* as a written text. I have also considered how the Gurū, embodied in the Scripture, is a pivotal force in the daily life of the Sikh, unfolding through the daily expressive rituals of singing, chanting and memorizing. This leads us into our next chapter, which explores the musical marriage between the revelation of the Word and *rāgā*.

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<sup>37</sup> *M1, Japjī, AG*, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 160.

## CHAPTER FIVE: MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ŚĀBAD KĪRTAN

ਮਾਰੂ ਸੋਲਹੇ ਮਹਲਾ ਪ  
ਕਲਜੁਗ ਮਹਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਪਰਧਾਨਾ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਪੀਐ ਲਾਇ ਧਿਆਨਾ ॥  
ਆਪਿ ਤਰੈ ਸਗਲੇ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਤਿ ਸਿਉ ਜਾਇਦਾ ॥੬॥

*Rāgā Mārū, Sōhalē, Gurū Arjan*  
*In this Dark Age of Kali Yuga, the Kīrtan of the Lord's Praises are most*  
*sublime and exalted.*  
*Become Gurmukh, chant and focus your meditation.*  
*You shall save yourself, and save all your generations as well. You shall go to*  
*the Court of the Lord with honor. ||6|| AG, 1075*

### **Singing Praises Through the Ages**

*Kīrtan* (from Skt. √ *Kīrti*, i.e. to praise, celebrate or glorify), that is, singing songs of praise to God is an essential part of Sikh worship and —as referenced in the above popular hymn in *Rāgā Mārū* — is considered a panacea for the modern age. The Sikh Gurūs lived during a period of musical and cultural renaissance in India when music and poetry flourished under the patronage of emperors and wealthy patrons alike. It was also a time that witnessed a confluence and synthesis of aesthetics and thought from Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, each with their own devotional hymn singing traditions. *Śabad kīrtan* benefitted from these influences, as did the classical and folk traditions of India. Musicologist A.S. Paintal remarks in this connection:

The Sikh sacred music, through its intimate sharing of the spirit of classical Hindustani music and its artistic assimilation of the popular and folk styles of music for its aesthetic-emotional needs, evolved new modes and patterns of devotional music based on, and intimately

related to, the well-known indigenous forms and styles of devotional music, characteristic of other religious faiths. Here we discern a synthesis that so truly governs the catholicity of the Sikh religion whose contribution to devotional music is not only of outstanding merit, but is also a part and parcel of the great heritage of this country in its religious and devotional modes of expression an appeal.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter explores the historical, musical and textual influences that lead to the development of *Śabad kīrtan*.

### **The Development of Devotional Music in India**

The hymns of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* as lyrical poetry, evolved out of a tradition of devotional singing that can be traced back 2,000 years. The emphasis placed on verse (*pada*) and tone (*swār*) can be observed throughout the evolution of praise singing leading to the complex musical system of *Śabad kīrtan*. Indian musicologists identify several distinct periods in its evolution: the Vedic Period, the *Purānic* Period, the Classical period and the medieval period.

From the Vedic Period onward (2,500 B.C. – A.D. 200) the singing of sacred poetry was considered the ideal medium through which to commune with the Divine. Vedic hymns, referred to as *sāmāgāna*, were guided by a sophisticated metrical system based on the number of syllables in a verse.<sup>2</sup> The sung poetry was taught through the study of *Chhanda*: the study of Vedic meter, in which great emphasis was placed on the metrical units of the verse (*pada*).<sup>3</sup> These metered hymns recited in

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<sup>1</sup> G.S. Mansukhani, *Sikh Kirtan*, 109.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Howard, *Vedic Recitation in Varanasi* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1986), 199-333.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

three basic tones -*Anudāta*, *Udāta* and *Swarita*, formed the basis for many later singing styles in India.<sup>4</sup>

During the Puranic period, (800 B.C. – 400 A.D.) *stōtra* singing (eulogistic songs) gained popularity. Two Sanskrit epic poems, the *Mahabharat* and *Ramayana* introduced the verse form, *Ślōka*, a verse of two lines, each with sixteen syllables, based on the Vedic *Anuśtubh* meter.<sup>5</sup> During this period, several singing styles were also employed.<sup>6</sup>

The Classical period (A.D. 100 – 1200) produced the tradition of “saint-singers” who preached through sung poetry.<sup>7</sup> They composed their hymns in *padas* and penned their names in the last verse of the poem, thus affirming their creativity and role in the poem.<sup>8</sup> Their poems contain a *dhruvpad* (literally a “fixed verse” *Skt.* “*dhruv*” + “*pad*”), which acted as a refrain repeated after every verse to reinforce and intensify the theme. The coupling of *pada* style poetry with music, in the form of *rāgā*, gave birth to the singing tradition of *prabandha*.<sup>9</sup> This rich and thriving genre became the preferred form for sung poetry of the poet saint tradition with some of the earliest *prabandhas* dating from the eighth-century ascetic sects of the *Siddhās* and *Nāth Yogīs*. The twelfth-century Hindu poet-saint, Jayadeva, popularized the

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<sup>4</sup> *Anudāta*, *Udāta* and *Swarita* correspond to lower pitch, higher pitch and intermediate pitch, respectively and are based on an intervallic relationship. See Wayne Howard, *Vedic Recitation in Varanasi*, 95-96.

<sup>5</sup> The *Anuśtubh* meter consists of a sixteen-syllable line, broken into two eight-syllable half-lines by a break in the middle of the line.

<sup>6</sup> Gurnam Singh, *A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Bani* (New Delhi: Manjit Singh, 1999), 38.

<sup>7</sup> Poets such as Jayadeva (twelfth-century) were considered as saints who composed spiritual poetry to song.

<sup>8</sup> This feature (final verse is called the *bhanita*) was popularly adopted in the saint-singer tradition as well as being an intrinsic part of all *Śabad* compositions.

<sup>9</sup> Callewaert and Lath, *The Hindi Padavali of Namdev*, 56.

*prabhandas* through his composition *Gitagovinda*, a hymn of praise in Sanskrit to Lord Krishna. He assigned *rāgās*, such as *Rāmkalī*, *Vasant*, and *Gūjarī* and the rhythm cycles of the seven-beat *rupak*, and twelve-beat *ektāl* to his poems.<sup>10</sup>

In an analysis of the *prabandhas* of medieval saint poet Nāmdev, Callewaert and Lath explain that musicians classified songs according to the *rāgā* in which they were composed: “It appears that first the singers sang a particular *pada* in a particular *rāgā*. Then they grouped together the *padas* which were to be sung in the same *rāgā*.”<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, *rāgā* was like an identity card for the earliest period of oral transmission. Repertoires, collections of songs classified by *rāgās* became popular in the fourteenth century among religious communities. One such collection known as the *Pancavāṇī* contains the poetry of the *Dādūpanth* (five highly-respected poets, three of whom whose poetry is also found in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*).<sup>12</sup>

The Medieval period (1200 - 1800 A.D.) is considered by scholars to be the Indian renaissance. During this period the arts reached new levels of expansion and synthesis. Swami Haridas (1480 -1575) further developed the *pada prabandha* style of sung poetry. A contemporary of Gurū Nānak, he composed four part *dhrupad* compositions as *sthāi*, *antara*, *sanchārī* and *abhōgī*. *Dhrupad* [Skt. *Dhru* (fixed) + *pad* (verse)] was a style of sung poetry that became a genre in its own right, built around a refrain and a series of verses.<sup>13</sup> Many poets of the *Bhaktī* movement (devotional revival) adopted this style, including saints such as Kabir, Nāmdev,

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<sup>10</sup> Jayadeva, *Love Song of the Dark Lord*, ed. Barbara Stoler Miller, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 7-14.

<sup>11</sup> Callewaert and Lath, *The Hindi Padavali of Namdev*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Kabīr, Nāmdev and Ravidās.

<sup>13</sup> For a comprehensive style of *dhrupad*, cf. Widdess, *Drupad Tradition and Performance in Indian Music*.

Haridās, Surdās. Tansen (1506 – 1589), one of Swāmī Haridās’ closest disciples, further popularized *dhrupad* by introducing many new *rāgās*. In his analysis of Sikh music, Dr. Gurnam Singh comments that a large percentage of Sikh hymns were composed and rendered in *dhrupad*.<sup>14</sup>

This period also bore witness to the mystical poetry of the Sufi saints who sang in their unique style of *Sufiana Qalam*.<sup>15</sup> They introduced several compositional styles: *Kafī*, *Dōhara* and *Śloka*. These will be further explored in Chapter Seven.

### **The Development of *Śabad kīrtan***

The period of the Gurus (1469-1666) falls in the medieval period of Indian history, by which time the tradition of sung poetry had already been practiced widely by Hindu and Sufi saints alike. Along with the classical *pada prabandh* genre, which greatly influenced the composition style of *Śabad kīrtan*, the Gurus employed other popular poetic forms, both classical and folk, to compose their hymns. (A detailed analysis of these follows in the succeeding chapters.) Gurū Nānak, along with nine successive gurus, each contributed to the development of the musical corpus of *Śabad kīrtan* by both borrowing and creating new *rāgās* and rhythms, introducing a variety of singing styles and poetic compositions, developing and establishing institutions of learning, instituting a series of services and liturgical compositions, as well as introducing traditional string instruments into the repertoire.

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<sup>14</sup> Singh, *A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Bani*, 76.

<sup>15</sup> For an excellent detailed study of this genre, cf. Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan*, 17-72.

Gurū Nānak composed poetry with the musical accompaniment of Bhai Mardana, a Muslim *mirāsī* (musician caste) who played the *rabāb* (a strummed instrument). A well-known story from the *Pūrātan Janamsakhi* relates that the Gurū Nānak spoke to Bhai Mardana, stating “Oh Mardana, concentrate your mind on the *shabad* (mystical word). Hymns are not constructed without your help. Play the *rabāb*.”<sup>16</sup>

After his four preaching odysseys, he settled in Kartarpūr and established it as the first center of *Gurmat Sangīt* (Sikh music). Here, the beginning of *kīrtan* in an institutional format began with the liturgical singing of the *Japjī Sahib* in the morning and *Sō Dār* and *Āratī* in the evening, as is confirmed in the ballad of Bhai Gurdas.<sup>17</sup> Gurū Nānak borrowed from classical and folk forms of Indian poetry like *Śalōk*, *Paūrī*, *chant*, *Vār* and *Sōhila*, and added his own poetry including *Bārāh-Mahā* (a calendar poem), *Ārti*, *Patti*, *Pahēy*, *Gōsht* and *Alāhuṇīā*. He composed 974 hymns in nineteen *rāgās*. G.S. Mansukhani relates “Guru Nanak democratized sacred music and brought it from the exclusive temple halls to the homes of the ordinary men and women.”<sup>18</sup> He used music as a tool to bring the masses together, laying the foundation for a popular religious literature and spiritual culture.

The second Gurū Angad initiated the tradition of the daily ballad singing of the *Āsā Dī Vār* with the *rabābīs* (Muslim musicians who play the *rabāb*) Bhai Balwand and Satta. He composed 62 *ślōkas* in ten *rāgās*. He established Khadoor

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<sup>16</sup> Samsher Singh Ashok, ed., *Puratan Janamsakhi*, (Amritsar: Khalsa College, 1962), 71.

<sup>17</sup> Surinder Singh Kholi, *Bhai Gurdas – The Great Sikh Theologian* (Punjabi University: Patiala, 2007)

<sup>18</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Music*, 94.



Sahib *Gūrdwāra* complex for the propagation of Sikhism and also popularized the *gurmukhī* script and established the tradition of *katha and kīrtan* (a service combining sermon and song). He furthered the *gharāṇa* tradition of *kīrtankārs* (different schools of music for training singers) by patronizing Bhai Sajda (son of Bhai Mardana), Rai Balwand, Bhai Sadu and Bhai Badu.<sup>20</sup>

The third Gurū Amār Dās (1479-1574) wrote 907 hymns in seventeen *rāgās*, composing hymns in both classical and folk poetic forms, including *padas*, *aṣṭapadī*, *chhant*, *solhe*, *patti*, and *vār* styles. He also composed the liturgical composition, the *Anand Sāhib* hymn. He established *Goindwal Sahib Gūrdwāra* as the center of Sikhism coordinating a system of administrative units (the *manjī* system) including the tradition of Sikh sacred music. He contributed to the development of the *sarinda* (bowed instrument).

The fourth Gurū Rām Dās (1534 – 81) wrote 835 hymns in 30 ragas. He composed compositions in the popular folk form, *Chhant* in *Rāgā Āsā* and also the marriage hymns, *Lāvan* in *Rāgā Sūhī*. Gurū Rām Dās composed eight ballads (*vārs*) indicating traditional tunes (*dhūnīs*) for three of them in the song's title. He is also famous for his ten *partāl* compositions (a classical composition with multiple time signatures). The construction and development of Amritsar as Rāmdāspūr commenced under his authority.

The fifth Gurū Arjan (1563-1606) was a prolific writer and musician, composing 2,218 hymns in thirty-one different *rāgās*. He is noted for of the most celebrated and recited hymns in *Gurbāñī*, the *Sukhmañī Sāhib*. He played a

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<sup>20</sup> Gurnam Singh, *A Musicological Study*, 120.

significant role in both producing the first compilation of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and installing it in the *Harimandir Sahib* in 1604. He also instituted a system of daily music services ((*chaṅkī*), in which both Sikh *rāgī* and Muslim *rabābī* performed. These were the *Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaṅkī*, *Anand dī Chaṅkī*, *Charan Kamal dī Chaṅkī*, *Sodar dī Chaṅkī*, *Kalyāṇ dī Chaṅkī*.<sup>21</sup> He emphasized group participation in singing and assigned non-professional and non-hereditary amateur class singers as *Rāgīs*.

The sixth Gurū Hargobind established a class of ballad singers, *Dhādī*, who accompanied themselves on the *Dhād* (small double-barreled drum) and *sārangī* (bowed instrument). He is also linked with accompaniment on the *taus* (string bowed instrument). Gurū Hargōbind also initiated the *chalna chaṅkī* (a *kīrtan* sung during a procession that circumambulates the *Gurdwāra* four times daily), which is to this day, part of the regimen of services at *Dārbār Sāhib* and key *Gurdwāras* in India.

Gurū Har Rai continued the *kīrtan* tradition by introducing simple explanation of *baṇī* through stories in *katha* style. Little is written about Gurū Harkrishan's contribution to Sikh *kīrtan*, since he died at the young age of eight years old. Guru Tegh Bahādur composed 116 hymns in fifteen *rāgās*. He introduced the *Rāgā Jaijāvanti* to the corpus of the scripture. He also used the notes of *sargam* (musical syllables in Indian music) in his hymns. He established Anandpur Sahib as a spiritual center.

The tenth and final guru in the succession of living masters, Gurū Gōbind Singh was a great patron of poets and musicians. He himself composed hymns in

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<sup>21</sup> Daljit Singh. *Sikh Sacred Music* (Ludhiana: Daljit Singh, 1967), p. 48.

nineteen different ragas, three of which are not found in the *GGS* (*Adan*, *Paraj* and *Kāfī*). He was considered a highly versatile poet, learned in the classical languages of Sanskrit, Persian and Farsi and in the local languages of Bhojpuri and Punjabi. The scholar D.P. Ashta in *The Poetry of the Dasam Granth* remarks: “He gave us music, martial and hymnal, sacred and secular, simple and complex. In him we find a saint singing hymnal songs, a soldier giving martial music, a householder singing virtues of a good life and painter creating wonderful pictures with music.”<sup>22</sup> He employed 52 scholars at his court whose job was to study and translate the Scriptures and religious doctrines of different faiths. He used *khyāl* style in his poetry according to the text of the hymn “*Mitra pyārē nū*.”<sup>23</sup>

Towards the close of this period, a new classical singing style, *khyāl*, emerged which would eventually virtually replace the older *dhrupad* style. While *dhrupad* came out of a classical tradition steeped in the Sanskrit tradition of classical and courtly poetry, *khyāl* (Urdu for imagination) was more lyrical and light, focusing on musical embellishment and improvisation.<sup>24</sup> By the mid eighteenth century, *khyāl* became the most popular and preferred form for rendering *rāgās*, and thus greatly influenced the style in which *Śabad kīrtan* was presented.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Dharam Pal Ashta, *The Poetry of the Dasam Granth* (Delhi: Arun Prakashan, 1959), 74.

<sup>23</sup> This hymn is in the *Dasam Granth*, p. 1347.

<sup>24</sup> Bonnie C. Wade, *Khyal: Creativity within North India's Classical Music Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1-11.

<sup>25</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar*, 1-45.

## ***Śabad kīrtan* and Pre-Partition**

The condition of *Śabad kīrtan* following the death of the tenth Gurū is sketchy, due to the fact that there is a dearth of material available on the condition of *kīrtan*. We can assume that following the demise of Gurū Gobind Singh and the growing persecution of Sikhs by Muslim rulers and invaders, that this period was not conducive to musical growth. However, during the reign of the Sikh emperor, Maharaj Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), who was a great patron of the arts, *Śabad kīrtan* flourished, and historical documentation supports the patronage of this sacred art. Much like the transmission of knowledge in India, which followed the oral tradition of “*guru śiṣyā parampara*” (teacher student relationship), Sikh music was passed on in a similar way, as Dr. Pashaura Singh explains:

The *rāgās* of the *Ādī Granth* were passed on to different generation of *rāgīs* belonging to old family traditions (*gharāṇās*) and the Sikh institutions of learning (*taksāls*). The musical notation of these *rāgās* were only committed to writing in the late nineteen and early twentieth centuries during the Singh Sabha period.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike the *gharāṇās* system in Indian classical music, most *taksāls* act as Sikh seminaries, where students are trained to become *rāgīs*, *granthīs* and *prachāraks* (hymn singers, priests and preachers). Some of the most well known schools of *Gurmat Sangīt* scattered throughout Punjab are listed below.<sup>27</sup> [Figure 5.1]

### **Figure 5.1. Well-known *Taksāls***

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<sup>26</sup> Guy Beck, *Sacred Sound. Experiencing Music in World Religions* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 160.

<sup>27</sup> For a description of each *taksāl*, see G. Singh, 2000, 169-174.

1. *Damdāmā Taksāl* in Talwandi
2. *Budhā Jōṛ Taksāl* in Punjab
3. *Mastūānā Taksāl* in Sangrur
4. *Sēvā Panthī Taksāl* in Punjab
5. *Damdāmī Taksāl* in Chowk Mehta
6. *Daudharpur Dī Taksāl* in Daudharpur
7. *Singhān Wālā Taksāl* in Singhan
8. *Haraganā Dī Taksāl* in Haragana
9. *Taran Tāran Taksāl* in Taran Taran
10. Sikh Missionary College in Amritsar
11. *Kalērā Wālā Taksāl* in Nānaksar
12. *Rakābganj Taksāl* in Delhi
13. *Jawaddī Kalā Taksāl* in Ludhiana
14. *Bhaini Sāhib* in Ludhiana

A renewed interest in the musicology of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* reappeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the publication of several printed collections of *Śabad kīrtan*. One of the earliest publications of *śabad* notations is the work of Ustad Bhai Prem Singh (1903), who published a collection of hymns as an instructional guide for students.<sup>28</sup> Eminent Sikh scholar and student of Sikh music, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha published a comprehensive dictionary in 1930, *Gurushabad Ratnākar Mahān Kōsh*, which provided definitions and descriptions of the *rāgās* and musical features of *Śabad kīrtan*.<sup>29</sup> M.A. Macauliffe, a contemporary of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, was the first Western scholar to write about the *rāgās* of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* and included musical transcriptions of 31 *rāgās* in the fifth volume of his six set collection entitled: *The Sikh Religion*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Bhai Baldeep Singh provided this information to me during an interview in Delhi, 2007. However, I have not been able to locate a copy of this book nor any more detailed information about it at this time.

<sup>29</sup> Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurushabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, 2nd edition (Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, 1960).

<sup>30</sup> Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion, Sacred Writings*, vol. 5, 333-351.

This publication incited even greater interest by Sikhs to study and document their sacred music. In the 1930s, Bhai Charan Singh published a five-book compilation of *Śabads*, titled: “*Gurmat Sangīt par hun tak mili khōj*” (*Recent research of Gurmat Sangīt*). Bhai Gian Singh Abbotabad (born in 1800s) an avid collector of old compositions, documented seminal melodies of *rabābīs* during the early twentieth century and in 1961, published a hymnal, *Gurbāñī Sangīt*, containing 192 *śabads* in sixty *rāgās*. This two-volume collection was of critical importance, because with it he documented compositions that would soon be lost when the country was partitioned on religious grounds, driving out some of the greatest exponents of the tradition, the Muslim *rabābīs*.<sup>31</sup>

During the turn of the century, the *Nāmdharī* Sikh community played a prominent role in fostering the awareness and dominance of *Śabad kīrtan*. Under the leadership of Satguru Pratap Singh (1890-1957), the *Nāmdhārīs* were (and still are) staunch patrons and practitioners of Indian classical music, as well as of *Śabad kīrtan*, inviting some of the finest *rabābīs* and classical musicians to teach at their center, *Nāmdharī Sangīt Vidyālaya* at *Shri Bhaini Sāhib*, Punjab. In 1933, Satguru Pratap Singh organized a *Gurmat Sangīt* festival, which brought eminent musicians from all over India. To this day, this community has played a seminal role in maintaining and preserving many old compositions under the auspices of their current spiritual leader, Satguru Jagjit Singh.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Navtej K. Purewal, *Shabad Kīrtan Across Text, Tradition and Boundaries: A Social History of the Rābabī Tradition*. (Routledge Press). Forthcoming.

Cf. on the present condition of these *rabābīs* now in Pakistan.

<sup>32</sup> Beant Kaur, *The Namdhari Sikhs* (London: Namdhari Sikh Historical Museum, 1999), 38.

### ***Śabad kīrtan* and Post-Partition**

The period during and immediately following the partition of India and Pakistan witnessed a profound change and loss of the main proponents of the *Śabad kīrtan*, namely the *rabābīs*, the trained, hereditary Muslim performers of *kīrtan*, who were forced to evacuate India and leave their service at *Gūrdwāras*. The *rabābīs*, who possessed many old compositions, were replaced by *rāgīs*, many who had little or no training in the classical *rāgās*. Following partition, only baptized Sikhs were permitted to perform the service of *kīrtan* at *Dārbār Sāhib*.

The profound loss of these great exponents resulted in a decline in both the quality and performance of *Śabad kīrtan*. It was due in part to the *gharāṇā* system of transmission and of the regular services held daily (*chaṁkīs*) that hymns and singing styles were maintained.

### ***Gurmat Sangīt Revival***

In the 1980s, Professor Tara Singh (pioneer on the subject of music of Punjab) composed numerous anthologies of musical compositions. In 1983, he published the first dictionary of *rāgās* of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, “*Ādī Granth Rāg Kōsh*.” He produced several esteemed disciples, including Dr. Gurnam Singh, under whose generous guidance I learned much about this tradition. Dr. Gurnam Singh has extensively published and promoted the research and analytical study of *Gurmat Sangīt*.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Dr. Gurnam Singh, *Sikh Musicology; A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Bani Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar*; "Sacred Music of Punjab," Lecture, Department of Religion, Hofstra University (New York, 2008); Gurnam Singh and

This period also witnessed a revived interest in the *Śabad kīrtan* performance tradition. In 1981, in Patiala, Punjab a circle of musicians and lovers of Sikh music formed the *Gurmat Sangeet Society*. For the next thirteen years, this society would hold *kīrtan* gatherings in which all hymns would be sung in *nīdhārit rāgās* (prescribed *rāgās*).

A growing interest in systematizing Sikh music and in legitimizing it in the face of popular music (of which most *kīrtan* was being sung) coincided with a revival of Sikhism following one of the darkest periods of Sikh history: in 1984, following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, a near genocide of Sikhs was initiated by the Indian government.

In the early 1990s, an evaluation team, the *Rāg Nirnāyak Committee*, was formed to gain consensus on the prescribed *rāgās* in the *SGGS*. Headed by Pandit Daleep Chandra Bedi, this team's objective was to create a standardization of the sixty-two *rāgās* for learning. The evaluation team also consisted of eminent *kīrtaniyas* and scholars, with each of these exponents sharing their compositions to come up with an agreed upon form for each *rāgā*. The results of their meetings produced numerous articles and publications on the musicology of Sikh music, along with an annual three-day festival of *Gūrmat sangīt*: “*Adūtī Gurmat Sangīt Samelan*” (Unique Celebration of *Gurmat Sangīt*) held at *Jawaddi Taksāl*, Ludhiana, Punjab. This period also witnessed the publication of collections of old compositions, including the two-volume set of *prachīn rīts* (old hymns) by Bhai Avatar Singh

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Yashpal Sharma, *Gurmat Sangeet Raag Ratnavali* (New Dehli: Shabad Nidhi Prakashan, 1997).



(thirteen generation *rāgī*) and a four-volume collection of rare and traditional hymns by Principal Dayāl Singh, principal of the *Rakab Ganj taksāl*.<sup>34</sup>

The last twenty years have witnessed a flourishing revival of Sikh music spreading globally throughout the Sikh diasporas. There are various schools specializing in *Gūrmāt sangīt*: the teaching of traditional *rāgās*, *tālās*, poetic modes, singing styles and playing styles of traditional instruments. There are also numerous festivals and competitions, both local and international, where students can compete on the accuracy of presentation. The study of Sikh music has provided an engaging environment for first-generation Sikh youth and a musical means to explore and express their cultural and ethnic pride. It has also become a lucrative profession for many *rāgīs* from India, who teaching and perform *kīrtan* throughout the Sikh diaspora. This dissertation itself is a product of the enthusiasm, generosity and guidance of numerous individuals who are both part and product of this Sikh music revival.

This chapter has offered an overview of the development of devotional singing in India, and more specifically, of *Śabad kīrtan*. The following chapters provide a comprehensive analysis of the musical system based on classical *rāgā* and *tālā* (Chapter Six), the application of *Śabad kīrtan* to the daily life of the Sikh (Chapter Seven), and finally, an investigation of *Śabad kīrtan* as it unfolds at the *Gūrdwāra (kīrtan chaunkī)*. Chapter Eight weaves together the results of this comprehensive study and suggests future areas of study and research.

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<sup>34</sup> Bhai Avatar Singh and Bhai Gurcharan Singh, *Gurbani Sangeet Prachin Reet Ratnavali*, 2 vols. (Patiala: Publication Bureau Punjabi University, 1997), and Principal Dayal Singh, *Gurmat Sangit Sagar*, 4 vols. (New Delhi: Guru Nanak Vidya Bhandar Trust, 2003).



## CHAPTER SIX: HARMONY OF *RĀGĀ* AND REVELATION

ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਪਰੀਆ ਪਰਵਾਰ ॥  
ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਇਹੁ ਧਨੁ ਮਾਲੁ ॥  
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਬੂਝੈ ਏਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥੪॥੯॥

*The divine crystalline harmonies, their consorts, and their celestial families  
from them, the essence of Ambrosial Nectar is produced.  
O Nanak, this is the wealth and property of the Creator Lord.  
If only this essential reality were understood! ||4||9|| Rāgā Āsā, M1<sup>1</sup>*

### **The Evolution of *Rāgā***

The creation of an aesthetic experience through which to impart the divine messages was of utmost importance for the Gurus. *Rāgā* received the most elevated status in their view, as is demonstrated by the numerous references to *rāgās* in the hymns themselves, by the convention of organizing hymns by *rāgā* chapters, and by including the *Rāgāmālā*, a compendium of *rāgās*, at the close of the scripture.<sup>2</sup> This chapter explores the harmony of revelation (in the form of words) and *rāgā* as it unfolds through *gurbāṇī*.

*Rāgā*, generally speaking, may be described as a musical mode, which includes instructions for both ascending and descending notes, as well as a set of rules on how to build a melody. Its etymology, from the Sanskrit root  $\sqrt{ranj}$ , meaning ‘to be dyed or colored,’ alludes to the *rāgā*’s capacity to effect and influence the emotions.

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<sup>1</sup> *AG*, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> The authorship of this is a subject of controversy. Harbans Singh, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, 4: 422.

Accordingly, each *rāgā* is associated with an emotional state (*rasa*).<sup>3</sup> A comprehensive explanation of *rāgā* would thus include both its musical and extra-musical characteristics.

This tradition, refined and elaborated over a period of more than a thousand years, has been the primary source for the classical music traditions throughout the subcontinent of India. The earliest Sanskrit treatise on Indian music (Bharata's 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. *Nātyashāstra*) provided a theory and definitions of *rāgās* with simple melodies in musical notation. Other early writers on music such as Matanga in his sixth-century treatise, *Brihadeshi*, commented on the *rāgā* system in vogue at the time, making the distinction between *margī* music (classical style used in worship and devotion) and *dēshī* music (secular in nature). He also provided written characteristics for many *rāgās*. In the thirteen century, *Śārṅgadēva* (1210-1247) wrote a musical manual, called *Sangīt Ratnākar*, in which he outlined the musical develop of *rāgā* from the second century onwards. He was also responsible for dividing the octave into twenty-two equal intervals (*shrūtīs*).<sup>4</sup> Another significant contribution to the development of *rāgā* was V.S.Bhatkhande's (1860-1936) classification of *rāgās* into ten basic parent scales or "*thāt*."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, vol. 1 (Varanasi, U.P: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 861.

<sup>4</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 27-28.

<sup>5</sup> Each *thāt* contains seven pitches. The *thāts* are as follows: *Bilāwal*, *Khamāj*, *Kāfī*, *Āsāwarī*, *Bhairavī*, *Bhairō*, *Kalyān*, *Marwā*, *Pūrvī*, and *Tōḍī*. For additional study of *thāts* Cf. Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, *The Ragas of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution* (Islamabad: Lok Visra Publishing House, 1971), and Walter Kauffman, *The Ragas of North India*.

### **Salient Features of Rāgā**

The North Indian approach to *rāgā* carries with it several distinct features both musical and extra-musical: (1) directions for both ascending and descending movement, (2) notes of primary and secondary importance (3) characteristic melodic phrases, (4) a time of day designated for performance and (5) an aesthetic experience (*rasa*). The representation of ascending and descending notes of a given *rāgā* is conceptually similar to the Western approach towards the concept of scale. Both approaches recognize twelve semitones from which are derived the seven standard notes of the scale. However, the *rāgā* system is based on a principal of musical intervals with a movable tonic. Provided below is a table of solmisation syllables for the twelve semitones (and the Western correlate), along with the intervals between tones. [Table 6.1]

**Table 6.1 Musical syllables/abbreviation and their standard positions**

<b>Musical syllable/ abbreviation</b>	<b>Musical syllable Western</b>	<b>Step/interval</b>
1. <i>Shadaj /Sa</i>	Do	½
<i>Kōmal re</i>		½
2. <i>Rishabh /Re</i>	Re	½
<i>Kōmal ga</i>		½
3. <i>Gandhar /Ga</i>	Mi	½
4. <i>Madhyam /Ma</i>	Fa	½

<i>Tīvra ma</i>		½
5. <i>Pancham /Pa</i>	Sol	½
<i>Kōmal dha</i>		½
6. <i>Dhaivat /Dha</i>	La	½
<i>Kōmal nī</i>		½
7. <i>Nīshad /Nī</i>	Ti	½

The graphic representation below provides correspondence between the two systems in staff notation. Here musical syllables with capital letters stand for the seven natural tones and the syllables with lower-case letters stand for four flattened tones D $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , B $\flat$  and one sharpened tone, F $\sharp$ . Sa is equivalent to “C $\natural$ ”. The table given below provides a representation of 2 ½ octaves. Notes of the lower octave are indicated by a dot below the note:  $\underline{\text{Pa}}$ , while the upper octave is indicated by a dot above the note:  $\overset{\cdot}{\text{Sa}}$  [Figure 6.1]

**Figure 6.1. A Correlation of Indian *Sargam* (solfege) with Western Notation. (Sa is equivalent to “C”)**

The figure displays three staves of musical notation. The first staff shows the sequence: Pa (lower octave), dha (lower octave), Dha (lower octave), ni (lower octave), Ni (lower octave), Sa (lower octave), re (lower octave), Re (lower octave), ga (lower octave), Ga (lower octave), Ma (lower octave), ma (lower octave). The second staff shows the sequence: Pa (lower octave), dha (lower octave), Dha (lower octave), ni (lower octave), Ni (lower octave), Sa (lower octave), re (lower octave), Re (lower octave), ga (lower octave), Ga (lower octave), Ma (lower octave), ma (lower octave), Pa (upper octave), dha (upper octave), Dha (upper octave), ni (upper octave). The third staff shows the sequence: Ni (upper octave), Sa (upper octave).

Because *rāgā* has a moveable tonic, its intervallic formula provides an additional key to correlating it to non-*rāgā* scale systems. The melodic formula for *Rāgā Bilāwal*, equivalent to our C Major scale (Ionian mode) follows the intervallic pattern:  $1+1+\frac{1}{2}+1+1+1+\frac{1}{2}$ . [Figure 6.2]<sup>6</sup> By following this intervallic pattern, the *rāgā* can begin on any note.

**Figure 6.2. Melodic Structure of *Rāgā Bilāwal***

Raga Bilaval



Mukh Ang



Intervals:  $1 + 1 + \frac{1}{2} + 1 + 1 + 1 + \frac{1}{2} = 6$  steps

Whereas the formula for *Rāgā Āsāwarī* is our minor scale (or Aeolian mode) following an intervallic pattern:  $1+1\frac{1}{2}+1+\frac{1}{2}+2$ . [Figure 6.3]

**Figure 6.3. Melodic Structure of *Rāgā Āsāwarī***

Raga Asawari



Mukh Ang



Intervals:  $1+1\frac{1}{2}+1+\frac{1}{2}+2 = 6$  steps

<sup>6</sup> All transcriptions for the melodic outlines *rāgās* provided in this dissertation are based on Gurnam Singh's *rāgā* descriptions found in *Sikh Musicology*. A complete listing for the sixty-two *rāgās* is provided in Appendix B.

In addition to a formula for ascending and descending notes, each *rāgā* is associated with a parent scale (*thāt*) and assigned both a sonant note of primary importance (*vādī*) and a consonant note of secondary importance (*samvādī*). Each *rāgā* also possesses characteristic phrases and note sequences as well as extra-musical rules: assigned to a time of day (*pahār*) and connected to an aesthetic feeling (*rasa*).

### *Rāgā and Kīrtan of the Gurūs*

ਸਭਨਾ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੋ ਭਲਾ ਭਾਈ ਜਿਤੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥  
 ਰਾਗੁ ਨਾਦੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਚੁ ਹੈ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਕਹੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥  
 ਰਾਗੈ ਨਾਦੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਇਨੀ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਬੂਝਿਆ ਜਾਇ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਬੂਝੈ ਤਿਨਾ ਰਾਸਿ ਹੋਇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਸੋਝੀ ਪਾਇ ॥  
 ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਿਉ ਤਿਸੈ ਦੀ ਰਜਾਇ ॥੨੪॥

*Among all Rāgās, that one is sublime, O Siblings of Destiny, by which the Lord comes to abide in the mind.  
 Those Rāgās, which are in the Sound-current of the Nād are totally true; their value cannot be expressed.  
 Those Rāgās, which are not in the Sound-current of the Nād - by these, the Lord's Will cannot be understood.  
 O Nanak, they alone are right, who understand the Will of the True Guru.  
 Everything happens as He wills. ||24|| Salōk, M4, AG, 1421*

*Śabad kīrtan* offers a special addition to the study of the development of *rāgās* and “period” *rāgās* many of which are to this day performed in the early *rāgā* variants.<sup>7</sup> Like the poet singers of the *prabandha* style, the Gurūs took full advantage of the powerful influence *rāgās* had on the minds and hearts of listeners and assigned specific *rāgās* to the poetic compositions, aware that the delivery power of the hymn would be greatly enhanced by the musical magnetism. Assigned to all hymns

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<sup>7</sup> Gurnam Singh, *A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Baṇī*, 100-107.



including liturgical hymns for births, weddings, and death, *rāgā* was seen as a melodic imprint imbued with a *rasa* (aesthetic sentiment), which could capture the heart and mind of the listener. Scholar of Sikhism, Taran Singh observes:

Gurū Nānak wrote a large number of lyrics to suit all climes, cultures, seasons and times. When he made innovations in combining certain measures like Basant and Hindol, he aimed at the sobriety and avoided extremes. By this device, he brought together various sections and sects of India. His poetry served as a bridge between the Muslims and the Hindus. The former were fond of Āsā, Sūhī and Tilang and the later of the remaining rags. Yogis were devoted to Rāmkalī. Mājḥ was a local rag of the Punjab. Gūjarī belonged to the Gujar tribe. Seasonal rāgās of Basant, Malār, Sārang, Sūhī, Bilāwal and Rāmkalī were sung in national gatherings, which consisted of the Hindus and Muslims. They are expressive of joyous moods. Such congregational singing brought the community closer.<sup>8</sup>

*Rāgās*, imbued with spiritual value, are themselves praised by the Gurūs in many of the hymns such as the below hymn in *Rāgā Bilāwal*.

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਃ ੪ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਉਤਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਗਾਵਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਦੁ ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਰਾਗੁ ॥  
ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਣਿ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਧੁਰਿ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਭਾਗੁ ॥  
ਸਭ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਰੈਣਿ ਗੁਣ ਉਚਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਉਰਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੁ ॥  
ਸਭੁ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਮਨੁ ਖਿੜਿਆ ਹਰਿਆ ਬਾਗੁ ॥  
ਅਗਿਆਨੁ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਮਿਟਿ ਗਇਆ ਗੁਰ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਚਰਾਗੁ ॥  
ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜੀਵੈ ਦੇਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਇਕ ਨਿਮਖ ਘੜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਗੁ ॥੧॥

*Vār Bilāwal, Fourth Mehla:*

*One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:*

*Salōk, Fourth Mehla:*

*I sing of the sublime Lord, the Lord God, in the melody of Rāgā Bilāwal.  
Hearing the Guru's Teachings, I obey them; this is the pre-ordained destiny  
written upon my forehead.*

*All day and night, I chant the Glorious Praises of the Lord, Har, Har, Har;  
within my heart, I am lovingly attuned to Him. My body and mind are totally  
rejuvenated, and the garden of my mind has blossomed forth in lush abundance.  
The darkness of ignorance has been dispelled, with the light of the lamp of the*

<sup>8</sup> Taran Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Mind and Art* (New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1992), 137

*Guru's wisdom. Servant Nanak lives by beholding the Lord.  
Let me behold Your face, for a moment, even an instant! ||I||<sup>9</sup>*

Along with composing hymns in popular *rāgās* of the day, the Gurūs increased their repertoire by creating new *rāgās* drawn from the folk traditions and combining *rāgās* to create variations. Three distinct classifications of *rāgā* are found in *Gurū Granth Sāhib*: (1) *shuddha rāgās* (pure *rāgās*), (2) *chhayalag rāgās* (a combination of two *rāgās*), and (3) *sankīran rāgās* (a combination of two or more *rāgās* under the heading of a main *rāgā*).<sup>10</sup> Additionally, Gurū Nānak introduced a new *rāgā* by combining North and South Indian *rāgā* forms (the word *Dakhaṇī* – meaning “south” is suffixed to these *rāgās*).<sup>11</sup> He also popularized the singing of *rāgās* derived from folk music (*Mājh, Āsā, Bihāgarā, Waḍhans, Sūhī, Mārū* and *Tūkhārī* fall into this category). [Table 6.2]

**Table 6.2. *Rāgās* in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib***

<b>Name of <i>Rāgā</i></b> ( <i>Shuddha rāgās</i> )	<b><i>Rāgā</i> variation</b> ( <i>Chhayalag/ Sankīran</i> <i>rāgās</i> )	<b>Page number</b> <b>in <i>AG</i></b>	<b>Popular</b> <b>liturgy</b>
1. <i>Rāgā Sirī</i>		14	
2. <i>Rāgā Mājh</i>		94	
3. <i>Rāgā Gauṛī</i>		151	<i>Sukhmaṇī</i> <i>Sāhib</i>
	1. <i>Gauṛī Guārērī</i>	151	
	2. <i>Gauṛī Dakhaṇī</i>	152	
	3. <i>Gauṛī Chētī</i>	154	
	4. <i>Gauṛī Bairāgaṇī</i>	156	

<sup>9</sup> *AG*, p. 849.

<sup>10</sup> Gurnam Singh, *A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Baṇī*, 113.

<sup>11</sup> Originally of the same source, the *rāgā* system divided North and South Indian Classical music, respectively *Hindustānī* and *Carnātic* systems, around the time of Gurū Nānak.

	5. <i>Gauṛī Pūrabī Dīpakī</i>	157	
	6. <i>Gauṛī Pūrabī</i>	242	<i>Kīrtan Sōhilā</i>
	7. <i>Gauṛī Dīpakī</i>	312	<i>Kīrtan Sōhilā</i>
	8. <i>Gauṛī Mālawā</i>	214	
	9. <i>Gauṛī Mālā</i>	214	
	10. <i>Gauṛī Mājh</i>	218	
	11. <i>Gauṛī Sōrath</i>	330	
4. <i>Rāgā Āsā</i>		347	<i>Āsā Dī Vār,</i> <i>Rahirās,</i> <i>Kīrtan Sōhilā</i>
	1. <i>Āsā Kāḥī</i>	418	
	2. <i>Āsāwarī</i>	369	
	3. <i>Āsāwarī Sudhang</i>	369	
5. <i>Gūjarī</i>		489	<i>Rehrās</i>
6. <i>Dēvgandārī</i>		527	
	1. <i>Dēvgandār</i>	531	
7. <i>Bihāgarā</i>		553	
8. <i>Waḍhans</i>		557	<i>Alāhūṇīā ,</i> <i>Ghōṛīān</i>
	1. <i>Waḍhans Dakhaṇī</i>	580	
9. <i>Sōrath</i>		595	
10. <i>Dhanāsarī</i>		660	<i>Āratī</i>
11. <i>Jaitsrī</i>		696	
12. <i>Tōḍī</i>		711	
13. <i>Bairārī</i>		719	
14. <i>Tilang</i>		721	
	1. <i>Tilang Kāḥī</i>	726	
15. <i>Sūhī</i>		728	<i>Lāvān</i> (Wedding ceremony)
	1. <i>Sūhī Kāḥī</i>	751	
	2. <i>Sūhī Lalit</i>	793	
16. <i>Bilāwal</i>		795	
	1. <i>Bilāwal Dakhaṇī</i>	843	
	2. <i>Bilāwal Mangal</i>	844	
	3. <i>Bilāwal Gōṇḍ</i>	874	
17. <i>Gōṇḍ</i>		849	
18. <i>Rāmkalī</i>		876	<i>Anand Sāhib</i>
	1. <i>Rāmkalī Dakhaṇī</i>	907	
19. <i>Nat</i>		977	
	1. <i>Nat Nārāyan</i>	974	
20. <i>Mali Gauṛā</i>		984	
21. <i>Mārū</i>		989	
	1. <i>Mārū Dakhaṇī</i>	1033	
	2. <i>Mārū Kāḥī</i>	1014	
22. <i>Tūkhārī</i>		1107	

23. <i>Kēdārā</i>		1118
24. <i>Bhairō</i>		1125
25. <i>Basant</i>		1168
	1. <i>Basant Hinḍōl</i>	1171
26. <i>Sārang</i>		1197
27. <i>Malār</i>		1254
28. <i>Kānaṛā</i>		1294
29. <i>Kalyāṇ</i>		1319
	1. <i>Kalyāṇ Bhōpālī</i>	1321
30. <i>Prabhātī</i>		1327
	1. <i>Prabhātī Dakhaṇī</i>	1343
	2. <i>Prabhātī Bibhās</i>	1346
	3. <i>Bibhās Prabhātī</i>	1351
31. <i>Jaijāvanti</i>		1352

Along with 62 prescribed *rāgās* in which the hymns are composed, the final hymn of the scripture, the *Rāgāmālā*, lists a compendium of 64 *rāgās*. The extra-musical elements of *rāgā* related to assigned time for performance (*pahār*) and emotional feeling (*rasa*) were also recognized and included in singing instructions.

### ***Rāgā* and Time in *Śabad Kīrtan***

That the Gurus were aware of the connection between *rāgā* and time is evident from both the numerous references to *pahār* in the hymns themselves, as in the hymn in *Rāgā Sōrath* by Gurū Arjan that reads: “ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਈ” (*Twenty-four hours a day, I sing His Glorious Praises*).<sup>12</sup> Borrowing from the Sanskrit system of *prahār* (the division of the day into eight *prahārs* or three-hour periods), each *rāgā* is assigned a time (*Gur*: “*pahar*”) to be performed. [Table 6.3]<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *AG*, p. 626.

<sup>13</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 143-152.

**Table 6.3. The Eight *Pahars***

Name of <i>Pahār</i>	Timing	<i>Rāgās</i>	
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	6 a.m. to 9 a.m.	<i>Dēvgandārī,</i> <i>Bairārī</i>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	9 a.m. to 12 a.m.	<i>Gūjari, Tōḍī,</i> <i>Sūhī, Bilāwal,</i> <i>Gōṇḍ , Sārang,</i>	
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	12 a.m. to 3 p.m.	<i>Waḍhans,</i> <i>Dhanāsarī,</i> <i>Mārū,</i>	
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	3 p.m. to 6 p.m.	<i>Mājḥ, Gauṛī,</i> <i>Tilang, Tūkhārī,</i>	
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	6 p.m. to 9 p.m.	<i>Śrī, Jaitsrī, Mālī</i> <i>Gaurā, Kēḍārā,</i> <i>*Basant, Kalyāṇ,</i>	*Any time during the Spring season
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	9 p.m. to 12 p.m.	<i>Bihāgarā,</i> <i>Sōrath, Naṭ</i> <i>Nārāyan,</i> <i>Kānaṛā,</i> <i>Jaijāvantī,</i>	
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	12 p.m. to 3 a.m.	<i>Malār</i>	Any time during the rainy season
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	3 a.m. to 6 a.m.	<i>Āsā, Rāmkaḷī,</i> <i>Bhairō, Prabhātī</i>	

Many hymns allude to their singing time in the poetic symbolism. For example, a hymn by Gurū Nānak in *Rāgā Śrī* (assigned to the first *pahār* of the night, 6 – 9 p.m.) alludes to the lighting of an oil lamp (as darkness takes hold of the earth):<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> AG, p. 25. For more information on the *pahār* system, cf. G.S. Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 144, and Pandit Vishnunarayana Bhatkhande, *Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati Kramika Pustak-Malika*, 3: 329.

*Let the reading of your prayer book be the oil, and let the Fear of God be the wick for the lamp of this body.*

*Light this lamp with the understanding of Truth. ||2||*

*Use this oil to light this lamp.*

*Light it, and meet your Lord and Master. ||1||Pause||*

The first verse of a *chhant* by Gurū Arjan in the pre-morning *rāgā*, *Rāgā Āsā*, (AG 459) that states:

*The night is wet with dew, and the stars twinkle in the heavens.*

*The Saints remain wakeful; they are the Beloveds of my Lord.*

*The Beloveds of the Lord remain ever wakeful, remembering the Naam, the Name of Lord, day and night.*

*Rāgā Āsā* is assigned to the fourth *pahār* of the night, 3-6 a.m.

### ***Rāgā* and People in *Śabad kīrtan***

In *Śabad kīrtan*, *rāgā* also carries with it an association with people, places and events in life. Gurū Nānak composed numerous hymns in *Rāgā Rāmkalī*, a favorite of the ascetic sects, the *Nāths* and *Siddhās*. His famous hymn, *Sidh Gost* (Dialogue with the Sages) recounts his communication with these ascetics in their preferred *rāgā*.<sup>15</sup> Many hymns in this *rāgā* refer directly to his communication with them, such as the first verse of a popular hymn in *Rāgā Rāmkalī*: “*He alone is a Bairāgī (renunciate), who turns himself toward God.*”<sup>16</sup> *Rāgā Tilang* on the other hand, is associated with the Muslim community, specifically, the Sufis. Many hymns in this *rāgā* are sprinkled with the poetic images and vocabulary of mystical Islam.

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<sup>15</sup> AG, p. 938-946.

<sup>16</sup> AG, p. 953.

*Yak araj gufatam pēis tō dhar gōs kun karatār ||  
hakā kabīr karīm tū bēaib paravadagār ||I||  
dunīā mukāmē fānī tehakīk dil dānī ||  
mam sar mūe ajarāīl girafateh dil hēch an dānī ||I|| rahāō ||*

*I offer this one prayer to You; please listen to it, O Creator Lord  
You are true, great, merciful and spotless, O Cherisher Lord. ||I||  
The world is a transitory place of mortality - know this for certain in your mind.  
Azraa-eel, the Messenger of Death, has caught me by the hair on my head, and yet, I  
do not know it at all in my mind. Refrain<sup>17</sup>*

Gurū Nānak has used both the classical and folk styles of *rāgās* to express life cycle events, such as *Rāgā Wadhans*, which, when sung in folk mode, is used to both celebrate union in marriage and union with the Divine in death. The wedding liturgy, *Lāvān*, is sung in *Rāgā Sūhī*. These life-cycle hymns will be further analyzed in the following chapter.

### ***Rāgā and Rasa***

ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥  
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਵਰਸੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਏ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਕੋਈ ਜਨੁ ਪਾਏ ॥  
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਪੀ ਸਦਾ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਾਸੇ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਬੁਝਾਵਣਿਆ ॥੧॥  
ਹਉ ਵਾਰੀ ਜੀਉ ਵਾਰੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਪੀਆਵਣਿਆ ॥  
ਰਸਨਾ ਰਸੁ ਚਾਖਿ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਸਹਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਣਿਆ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*mājh mehalā 3 ||  
amṛta varasai sehaj subhāy ||  
guramukh viralā kōī jan pāy ||  
amṛta pī sadā thripatāsay kar kirapā trisanā bujhāvaṇiā ||I||  
ho vārī jīō vārī guramukh amṛta pīāvaṇiā ||  
rasanā ras chākh sadā rahai rang rātī sehajay har guṇ gāvaṇiā ||I|| rahāō ||*

<sup>17</sup> AG, p. 721.

*Mājh Third Mehla:  
 The Ambrosial Nectar rains down, softly and gently.  
 How rare are those Gurmukhs who find it.  
 Those who drink it in are satisfied forever. Showering His Mercy upon them, the Lord  
 quenches their thirst. ||I||  
 I am a sacrifice, my soul is a sacrifice, to those Gurmukhs who drink in this  
 Ambrosial Nectar.  
 The tongue tastes the essence, and remains forever imbued with the Lord's Love,  
 intuitively singing Glorious Praises of the Lord. ||I||Pause||<sup>18</sup>*

Throughout the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, references to *rasa*, the psycho-emotional aesthetic experience, abound. *Rasa*, traditionally associated with dramatic theory, extends to the performing arts as well. While nine *rasa* are traditionally assigned to the aesthetic experience, Sikhs recognizes three main *rasas* that are produced through the hymns: *śṛṅgar* (love), *vīr* (courage), and *shānt* (peace).<sup>19</sup> From a Sikh hermeneutical standpoint, union with the Divine is the ultimate aesthetic objective (*rasa*). Consequently, *śṛṅgar rasa* is interpreted as Divine love and referred to in many hymns as both *amṛta rasa* and *har rasa*. This topic is further explored in Chapter Eight.

### **Musical Directions in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib***

#### **The Title: *Rāgā*, Author, Poetic style and *Ghar***

Most hymns in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* begin with a title providing written directions. These directions are considered an important part of the *śabad* and are sung as the announcement of the hymn. The standard sequence of the title begins with

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<sup>18</sup> *AG*, p. 119.

<sup>19</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 85.



the name of the *rāgā*, followed by the author’s name (or in the case of the Gurus, the word “*Mahalā*”). The next musical direction is the style of poetry and concludes with the word “*Ghar*” followed by a number from one to seventeen. [Figure 6.4]

**Figure 6.4. Title organization of a *Śabad***

*Mājh Mahalā 5 Chaupadē Ghar 1*  
 ↑     ↑            ↑            ↑  
*Rāgā* author poetic style rhythm (?)

**Poetic/ Singing Styles**

I have already explored the *rāgās* and authors in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, so I will now turn briefly to the other two other musical directions: poetic forms/singing styles and *ghar*. Along with the indications of *rāgā* and composer, the title indicates the poetic form in which the hymn is to be sung. Dr. Gurnam Singh explains that poetic forms each have prescribed singing styles. The Gurus composed hymns in both classical and folk forms of poetry and performed the hymns in their corresponding singing style. Accordingly, they sang *padas*, *āstapadī*, and *ārati* in the medieval classical style (*prabandh* and *dhrupad*) and employed the singing styles of folk poetry for hymns drawing from folk forms: *chhant*, *alāhuñīā*, *paurī*, *vār* etc. These will be explored in the following chapter.

***Ghar***

Coming up with a single definition for *ghar* has been a challenge for scholars of Sikh music, because this term was absent from medieval musical terminology, and *ghar* is no longer practiced in the *gurbāñī* tradition. Consequently, determining its

exact meaning has been difficult.<sup>20</sup> Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha offers two possible meanings for *ghar*: related to rhythm (*tālā*) or related to tone (*swārā*).<sup>21</sup> Most scholars have accepted *ghar* as related to *tālā* or rhythm, making the connection between Indian classical music and Persian and Arabic musical influence (of which the numbering of rhythm cycles was the convention).<sup>22</sup>

There are three distinct interpretations of *ghar* as a: (1) a *tālā* (2) divisions within the *tālā* or even (3) the number of beats in a given *tālā*. While its practical use in performance has ceased, it is a feature in the title of many hymns and thus an understanding of it should be pursued. This short discussion of *ghar* provides an ideal time to introduce the rhythmical format for *śabad kīrtan*, which draws from the classical rhythms of *dhrupad*, *khyāl* and the folk rhythms.

### **The Rhythms of Śabad Kīrtan**

In Indian classical music, rhythm is realized in terms of musical meters (*thēkas/ tālā*). Each *thēka* is composed of a number of beats (*mātrās*) that are organized into numbered groupings. These are organized into a recurring pattern that follow a closed loop or cycles of six, seven, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, sixteen, or at times even larger number of beats. [Table 6.4] Several key terms provide an understanding of the language of Indian rhythms. They are the *sam* (first and primary

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<sup>20</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Sikh Musicology*, 90.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurushabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, and Dr. Inderjit N. Kaur, "Discovering the meaning of ghar in shabad headings of Guru Granth Sahib," *Sikh Musical Heritage Institute*, 12 7, 2008, [www.sikhmusicheritage.org/](http://www.sikhmusicheritage.org/) (accessed 12, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Amir Khusro (1253-1325), considered the father of *qawwali*, was highly esteemed Sufi musician, scholar and poet. His contributions of Persian and Arabic elements into Indian classical music are widely recognized.

stressed beat of the cycle, indicated with the symbol “X”), *khālī* (weak stressed beat, indicated with the symbol “O”), and *thālī* (secondarily stressed beat, indicated with a number: 1, 2, 3 or 4). *Bōl* refers to spoken syllables that refer to rhythmical hand positions] and *laya* refers to the tempo or speed of the rhythm cycle), which can be further categorized as:

1. *Vilambit*: a very slow beat or tempo
2. *Madhya laya*: moderate tempo.
3. *Drut*: fast tempo.

**Table 6.4. Rhythm Cycle *Tintāl***

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ	ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ	ਤਾ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਾ	ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ
<i>dhā</i>	<i>dhin</i>	<i>dhin</i>	<i>dhā</i>	<i>dhā</i>	<i>dhin</i>	<i>dhin</i>	<i>dhā</i>	<i>Tā</i>	<i>tin</i>	<i>tin</i>	<i>tā</i>	<i>dhā</i>	<i>dhin</i>	<i>dhin</i>	<i>dhā</i>
X				2				0				3			
<i>Sam</i>				<i>thālī</i>				<i>khālī</i>				<i>thālī</i>			

1. Name of *tālā*: *Tintāl*
2. Number of beats (*mātrās*): 16
3. Number of divisions: 4

*Śabad kīrtan* employs the rhythms of both classical Indian music (*dhrupad* and *khyāl*) as well as Punjabi folk music. Traditionally, the preferred percussion instrument for *Śabad kīrtan* was *pakhāwāj* (a double-barreled drum), which is the accompanying instrument for *dhrupad*, while the *tabla* (used for *khyāl* and light classical music) eventually replaced the *pakhāwāj*. Bharat Gupta, Associate Professor at Delhi University and a founding member and trustee of the International Forum for India’s Heritage in Delhi comments:

The songs of all sects of Indian spiritual pursuits were sung in the *dhrupapada* style. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and his successors till Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1609) who installed the *Ādī Granth* at Amritsar

at the holy shrine of Durbar Sahib in 1604, sang most of their compositions in the *dhrupada* style apart from continuing the use of the ancient *chand-pada* (*prabandh*) styles. The Jori, along with the *mridang* or *pakhavaj*, thus is the primary drum of the *Gurbani kirtan*, which was performed according to the highest standards of what is now called classical music.<sup>23</sup>

While the *tabla* has become the most popular percussion instrument for *Śabad kīrtan*, *dhrupad tālās* such as *Sūlfāk* (10 beats), *Chārtāl* (12 beats), *Chanchal* (14 beats), *Panjtāl* (15 beats) and *Bīrtāl* (20 beats), are still employed in *śabads* performed in *dhrupad* style that are played on the *jōrī* (hand drums similar to tabla, however, the right handed drum is larger). The popular rhythms of the other classical genre *khyāl* that are popularly performed are *Dādra* (6 beats), *Rūpak* (7 beats), *Keherva* (8 beats), *Jhaptāl* (10 beats), *Ektāl* (12 beats), *Dīpchandī* (14 beats) and *Tintāl* (16 beats). *Śabad kīrtan* also employs a unique folk rhythm, *Paurī tālā* (four beats), which accompanies the folk verse style *Paurī*. (Refer to Appendix C for a transcription of each *tālā*).

### **Delivery**

*Śabad kīrtan* falls into the category of “song”. While classical music gives primacy to music over text, in *Śabad kīrtan* there is primacy of text over musical delivery. Recitation and chanting are two more prominent forms through which Scripture was transmitted. A fifteenth-century ballad by Bhai Gurdas testifies that during the early period of the Gurūs, there was “devotional chanting of *Japjī* in the ambrosial hours of early morning and the singing of *Sō Dar* (Evening Prayers) and

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<sup>23</sup> Bharat Gupta, "JORI: Percussion Instruments Vol I," *Sikhspectrum.com Quarterly*, 2 2006, <http://www.sikhspectrum.com/022006/jori.htm> (accessed January 4, 2011).

*Āratī* in the evening.”<sup>24</sup> Dr. Pashaura Singh notes: “Interestingly, the name of the fourth Gurū is particularly associated with the daily routine of oral recitation of liturgical prayers as part of the “code of conduct.”<sup>25</sup> Consequently, a service of *Śabad kīrtan* involves both sung and chanted expressions.

### **Presentation:**

#### **The *Kīrtan Chaṅkī***

In her book “*Gurmat Sangit Da Sangit Vigian*,” Dr. Varinder Kaur Padam provides a standard layout for a series of daily *kīrtan chaṅkīs* at *Dārbār Sāhib*. The service weaves together a repertoire of hymns from both classical and folk-style genres incorporating singing, chanting and reciting. Appendix D below provides a complete list of the *Chaṅkīs*. Table 6.5 shows the layout of a typical service for the early morning *chaṅkī*, the *Bilāwal dī Chaṅkī* followed by the musical analysis of hymns for each of these pieces in the service. [Figure 6.4]

**Table 6.5. *Bilāwal dī Chaṅkī* (first session)**

Item presented	<i>Śabad</i>	Execution	<i>Rāgā</i> /author	Page in <i>AG</i>
1. <i>Shān</i>		Instrumental prelude	<i>Bilāwal</i>	
2. <i>Mangalācharan</i>	“ <i>Danḍot banda anik bār</i> ”	Sung/Chanted invocation	<i>Gaurī</i> , M5	256
3. <i>Śabad - dhrūpad ang</i>	“ <i>Aisī prīti karō man mērē</i> ”	Sung	<i>Bilāwal</i> , M5	807
4. <i>Śabad</i>	“ <i>Sānta pāyī gur satigur pūrē</i> ”	Sung	<i>Bilāwal</i> , M5	806
5. <i>Paurī</i>	“ <i>Hū hari prabh āp agam</i> ”	Sung/recited rhythmically	<i>Bilāwal</i> , M3	849

<sup>24</sup> Bhai Gūrdās, *Vārān Bhai Gūrdās*, trans. Dr. Jodh Singh, 2 vols. (Patiala: Brahmraj Singh, 2004), 1:38.

<sup>25</sup> In Guy Beck, *Sacred Sound: Experiencing Music in World Religions*, 145.

Recommended Rāgās: Āsāwarī, Gūjarī, Dēvgandārī, Dēvgandār, Waḍhans, Tōḍī, Sūhī, Sūhī Kafi, Sūhī Lalit, Gōṇḍ, Bilāwal Gōṇḍ, Basant, Bilāwal.

### 1. Shān

The *Shān* is an instrumental prelude commonly performed in *kīrtan* services that follows the classical format. Like the *alāp* in Hindustani classical music, the *Shān* helps to set the stage and invoke the mood of the *rāgā*. Typically performed on a melodic instrument such as a harmonium, or traditional string instrument with percussion accompaniment *dilruba* (bowed string instrument), the following example is a popular prelude in *Rāgā Āsā* in a sixteen-beat cycle. [Figure 6.5] I transcribed this from a live recording with *dilruba* (bowed string instrument) and tabla.

Figure 6.5. *Shān* in *Rāgā Āsā*

**Shan**  
Raga Asa - tintal

Performed on dilruba  
by Bhai Amandeep Singh  
Arranged by Jan Eyer

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a sequence of notes with fingerings 2, 0, and 3. The second and third staves continue the melody with fingerings X, 2, 0, and 3. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a final note and a repeat sign.

## 2. Mangalācharan

Following the *Shān*, a *Mangalācharan* (invocational prayer) is offered.

*Rāgīs* typically select *Ślōkas* or popular verses from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* to sing as the *Mangalācharan*. The sample given below is a popular invocation sung in *Rāgā Bilāwal* to a slow twelve-beat cycle accompanied on *tabla*. [Figure 6.6]

**Figure 6.6. *Mangalācharan*: Invocation in *Rāgā Bilāwal***

**Mangalacharana**  
*Raga Bilawil - Ektal*

Lyrics by Guru Arjan, AG 256  
Composed by by Dr. Gurnam Singh  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

Sthayi

Wa \_\_\_\_\_ he \_\_\_\_\_ gu ru dan do ta van \_\_\_\_\_ da na

6 7 8 9 10 11  
a ne ka ba \_\_\_\_\_ ra sa ra ba kaa la \_\_\_\_\_ saa \_\_\_\_\_ ma \_\_\_\_\_ ra \_\_\_\_\_ tha

12 Antara

13 dho la na te raa \_\_\_\_\_ kha pra bhu naa \_\_\_\_\_ na ka de \_\_\_\_\_ ka ra \_\_\_\_\_ ha tha

18 2 3  
aa nan da gu ni \_\_\_\_\_ ni dha na gu ru ga ri ba ni vaa ja sa hi ba ni ma ni aa ke maa na

24 4 X  
va \_\_\_\_\_ he gu ru va \_\_\_\_\_ he gu ru va \_\_\_\_\_ he gu ru

“I bow down, and fall to the ground in humble adoration, countless times, to the All-powerful Lord, who possesses all powers.  
Please protect me, and save me from wandering, God. Reach out and give Nanak Your Hand.” ||1|| Śālōk

The following chart provides the counting pattern (six sets of two beats per unit) along with the *bōl* (the mnemonic syllables associated with each rhythm cycle and indicative of hand positions used for the beats). [Table 6.6]

**Table 6.6: *Ektāl*: 12 beat cycle**

Beats	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Rhythmical syllables in Gurmukhi	ਪਿੰ	ਪਿੰ	ਧਗੇ	ਤਿਰਕਿਟ	ਤੂ	ਨਾ	ਕਤ	ਤਾ	ਧਗੇ	ਤਿਰਕਿਟ	ਪਿੰ	ਨਾ
Rhythmical syllables	<i>Dhin dhin</i>		<i>Dhāgētirakita</i>		<i>Tū nā</i>		<i>Kat tā</i>		<i>Dhāgē tirakita</i>		<i>Dhin nā</i>	
clapping	X		0		2		0		3		4	

### **3. Śabad in *Dhrupad* style (and *khyāl* style)**

The *Mangalācharaṇ* is followed by a series of hymns that adhere to the *Sikh kīrtan maryāda* and include both classical and folk genres. The service typically commences with a hymn in *dhrupad* style, followed by a lighter composition in *khyāl*. It concludes with a *Paurī*.

A sample of each style of hymn is provided below. For the first composition, a hymn in *Rāgā Basant*, I provide both *dhrupad* and *khyāl* arrangements. [Figure 6.7] *Rāgā Basant* is a popular seasonal *rāgā*, described in the *Rāgāmālā* as a spring *rāgā*. Following the *kīrtan maryāda*, *Śabads* in *Rāgā Basant* are sung during every *kīrtan* service in *Gūrdwāras* from the festival of *Māgh* (in January) to the festival of *Hōla Mohalla* (mid-March). In Indian classical music, *Rāgā Basant* is performed in five



variants. Two of the most popular varieties —one associated with *Purvī thāt* and one in *Bilāwal thāt*— are presented here. *Kīrtaniyas* and scholars of Sikh music recognize the *Bilāwal thāt* variant as the official *Basant* form for Sikh music. *Rāgā Basant* is a popular seasonal *rāgā* sung in five variants, two of the most popular in *Purvī thāt* and *Bilāwal thāt* are provided. Some *kīrtaniyas* and scholars of Sikh music (such as Dr. Gurnam Singh) recognize the *Basant* form in *Bilāwal thāt* as the form prescribed by the Gurūs.<sup>26</sup> The musical outline of each variant of the *rāgā* is provided along with references for each style of *Basant*.

**Figure 6.7. Śabad in Rāgā Basant: “Basant Charīyā Phūlī Banarāi”**

ਬਸੰਤੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥ਬਸੰਤੁ ਚੜਿਆ ਫੂਲੀ ਬਨਰਾਇ ॥  
 ਏਹਿ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਫੂਲਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥੧॥  
 ਇਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਹੋਇ ॥  
 ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪੈ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਵੈ ਧੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁਣਾਏ ॥ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭਾਏ ॥੨॥  
 ਫਲ ਫੂਲ ਲਾਗੇ ਜਾਂ ਆਪੇ ਲਾਏ ॥ਮੂਲਿ ਲਗੈ ਤਾਂ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਏ ॥੩॥  
 ਆਪਿ ਬਸੰਤੁ ਜਗਤੁ ਸਭੁ ਵਾੜੀ ॥ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਰੈ ਭਾਗਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਿਰਾਲੀ ॥੪॥੫॥੧੭॥

*basant mahalā 3 ||basant charīā fūlī banarāi ||*  
*ēhi jā jant fūhi har chit lāi ||1||in bidhi ihu man hariā hōi ||*  
*har har nām japai dhin rātī guramukh houmai kadtai dhōi ||1|| rahāō ||*  
*satigur bāṇī sabad suṇāē ||ihu jag hariā satigur bhāē ||2||*  
*fal fūl lāgē jān āpē lāē ||mūl lagai tān satigur pāē ||3||*  
*āpi basant jagath sabh vārī ||nānak pūrai bhāg bhagat nirālī ||4||5||17||*

<sup>26</sup> Gurnam Singh, *A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Bani*, 231.

*Basant, Third Mahala*

Spring has come, and all the plants are flowering.  
These beings and creatures blossom forth when they focus their consciousness on the  
Lord. ||1||  
In this way, this mind is rejuvenated.  
Chanting the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, day and night, egotism is removed and  
washed away  
from the Gurmukhs. ||1||Pause||  
The True Guru speaks the Bānī of the Word, and the Shabad, the Word of God.  
This world blossoms forth in its greenery, through the love of the True Guru. ||The mortal  
blossoms forth in flower and fruit, when the Lord Himself so wills.  
He is attached to the Lord, the Primal Root of all, when he finds the True Guru. ||3||  
The Lord Himself is the season of spring; the whole world is His Garden.  
O Nanak, this most unique devotional worship comes only by perfect destiny. ||4||5||17||<sup>27</sup>

**Figure 6.8. Melodic Outline of Rāgā Basant (Bilāwal thāt)**

Sa, Ga, Ma, Dha, Ni, Sa (*Basant arōha*)  
Sa, Ni, Dha, Pa, Ma, Ga, Re, Sa (*Bilāwal avarōha*)

Raga Basant



Mukh Ang



<sup>27</sup> AG, 1176.

Figure 6.9. Śabad in Rāgā Basant (Dhrupad ang)<sup>28</sup>

## Basant ChaRiya phoolee bana Rayi

Raga Basant - Chartal

Lyrics by Guru Amardas, AG 1176  
Composed by Dr. Gurnam Singh  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

Refrain (Rahao)

ba san tachariaaphooli ba na gaa yi ay \_\_\_ jee ya jan taphoola hi ha ri chi tu laa yi \_\_\_ba

Verse (antara)

i na ba dhi i ha ma na ha ri aa \_\_\_ho yi\_\_\_ h ri ha ri naa ma ja pai di na raa \_\_\_ti\_\_\_ gu ra mu khi ho mai k dhai \_\_\_dho yi\_\_\_

gu ra mu kh ho mai \_\_\_ka dhai \_\_\_dho yi\_\_\_ , ba

This arrangement follows a slow twelve beat *tālā*, *chartāl*, which is popularly played in *dhrupad* compositions. The chart below provides the counting pattern for this rhythm cycle. [Table 6.7]

Table 6.7: *Chartāl*: Twelve-Beat Cycle

*CharTāl*: 12 beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ਧਾ	ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਤਾ	ਕਿਟ	ਤਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਤਾ	ਤਿਟ	ਕਤਾ	ਗਦੀ	ਗਨ
Dhā	Dhā	Dhin tā		kiTa	tā	Dhin tā		tiTa	katā	Gadī	gana
X		O		2		0		3		4	

This second version of the same hymn employs a sixteen beat cycle: *tintāl*,

<sup>28</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar*, 284.

popularly used in *Khyāl* style hymns. [Figure 6.10] This is followed by a chart of its rhythm cycle. [6.11]

**Figure 6.10. Melodic Outline of *Rāgā Basant* (*Purvī thāt*)**

*Rāgā Basant* in *Purvī ang*:

Sa, Ga, ma (*tivra*/sharp) dha (*komal*/flat), re (*komal*/flat), Sa  
 Sa, Ni, dha (*komal*), Pa, ma (*tivra*) Ga, Ga, Ma, dha (*komal*), Ga, ma (*tivra*),  
 Ga, re (*komal*) Sa. (*Purvi avaroha*)

**Rag Basant (Purvi that)**

Rag Basant



Mukh Ang



Figure 6.11. Hymn in *Rāgā Basant Khyāl ang*<sup>29</sup>

## *Basant chariya phuli banrai*

*Raga Basant - Tintal*

Lyrics by Guru Amardas  
Performed by Bhai Kamaljeet Singh  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

Refrain (*Rahao*)

12: 13 14 15 16      X      2      0      3

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12: 13 14 15 16

ba san ta cha Ri yaa phoo lii ba na rai yee ba san ta cha Ri

X

3 yaa phoo lii ba na rai yee ba san ta cha Ri yaa \_\_\_\_\_ eh jia jan ta phoo lay \_\_\_\_\_

X

5 ha ra chi ta laye \_\_\_\_\_ eh jia jan ta phoo laa ye ha ra chita laa \_\_\_\_\_ ba san ta cha Ri

Verse (*anṭara*)

7 yaa phoo li ba na rai yee ba san ta cha Ri yaa \_\_\_\_\_ in bi dhi i he ma na

9 hari aa ho \_\_\_\_\_ in bi dhi i he ma na hari aa ho \_\_\_\_\_ har ha ra naa ma \_\_\_\_\_ ja

11 pai dina raa \_\_\_\_\_ gur mu kha ho mai \_\_\_\_\_ ka dhai \_\_\_\_\_ dho \_\_\_\_\_ yi \_\_\_\_\_ ba san ta cha Ri

### 4. Śabad in Khyāl style

Following the *dhrupad* composition, the *rāgīs* are required to sing a hymn in a lighter classical style, such as *khyāl*. The below hymn in *Rāgā Śrī* is sung in *khyāl* style following the popular sixteen beat cycle: *tintāl*. *Rāgā Śrī*, considered the “King of *Rāgās*,” is first in the series of *rāgās* in the *SGGS*. This *rāgā*, considered a very old North Indian *rāgā*, follows the *Purvī thāt*. Its *rasa* is described as contemplative,

<sup>29</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6h9ZLRXM8k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6h9ZLRXM8k) [accessed January 14, 2011]



Figure 6.13. Native notation for Hymn in *Rāgā Śrī*

Beats Sargam	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Lyrics	<b>Rahāō (Refrain)</b>				SaRe	NiSa	Pa	Pa	Ma	Dha	Ma	Ma	Ga	Re	-	Sa
Clap	X				2				0				3			
	SaRe	-	-	GaRe	-	-	-	-	Sa	N	Dha	Pa	Ma	Pa	Ni	Sa
	Jā	-	-	u	-	-	-	-	Mai	-	ā	pa	n ā	-	Gu	ru
	-	Sa	-	Ni	Re	Re	Sa	-	-	Sa	Pa	-	Ma	Dha	Ma	-
	-	Pū	-	chh	-	dē	khē	ā	Pa	-	a	va	Gaṇā	-	hī	-
	GaRe	-	SaRe	-												
	Thā	-	u	-												
	<b>Antarā (Verse)</b>								-	Ma	Ma	Pa	Ni	-	Śa	Śa
	-	Śa	-	-	Re	-	Śa	-	-	Mō	tī	ta	Man	-	da	ra
	Ni-	ū	-	sa	reh	-	-	-	-	ReRe	Re	Re	ReNi	-	NiRe	-
	-	Re	Ga	Re	Ni	-	Re	Śa	-	MaMa	Pa	Pa	Ni	-	Śa	-
	-	ja	r	a	ō	-	-	-	-	ka	tū	r	Kun	-	gū	-
	-	Śa	Śa		Re	-	Śa		-	Re	-		ReNi	-	NiRe	
	Ni	-	a	ga	Śa	-	Chan	-	Re	lī	-	p	Ā	-	vai	-
	ra				na											
	-	Re	Ga	Re	Ni	-	Re	Śa	Śa	Ni	Dha	Pa	Pa	-	Ma	
	-	Chā	-	-	ō	-	-	-	Ma	t	dē	kha	GaBhū	-	lā	-
	-	Re	Ga	Re	Sa	-	-	-	SaSa	Pa	Pa	Pa	Ma	Dha	Ma	Ga
	wī	-	-	sa	Rai	-	-	-	Tēra	chi	ta	nā	ā	-	vai	-
	GaRe	-	-	SaRe												
	Nā	-	-	ō												

Figure 6.14: Śabad in Rāgā Śrī<sup>32</sup>

**Har Bina Jeeo Jala Bala Jau**

*Raga Shri - Ghar 1 - Tintal 16 beats*      **Lyrics by: Guru Nanak**  
 Composer: Dr. Gurnam Singh  
 Arranged by: Jan Protopapas

**Hara Bina Jeeo Jala Bala Jae** ♩ = 120

Refrain 0

Ha ra bi na jee o ja la ba la jaa o

mai aa pa nhaa gu ru poo chh de khe aa a va ra naa hee

thaa o mo tee ta man da ra oo sa

reh ra ta nee ta ho hee ja rhaa o ka sa too r

kun goo a ga ra chan da na lee p aa vai chaa

o ma ta de kh bhoo laa wee sa rai te ra chi ta naa

aa vai naa o

©

<sup>32</sup> Gurnam Singh, *A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Baṇī*, 28.



“Hara Binna Jō Jal Bal Jāō”

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
ਰਾਗੁ ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ੧ ਘਰੁ ੧ ॥  
ਮੋਤੀ ਤ ਮੰਦਰ ਉਸਰਹਿ ਰਤਨੀ ਤ ਹੋਹਿ ਜੜਾਉ ॥  
ਕਸਤੂਰਿ ਕੁੰਗੁ ਅਗਰਿ ਚੰਦਨਿ ਲੀਪਿ ਆਵੈ ਚਾਉ ॥  
ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੂਲਾ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਉ ॥੧॥  
ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਜੀਉ ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ ॥  
ਮੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਛਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਅਵਰੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਥਾਉ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*Rāg srīrāg mahalā pahelā 1 ghar 1 ||  
mōtī ta mandar ūsarehi ratanī ta hōhi jaRrāō ||  
kasatūr kungū agar chandan līp āvai chāō ||  
mat dhēkh bhūlā vīsaraī tērā chit na āvai nāō ||1||  
har bin jō jal bal jāō ||  
mai āpanā gur pūchh dhēkhiā avar nāhī thhāō ||1|| rehāō ||*

*Raag Siree Raag, First Mehla, First House:  
If I had a palace made of pearls, inlaid with jewels,  
scented with musk, saffron and sandalwood, a sheer delight to behold  
-seeing this, I might go astray and forget You, and Your Name would not enter into my mind. ||1||  
Without the Lord, my soul is scorched and burnt.  
I consulted my Guru, and now I see that there is no other place at all. ||1||Pause||<sup>33</sup>*

## 5. Paurī

It is a common practice to conclude a *kīrtan* service with a *Paurī*, a folk composition. Literally, a “step,” a *Paurī* is a stanza of six to eight lines often containing the main theme of a hymn. The *Paurī* given below is popularly sung during the *Āsā Dī Vār* service (discussed in Chapter Eight) in *Rāgā Āsā* to the folk tune “*dhunī*” of “*Tūṇde Āsā Rāj*” (*The Maimed King of Āsā*). [Figure 6.15 and 6.16]

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<sup>33</sup> *AG*, p. 14.

Figure 6.15. Melodic Outline of *Rāgā Āsā*

Rag Aasa



Mukh Ang



Figure 6.16. *Paurī* in *Rāgā Āsā*<sup>34</sup>

### Asa - Pauri

Pauri Tala - four beats

Lyrics by Guru Nanak  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas  
from sound recording of Bhai  
Sukhwinder Singh

Tabla accompaniment commences



X

Bhi ta na wi cha su a pau Ri A pi nai Ap sa ji o A pi nai \_\_\_\_\_

5  
\_ ra chi o\_ Na o du yi ku da ra ta sa ji ai ka ri a sa na\_ di tho\_

10  
cha\_ o da ta kar ta a pa tun tu sa de ve\_ ka re pa sa\_ o tun ja no i sa ba sai

14  
te lai seh\_ jin dh ka va o kar i a\_ sa na\_ di tho chao di to

22  
chao ka re a sa na di to cha\_ o

All *Paurīs* employ a four-beat folk rhythm cycle called *Paurī tālā*. This is provided in the table below. [Table 6.8]

<sup>34</sup> Transcribed from sound recording by author of Bhai Sukhwinder Singh *Rāgī*, Bhaini Sāhib, September, 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar*, 287-288.

**Table 6.8. *Paṛī Tāla*: Four-Beat Cycle**

1	2	3	4
ਗੇ	ਤਿਟ	ਤਾ	ਗੇਤਾ
gē	tīTa	tā	gētā
X			

Discussion of the compositional repertoire of *Śabad Kīrtan* would not be complete without mentioning the *Paṛīāl*, a unique composition found exclusively in Sikh *Śabad kīrtan*. *Paṛīāl* is a musical composition that employs different *tālās* for different sections of the hymn. In the *SGGS*, there are 49 *Paṛīāl Śabads*. The example below is the transcription of a popular *Paṛīāl* in *Rāgā Kānaṛā* “*Man Jāpō Rām Gōpāl*” attributed to Gurū Rām Das, composed by Dr. Gurnam Singh. The melodic outline [Figure 6.17] is followed by the complete transcription of hymn [Figure 6.18]. The rhythm sequences are provided in Table 6.9.

**Figure 6.17. Melodic Outline for *Rāgā Kānaṛā***



Figure 6.18. *Partāl* in *Rāgā Kānarā*<sup>35</sup>

## Mana Jaapo Raam Gopal

Raga KanaRa - Partal - Ghar 5

Lyrics: Guru Ramdas AG 1296

Composer: Dr. Gurnam Singh

Arranged by Jan Protopapas

*Bir Tala* *Refrain (raha)*

ma na jaa po\_\_\_ raa\_\_\_ ma go paa laa ma ma

3 jaa po\_\_\_ raa\_\_\_ ma go paa laa ha ri ra ta na ja vay ha ra laa la ha ri

5 gu ra mu kha gha Ri\_\_\_ ta ka saal\_\_\_ ha ri ho ho\_\_\_ ki ra paa\_\_\_ la\_\_\_ ma na

7 jaa po\_\_\_ raa\_\_\_ ma go paa laa (instrumental interlude)

8 *1st Verse (antara)*  
*Panj Tala*  
tu ma re\_\_\_ gu na a ga ma a go\_\_\_ cha ra

10 ay ka jee a kiyaa ka thai\_\_\_ bee chaa ree raa ma raa ma raa ma raa ma laa la

12 tu ma ree\_\_\_ jee a kha tha ka thaa\_\_\_ too\_\_\_ too too hee jaa ne

14 hau\_\_\_ ha ri ja pu bha yee\_\_\_ ni\_\_\_ haal ni haa la ni haa\_\_\_ la\_\_\_ ma na

*Go To Measure 2* 12

2nd Verse  
*Chartal* Slowly

16 ha ma ray\_\_\_ ha ra praan sa thaa ha ma ray\_\_\_ ha ra praan sa thaa

18 swaa mee ha ri mee\_\_\_ taa\_\_\_ swaa mee ha ri mee\_\_\_ taa\_\_\_

Fast (percussion plays double speed - *dogun*)

20 ha ma ray\_\_\_ ha ra praan sa thaa swaa mee ha ri mee\_\_\_ taa\_\_\_

22 swaa mee ha ri mee\_\_\_ taa\_\_\_ may ray man ta na jeeh\_\_\_ ha\_\_\_ ri

24 ha re ha re raa ma naa ma dhu na naa ma dhu\_\_\_ na maa\_\_\_ la ma na

3rd Verse  
*Tintal* Fast

26 jaa ko bhaa\_\_\_ ga ti ni lee o ree su haa g ha ri ha ri ha ray ha ray gu na gaa vai gu ra ma ti

28 hau ba li ba lay\_\_\_ hau ba li ba lay\_\_\_ ja na naa na ka ha ri ja pa\_\_\_ bha ee nee

30 haa la nee haa la nee haa la ma na

*Go To Measure 2*

“Man Jāpō Rām Gōpāl”<sup>36</sup>

ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ਪੜਤਾਲ ਘਰੁ ੫ ॥  
ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
ਮਨ ਜਾਪਹੁ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਪਾਲ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਰਤਨ ਜਵੇਹਰ ਲਾਲ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਘੜਿ ਟਕਸਾਲ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਹੋ ਹੋ ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਤੁਮਰੇ ਗੁਨ ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਏਕ ਜੀਹ ਕਿਆ ਕਥੈ ਬਿਚਾਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਮ ਲਾਲ ॥  
ਤੁਮਰੀ ਜੀ ਅਕਥ ਕਥਾ ਤੂ ਤੂ ਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਹਉ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਭਈ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥੧॥  
ਹਮਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਸਖਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਹਰਿ ਮੀਤਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਜੀਹ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਹਰੇ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਧਨੁ ਮਾਲ ॥  
ਜਾ ਕੋ ਭਾਗੁ ਤਿਨਿ ਲੀਓ ਰੀ ਸੁਹਾਗੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਹਰੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਹਉ ਬਲਿ ਬਲੇ ਹਉ ਬਲਿ ਬਲੇ ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ  
ਜਪਿ ਭਈ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥੨॥੧॥੭॥

Kānarā mahalā 4 partāl ghar 5 ||  
ik oankār satigur prasādh ||  
man jāpahu rām gupāl || har ratan javēhar lāl ||  
har guramukh ghar takasāl || har hō hō kirapāl ||1|| rahāō ||  
tumarē gun agam agōchar ēk jīh kiā kathai bichārī rām rām rām rām lāl ||  
tumarī jī akath kathā tū tū hī jānehi ho har jap bhī nihāl nihāl nihāl ||1||  
hamarē har prān sakhā sūāmī har mīthā mērē man tan jīh har harē harē rām nām dhan māl ||  
jā kō bhāg tin liou rī suhāg har har harē harē gun gāvai guramat hō bal balē hō bal balē jan  
nānak har  
jap bhī nihāl nihāl nihāl ||2||1||7||

*Kaanraa, Fourth Mehla, Partaal, Fifth House:  
One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:  
O mind, meditate on the Lord, the Lord of the World.  
The Lord is the Jewel, the Diamond, the Ruby.  
The Lord fashions the Gurmukhs in His Mint.  
O Lord, please, please, be Merciful to me. ||1||Pause|| = Refrain  
Your Glorious Virtues are inaccessible and unfathomable; how can my one poor tongue describe  
them?  
O my Beloved Lord, Raam, Raam, Raam, Raam.  
O Dear Lord, You, You, You alone know Your Unspoken Speech. I have become enraptured,  
enraptured, enraptured, meditating on the Lord. ||1|| = Verse 1  
The Lord, my Lord and Master, is my Companion and my Breath of Life; the Lord is my Best  
Friend.  
My mind, body and tongue are attuned to the Lord, Har, Haray, Haray. The Lord is my Wealth  
and Property. = Verse 2  
She alone obtains her Husband Lord, who is so pre-destined. Through the Guru's Teachings, she  
sings  
the Glorious Praises of the Lord Har. I am a sacrifice, a sacrifice to the Lord, O servant Nanak.  
Meditating on the Lord, I have become enraptured. = Verse 3*

<sup>36</sup> AG, p. 1297.

**Table 6.9. Rhythmical Structure of *Partāl***

**Refrain: *BīrTāl*:** Twenty-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
ਧਿੰ	ਤਰਕਿਟ	ਧਿੰ	ਨਾ	ਧਿੰ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ	ਧਿੰ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਰਕਿਟ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਨਾ	ਤੰਨ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ	ਧਿੰ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ
dhin tirakita dhin nā				Dhin -Ta -Ka			dhin-Ta -Ka			tin tirakita tin nā			Tin -Ta -Ka		Dhin Ta -Ka				
X				2			3			0				4			0		

**Verse #1: *Panjāl*:** Fifteen-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ਧਿੰ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ	ਧਾ	ਤਿ	ਟ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ	ਧਾਗੇ	ਨਧਾ	ਤਰਕਿਟ
Dhin -ta -ka			Dhin dhin dha dha			tin ṭa dhin dhin			Dha dhage		Nadha tirakita			
X			2				3				4		5	

**Verse #2: *CharTāl*:** Twelve-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ਧਾ	ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਤਾ	ਕਿਟ	ਤਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਤਾ	ਤਿਟ	ਕਤਾ	ਗਦੀ	ਗਨ
Dhā Dhā		Dhin tā		Kiṭa tā		Dhin tā		tiṭa katā		Gadī gana	
X		0		2		0		3		4	

**Verse #3: *TīnTāl*:** Sixteen-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	14	15	16
ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ	ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ	ਤਾ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ
Dha dhin dhin dha				Dha dhin dhin dha				Ta tin tin		Dha dhin dhin dha				
X				2				0			3			
Sum				Thali				Khali		Thali				

The role and importance of *Rāgā* in Sikh music cannot be underestimated. This chapter has examined the influence of *rāgā* music in the development and cultivation of Sikh *Śabad kīrtan*. The examples of hymns and song styles further supports the emphasis placed on word, melody and rhythm, which create the harmony of *rāgā* and revelation.



## CHAPTER SEVEN: SONG AND MEMORY: “SINGING FROM THE HEART”

ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਹੈ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਮਨ ਕੈ ਕਰਮਾ ॥  
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਪੁਰਬ ਲਿਖੇ ਕਾ ਲਹਨਾ ॥੮॥

*Singing the Kīrtan of the Lord's Praises in the Sādh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, is the highest of all actions. Says Nānak, he alone obtains it, who is pre-destined to receive it.*<sup>1</sup>

Throughout my research, I have observed how hymn singing plays such a significant role in understanding the collective, communal and egalitarian nature of Sikhism. The majority of events that I attended during my research in Punjab involved congregational singing: whether seated in the *Gūrdwāra*, or walking in a procession, the congregants were often actively engaged in singing. The importance of congregational singing is reiterated frequently. Gūru Arjan writes: “Individual recitation is like irrigation by water from a well which only benefits a small field; on the other hand, group *kīrtan* is like rainfall which covers a large area and benefits many people at the same time.”<sup>2</sup>

This chapter examines the repertoire of *Śabad kīrtan* and connection to the folk singing traditions of Punjab. The chapter is organized into two parts. In Part One, I classify hymns into five thematic groupings, exploring how *Śabad kīrtan* promotes a space of collective identity. Part Two considers the congregational singing of liturgical hymns and their impact on memory.

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<sup>1</sup> *AG*, p. 642.

<sup>2</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 101.

## Part One: Śabad kīrtan and Punjabi Folk Music Influence

*Śabad kīrtan* plays a key role in Sikh life, holding sway over all aspects of life from birth and marriage to death services. This music is both temporally and spatially linked to the folk music traditions of northwest India, which are made up of five geographic and cultural regions: Malwa, Puad, Doaba, Majha and Pahari. Alka Pandey, writing on Punjabi folk song tradition, explains:

There is not a moment when the vibrant Punjabi does not break into a song or dance. Whether it is the men working on the fields or the women going about their domestic chores, the rural Punjabi has a song for every moment. From birth to death, every occasion has its song. The folks songs of Punjab are an element of the little tradition; and while the rendition varies from region to region, the thematic content shows a remarkable similarity.<sup>3</sup>

The folk traditions of these regions are linguistically and culturally distinct, each possessing their own musical and poetic forms. The Sikh Gurūs intentionally employed techniques of composing in multi-lingual, multi-musical, and multi-poetic forms to make it easier for common folk to absorb the religious teachings. Borrowing extensively from local folk and religious idioms, and from familiar song styles and tunes, they reinterpreted common folk themes related to love, beauty, human desire, family, wealth, sorrow, and death with spiritual significance, assigning them metaphysical meanings.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Gurnam Singh observes:

Punjab is a major cultural canvas for the origin and development of Sikh religion. The *Rāgās*, styles of singing and instruments that developed from Punjabi folk music have been preferred by the Sikh Gurus. They established their authenticity through practical

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<sup>3</sup> Alka Pandey, *Folk Music and Musical Instruments of Punjab* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 1999), 28.

<sup>4</sup> Gurnam Singh, "Sacred Music of Punjab." (lecture, Department of Religion, Hofstra University, NY, November 18, 2008).

application of *Śabad kīrtan* and theoretical inclusion in the *Baṇī* of the *Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib*.<sup>5</sup>

In her study of the folk traditions of Punjab, Alka Pandey classifies folk songs under six themes: lifecycle songs, seasonal songs, devotional songs, love songs, ballads, and children songs.<sup>6</sup> These themes may be applied to the grouping of *Gurbāṇī* hymns, with the children songs replaced here by liturgical songs. I will use this thematic classification to analyze the folk-influenced genre of hymns so deeply woven into the fabric of congregational singing. [Figure 7.1]

**Figure 7.1. Themes of *Śabads***

1. Lifecycle *śabads*
2. Seasonal/Temporal *śabads*
3. Love/Devotional *śabads*
4. Ballads – *Vārs*
5. Liturgical *śabads*

Each of these themes includes a standard repertoire of hymns and melodies that act as a sonic link connecting the Sikh to Gurū, self, and community through the oral tradition. The table below provides a sample of popularly sung hymns, many of which I heard and recorded during my research. [Table 7.1] In the following pages, I will examine each of these themes.

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<sup>5</sup> Gurnam Singh, "Sacred Music of Punjab."

<sup>6</sup> Alka Pandey, *Folk Music and Musical Instruments of Punjab*, 28-30.

**Table 7.1: Thematic Classification of Popular Hymns**

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Shabad</i>	<i>Rāgā/Author</i>	<i>AG page #</i>
<b>1. Lifecycle Songs:</b>			
Birth	“Apune Har Pah Binaṭī Kahīai”	M4, Rāgā Dēvgandārī	AG, 561
Birth	“Pūtā Mātā kī Āsīs”	M5, Rāgā Gūjarī	AG, 689
Engagement- <i>Kuṛmāyī</i> :	“Sat santōkh kar bhāō kuṛam kuṛmāyī”	M4, Rāgā Sūhī	(AG, 776)
Wedding Processionals- <i>Ghōṛīān</i>	“Dēh tējaṅ jī rām ūpāiyā rām”	M4, Rāgā Sūhī	(AG, 575-579)
Wedding ceremony- <i>Lāvāñ</i>	“Lāvāñ”	M4, Rāgā Sūhī	(AG, 773-74)
Wedding songs - <i>Chhants</i>	“Mārēhis vē jan houmai bikhiyā”	M4, Rāgā Sūhī	(AG, 776)
Dirges – <i>Alāhuñīān</i>	“Dhan Sirandā sachā pātisāh”	M5, Rāgā Wadhans	(AG, 578-579)
Śabad at time of Cremation	“Jai ghar kīrat ākhīyai”	M1, M4, M5, Rāgā Gaurī Dīpakī, Rāgā Āsā, Rāgā Dhanāsarī, Rāgā Gaurī Purabi	(AG, 1-13)
<b>2. Seasonal/Temporal śabads</b>			
Śabads for spring	“Maulī dharatī mauliya akās”	Bhagat Kabīr, Rāgā Basant	(AG, 1193)
Śabads for the rainy-season	“Rāñē Kailās tathā Māladē Kīdhuni”	M1, Var Rāgā Malār Paurī	(AG, 1279)
Śabads for the twelve months - <i>Barāh Mahā</i>	“Har Jēṭi Juṛandā Lōṛīyai”	M5, Rāgā Mājh	(AG, 134)
Śabads on division of a day into 4 “watches”- <i>Pahare</i>	“Pahilai Paharai naiṅ salōnarīyē”	M1, Rāgā Tūkhārī	(AG, 1110)
Śabads for Day and Night – <i>Dinraiṅ</i>	“Sēvī Satiguru āpaṅa har smirarī chin sabh raiṅ”	M5, Rāgā Mājh	(AG, 136)
Śabads for The Lunar Days – <i>Tithi</i>	“ēkam ēkankār nirālā”	M1, Rāgā Bilāwal	(AG, 838)
Śabads for the seven days of the week- <i>Vār Sat</i>	“Ādit Vār ādi purakh hai sōī”	Bhagat Kabīr, Rāgā Gaurī	(AG, 841)

<b>3. Songs for Love/devotion</b>			
<i>Kafīan</i> -	“ <i>Chētanā Hai To Chēth Lai Nis Din Mai Prānī</i> ”	M9, <i>Rāgā Tilang</i>	(AG, 726)
Songs of Separation - <i>Biraharē</i>	“ <i>Pārabrahm Prabh Simarīyai</i> ”	M5, <i>Rāgā Āsā</i>	(AG, 431)
<b>4. Ballads</b>			
<i>Vārs</i>	<i>Har amṛta bhinnē lōiṇā</i> ”	M1, 2, 4, 5, and Satta and Balwant in eighteen different <i>rāgās</i>	(AG, 462-475)
<b>5. Liturgical Hymns</b>			
<i>Anand Sāhib</i>	“ <i>Anand bhaeiā mērī māē satigurū mai pāeiā</i> ”	M3, <i>Rāgā Rāmkalī</i>	(AG, 917-922)
<i>Sō Dār Rahirās</i>	“ <i>Sō dar tērā kēhā sō ghar kēhā</i> ”	M1, 3, 4, 5, 10 <i>Rāgā Āsā</i> and <i>Rāgā Gūjarī</i>	(AG, 451)
<i>Arati</i>	“ <i>Gagan mai tāl rav chand dīpak banē</i> ”	M5, <i>Rāgā Dhanāsarī</i>	(AG, 12-13)
<i>Sukhmaṇī Sāhib</i>	“ <i>Simaro, Simar Simar Sukh Pāvō</i> ”	M5, <i>Rāgā Gaurī</i>	(AG, 262-296)

### Lifecycle Hymns

The poetry of the Gurus is imbued with symbols of common folk life, assigning the mundane with a supra-mundane significance. Discouraging esoteric mysticism, Gurū Nānak sought examples of the mystical experience in the here and now of everyday living. A fine example is his hymn in *Rāgā Basant* in which the Persian water wheel is interpreted metaphorically, imbued with a spiritual message:

“*Let your hands be the buckets, strung on the chain, and yoke the mind as the ox to pull it; draw the water up from the well. Irrigate your fields with the Ambrosial Nectar, and you shall be owned by God the Gardener.*”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> AG, p. 1170.

Many of these hymns were sung to traditional folk songs and tunes which are referred to in the title of the *śabad*, such as *Chhants* and *Vārs*. Pashaura Singh observes, “All these musical directions concerning the *chhants* reveal an important fact that they were sung in popular folk tunes used at the time of weddings or other happy occasions.”<sup>8</sup> Several *rāgās* included in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* are linked to folk origins (*Rāgās Āsā, Mājh, Waḍhans, and Tūkhārī*).<sup>9</sup> *Rāgā Waḍhans* has been used extensively for folk compositions in lifecycle *śabads* pertaining to birth, marriage and death.<sup>10</sup> Two examples, *Ghōṛīān* and *Alāhuṇīā* set in *Rāgā Waḍhans*, will be explored below.

### *Ghōṛīān*

The *Ghōṛīān*, (literally “horses”) is a popular folk-style *śabad* sung as a processional hymn at Punjabi weddings. The *Ghōṛīān* narrates the wedding ceremony, commencing with the procession of the groom on horseback. Sung in *Rāgā Waḍhans*, Gurū Rām Das interpreted this event metaphorically, imparting spiritual meanings to mundane references. “The mare” of the secular version becomes “the human body,” “the saddle” becomes “the subjugated mind,” “the bridle” is construed as “the knowledge,” and “the whip” as “the love of God,” while “the wedding journey” is the “the journey of illusory life” and “the marriage feast,”

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<sup>8</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sāhib: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, 133.

<sup>9</sup> *Rāgā Āsā* was once a popular *rāgā* in Punjab and Rajasthan with many folk melodies played in this *rāgā*. Refer to Chapter Eight for more on this *rāgā*'s connections with folk music, *Mājh* is a regional *rāgā* of the Majha district of central Punjab.

<sup>10</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Guru Nanak Baṇī*, 116

the “spiritual consummation and bliss.” This popular *Ghōṛān*, “*Deh Tejan Ji Rām*” in six-beat *Dādra tāl*, was transcribed from a recording of Bhai Avatar Singh.”<sup>11</sup>

“Deh Tejan Ji Rām”

ਵਡਹੰਸੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ਘੋੜੀਆ  
 ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
 ਦੇਹ ਤੇਜਣਿ ਜੀ ਰਾਮਿ ਉਪਾਈਆ ਰਾਮ ॥  
 ਧੰਨੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਪੁੰਨਿ ਪਾਈਆ ਰਾਮ ॥  
 ਮਾਣਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਵਡ ਪੁੰਨੇ ਪਾਇਆ ਦੇਹ ਸੁ ਕੰਚਨ ਚੰਗੜੀਆ ॥  
 ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਚਲੂਲਾ ਪਾਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਵ ਰੰਗੜੀਆ ॥  
 ਏਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੁ ਬਾਂਕੀ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਪੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੀਆ ॥  
 ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਪਾਈ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਖਾਈ ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਮਿ ਉਪਾਈਆ ॥੧॥

*vadhans mahalā 4 ghoṛā*  
*ik oankār satigur prasādh ||*  
*dēh tējan jī rām oupāīā rām ||*  
*dhann mānas janam pu)n pāīā rām ||*  
*mānas janam vaḍ punnē pāeiā dēh su kanchan changarīā ||*  
*guramukh rang chalūlā pāvai har har har nav rangarīā ||*  
*ēh dēh us bā nkī jit har jāpī har har nām suhāvīā ||vaḍabhāgī pāyī nām sakhāī jan nānak*  
*rām oupāīā ||I||*

*Wadahans, Fourth Mehla, Ghorees ~ The Wedding Procession Songs:*

*One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:*

*This body-horse was created by the Lord,*

*Blessed is human life, which is obtained by virtuous actions.*

*Human life is obtained only by the most virtuous actions; this body is radiant and golden.*

*The Gurmukh is imbued with the deep red color of the poppy; he is imbued with the new color of the Lord’s Name, Har, Har, Har.*

*This body is so very beautiful; it chants the Name of the Lord, and it is adorned with the Name of the Lord, Har, Har.*

*By great good fortune, the body is obtained; the Naam, the Name of the Lord, is its companion; O servant Nanak, the Lord has created it. ||I||*

**Figure 7.2. Melodic outline of *Rāgā Wadhans***

Raga Wadhans



Mukh Ang



<sup>11</sup> AG, p. 575.





“Dhann Sarindā sachāa Pātisāh”

ਰਾਗੁ ਵਡਹੰਸੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਘਰੁ ੫ ਅਲਾਹਣੀਆ  
ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
ਧੰਨੁ ਸਿਰੰਦਾ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗੁ ਧੰਧੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥  
ਮੁਹਲਤਿ ਪੁਨੀ ਪਾਈ ਭਰੀ ਜਾਨੀਅੜਾ ਘਤਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ ॥  
ਜਾਨੀ ਘਤਿ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਆਇਆ ਰੁੰਨੇ ਵੀਰ ਸਬਾਏ ॥  
ਕਾਇਆ ਹੰਸ ਥੀਆ ਵੇਛੋੜਾ ਜਾਂ ਦਿਨ ਪੁੰਨੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ ॥  
ਜੇਹਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਤੇਹਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਜੇਹਾ ਪੁਰਬਿ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥

*rāga vaḍhans mahalā1 ghar 5 alāhanīā*  
*ik oankār satigur prasād ||*  
*dhann sirandhā sachā pātisāhu jīn jag dhandhhai lāiyā ||*  
*muhalat punī pā ī bhar ī jānīrā ghat chalāeīā ||*  
*jānī ghat chalāeīā likhiā āeīā runnē vīr sabāe ||*  
*kāneiā hans thīā vēchhōrā jāñ din punnē mērī māe ||*  
*jēhā likhiā thēhā pāeīā jēhā purab kamāeīā ||*

*Raag Wadahans, First Mehla, Fifth House, Alaahanees ~ Songs Of Mourning:  
One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:*

*Blessed is the Creator, the True King, who has linked the whole world to its tasks.*

*When one's time is up, and the measure is full, this dear soul is caught, and driven off.*

*This dear soul is driven off, when the pre-ordained Order is received, and all the relatives cry out in mourning.*

*The body and the swan-soul are separated, when one's days are past and done, O my mother.*

*As is one's pre-ordained Destiny, so does one receive, according to one's past actions.*

*Blessed is the Creator, the True King, who has linked the whole world to its tasks. ||1||<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> AG, p. 578.

Figure 7.4. *Alāhuṅtā* in *tintāl*<sup>14</sup>

## *Alahuniya* (Dirge)

*Raga Wadhans Tintal* 16 beats

Lyrics: Guru Nanak  
Traditional folk tune  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

0 Slowly 3 X 2 0 3 X

Dhan na si ran daa sa chaa paa ti saa hu  
dhan na si ran daa sa cha paa ti saa hu  
ji ni ja gu dhan dhai ji ni ja gu dhan dhai  
laa i yaa (vaa) mu ha la ti pu nee  
paa yee bha ree (vaa) mu ha la ti pu nee  
paa yee bha ree (vaa) jaa nee a Raa  
jaa nee a Raa jaa nee a Raa gha cha  
laa eeyaa (vaa) jaa nee gha ti cha  
laa eeyaa jaa nee gha ti cha

<sup>14</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet*, 262-265.

73 laa eeyaa li khi aa aa i aa run nay vee ra sa bhaa ay

81 jaa nee gha ti cha laa eeya

89 jaa nee gha ti cha laa eeyaa

97 kaan iyaa ham sa khee aa vay chho Raa

105 kaan iyaa ham sa khee aa vay chho Raa

111 jaan di na pun nay may ree maa ay jaa nee gh ti cha

121 laa iyaa mai jaa nee gha ti jee cha

129 laa iyaa

### Lāvāñ

Another lifecycle *śabad* is the *Lāvāñ*, a four-stanza composition by Gurū Rām Das sung during the Sikh wedding ceremony, referred to as the *Anand Karaj*.

Rendered in *Rāgā Sūhī*, the *Lāvāñ* is performed while the couple circumambulates a sacred fire. For each of the four rounds they make, a verse of the *Lāvāñ* is sung. The

melodic outline of *Rāgā Sūhī* is provided (Figure 7.5), followed by a transcription of the first verse of the *Lāvāñhī*. [7.6]

“*Lāvāñhī*”

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਪਹਿਲੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਪਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਕਰਮ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥  
ਬਾਣੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਵੇਦੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਹੁ ਪਾਪ ਤਜਾਇਆ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥  
ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਆਰਾਧਹੁ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸਹਜ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਮਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥  
ਜਨੁ ਕਰੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਾਵ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਆਰੰਭੁ ਕਾਜੁ ਰਚਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

*sūhī mahalā 4 ||*

*har pehilarī lāv paraviratī karam dṛṛāeiā bal rām jīō ||*  
*bāñī brahamā vaedh dharam dṛṛahu pāp thajāeiā bal rām jīō ||*  
*dharam dṛṛahu har nām dhiāvahu simrit nām dṛṛāeiā ||*  
*satigur gur pūrā ārādhahu sabh kilavikh pāp gavāeiā ||*  
*sehaj anand hōā vaḍabhāgī man har har mīt ā lāeiā ||*  
*jan kehai nānak lāv pehilitā ārambh kāj rachāeiā ||1||*

*Soohee, Fourth Mehla:*

*In the first round of the marriage ceremony, the Lord sets out His Instructions for performing the daily duties of married life.*

*Instead of the hymns of the Vedas to Brahma, embrace the righteous conduct of Dharma, and renounce sinful actions.*

*Meditate on the Lord’s Name; embrace and enshrine the contemplative remembrance of the Naam.*

*Worship and adore the Guru, the Perfect True Guru, and all your sins shall be dispelled.*

*By great good fortune, celestial bliss is attained, and the Lord, Har, Har, seems sweet to the mind.*

*Servant Nanak proclaims that, in this, the first round of the marriage ceremony, the marriage ceremony has begun. ||1||<sup>15</sup>*

**Figure 7.5. Melodic outline of *Rāgā Sūhī***

Raga Suhi



Mukh Ang



<sup>15</sup> AG, p. 773.

Figure 7.6. *Lāvāñ*<sup>16</sup>

***Lavan***  
Raga *Suhi*, Rupak Tala

Lyrics by Guru Ramdas  
Traditional folk tune  
Arranged by Protopapas

0 2 3

1. Ha ra pa la Ri laavan pa ra vi ra ti kara ma  
ma dri ro ha ra na ma dhi yaa va ha

4 dri Ra iyaa ba li raa m jee o Ba ni brahm aa  
sim ri ta naam dri yaa yo sa ti gu ru gu ra

7 ve da dha ra ma dri daro paa pa ta jaa iyaa ba li raa m jee o dha ra  
pu ra a radh sa bha ki la vi kha pa pa ga va ya. 2. Sa ha

Remaining verses follow this format.

### **Sohila**

*Sohila* is a folk poetic style typically sung during morning, or at childbirth. In *Gurbāñī kīrtan*, it is recited at night before retiring and understood metaphorically as a spiritual rebirth.

### **Seasonal and Temporal Śabads**

Time, which in the Sikh view is seen as both temporal and transcendental, is a guiding force of scriptural importance in Sikh devotional worship and a key theme of many hymns. Enlightenment is seen as a process of the human soul, mirrored through the passage of time. The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is filled with hymns that contain references to time-consciousness: hymns refer to the hours (*pahārē*), the days and

<sup>16</sup> Transcribed by author from a recording of *Lavan* sung by Bhai Chanak Singh, Hazoori Rāgī, Anandpur Sāhib, July 20, 2009.

nights (*din-rain*), the days of the week (*vār sāt*), the weeks (*thitī*), the months (*Bārah Mahā*) and the seasons (*ruttī*). All of these compositions stress the importance of time, which functions as a phenomenological cycle of remembrance of the Lord. Along with these, *śabads* in seasonal *rāgās* (such as *Rāgā Basant* for spring and *Rāgā Malār* for the rainy season) are equally important.

The *Bārah Mahā* (lit. “The Twelve Months”) is a form of folk poetry in which the emotions and yearnings of the human heart are expressed in terms of the changing moods of Nature over the twelve months of the year. Each particular month (of the Indian calendar) depicts the cycle of human emotions from the torment of separation (from God) to ultimate consummation. [Refer to the Indian calendar of months in Appendix A] It is customary to recite the appropriate hymn of the month from the *Bārah Mahā* on the first day of each month in the *kīrtan* services. The sample of *Bārah Mahā* presented below is in *Rāgā Tūkhārī*, another popular *rāgā* associated with the folk tradition. [Figure 7.7 and 7.8]

“Bārah Mahā”

ਹਰਿ ਜੇਠਿ ਜੁੜੰਦਾ ਲੋੜੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਅਗੈ ਸਭਿ ਨਿਵੰਨਿ ॥  
 ਹਰਿ ਸਜਣ ਦਾਵਣਿ ਲਗਿਆ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਬੰਨਿ ॥  
 ਮਾਣਕ ਮੋਤੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਉਨ ਲਗੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਸੰਨਿ ॥  
 ਰੰਗ ਸਭੇ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੈ ਜੇਤੇ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੰਨਿ ॥  
 ਜੋ ਹਰਿ ਲੋੜੇ ਸੋ ਕਰੇ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਅ ਕਰੰਨਿ ॥  
 ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਕੀਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੋਈ ਕਹੀਅਹਿ ਧੰਨਿ ॥  
 ਆਪਣ ਲੀਆ ਜੇ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਿਛੁੜਿ ਕਿਉ ਰੋਵੰਨਿ ॥  
 ਸਾਧੂ ਸੰਗੁ ਪਰਾਪਤੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਰੰਗ ਮਾਣੰਨਿ ॥

*har jēṭh jurandā lorīai jis agai sabh nivanni ||*  
*har sajan dāvaṇi lagiā kisai na dēi banni ||*  
*māṇak motī nām prabh oun lagai nāhī sanni ||*  
*rang sabhē nārāiṇai jēṭhē man bhāvanni ||*  
*jo har loṛē so karē soī jā karanni ||*  
*jo prabh kīṭhē āpanē sēi kehīahi dhhanni ||*  
*āpana līā jē milai vichhur kio rovanni ||*  
*sādhū sang parāpatē nānak rang māṇṇani ||*



## **Songs of Love and Devotion**

The development of Sikh devotional music was contemporaneous to devotional music of the Sufi community. Both styles of devotional music use the *Kafi*, a poetic arrangement considered by some to constitute the earliest poetic compositional style in Punjabi language. Common folk in West Punjab (what is now Pakistan) sing *Kafi* songs as part of their daily activities. The main theme in Sikh *Kafis* is that of the transient nature of the manifest world and the admonition not to become overly attached to worldly possessions. The compositional format consists of a refrain with several verses. The refrain, acting as the main theme, is repeatedly sung between the verses. Typically the lead vocalist sings the verse while the accompanying singers (and congregation) join in on the refrain.

*Biraharē* is another style of composition, which the Gurus adopted from the folk tradition. While in the folk tradition, these songs pertain to the pain of separation from the lover, these compositions in *Gurbāñī* express the state of is associated with separation between the devotee and the Divine.

## **Ballads (*Vārs*)**

*Mājh*, the geographic region considered as the cradle of Sikhism, is famous for *Vārs*, ballads regionally performed by hereditary bards, who sang praise songs and eulogies enumerating heroic deeds of their patrons. Sikh *Dhādīs* (a distinct group of musicians) specialized in singing marital ballads from Sikh history. Originally accompanying the Sikh armies onto the battlefield, they became popular oral historians and storytellers during the time of Gurū Hargobind. While they are highly



respected for their devotional music, their repertoire has increased to include songs with strong political messages.<sup>18</sup>

To this day, the *Vārs* of the *Ḍhāḍīs* can be heard daily at *Dārbār Sāhib*. Another interesting performance of *Vārs* is by a group of laypersons, which performs a processional-style service daily at *Dārbār Sāhib*. This walking service, popularly called the *chalna chaṅkī*, is comprised of two groups with one section leading, and the other repeating the hymns *a cappella*, verse by verse while circumambulating the *Gūrdwāra*. They draw their repertoire from a small six-volume hymnal “*Śabadam da Sangrāh*,” containing a collection of nineteen *Vārs*, which they claim were compiled by the famous Sikh priest, Baba Buddha himself in 1635. Leader of the processional, Jathedar Jagjit Singh explained that this tradition has been carried on continuously since the time of Gurū Hargobind’s imprisonment.<sup>19</sup>

While *Vārs* serve both secular and sacred functions, they are construed with sacred themes in *śabad kīrtan*. Sikh Gurus composed twenty-two *vārs* in nine different *rāgās*, assigning folk tunes to nine of them. In his translation of *Āsā di Vār*, Bhai Teja Singh postulates a connection between Greek odes and Sikh *Vārs*, tracing the origin of this singing style to Greek odes. He comments that following Alexander’s invasion of Northwest India in 326 B.C, the Greeks who settled in Punjab sang odes that were ballads in praise of heroes. Singh draws a connection

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<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive study of this genre, refer to Michael Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar: Religion, Violence, and the Performance of Sikh History*. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Jagjeet Singh, Amritsar, February, 2007.

between the sections of a *Vār*, which include *Śalōk* and *Paurī*, which he claims correspond to the strophe and anti-strophe format of an ode.<sup>20</sup>

Along with the overlap between folk and sacred music in function, the musical tunes of the *Vars* are connected to regional melodies. An example of this is *Vār Mājh*, sung in *Rāgā Mājh*, which, associated with the people of *Majh* district (Punjab), narrates the historical events of Malak Mureed and Chandrahada Sohiya (two princes of Medieval India). Another fine example of folk borrowings in the *Vārs* is found in the liturgy of the *Āsā Dī Vār* (a sermon sung in the pre-dawn hours daily in *Gūrdwāras*). This sung liturgy is rendered in the folk *rāgā Āsā*, popularly believed to have been handed down in its original form since the time of Guru Nanak. The verses of the *Āsā Dī Vār* are sung to the tune of a famous folk ballad of *Tuṇḍē Asarāj* (which recounts the valor of a maimed king *Asa*). While both versions (folk and *Gurbāṇī*) of the *Vār* are identical in tune, mode and poetic style, the words in *Gurbāṇī* lend to a spiritual theme. This service will be explored further in Chapter Eight.

### **Liturgical Hymns**

The daily singing or recitation of liturgical hymns forms a core responsibility of initiated Sikhs (*amṛtdhari*). Miriam Winter, writing on liturgical music in the Jewish and Christian tradition, provides three guidelines for liturgical singing:

- (1) It is essential that the people sing whenever it is possible and appropriate for them to do so, for through song and the act of singing people experience a sense of community and express the presence of God among them.

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<sup>20</sup> Daljit Singh, *Sikh Sacred Music*, 55.

(2) It is essential that the singing be ritually integrated within the given liturgical moment and that the musical expression be appropriate to the ethos of the liturgical action taking place; and finally

(3) It is essential that the music be pastorally sensitive to the celebrating assembly, reflecting a style and level of difficulty appropriate to the participants.<sup>21</sup>

These guidelines could be aptly applied to the *śabad kīrtan* singing tradition, which should be as Guru Arjan instructs: (1) continuously sung: “*āth pehar gun gāē sādihū sangīai*” (*Twenty-four hours a day, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, in the Sādih Sangat, the Company of the Holy*).<sup>22</sup> (2) *Śabads* were also ritually integrated into all of the liturgies starting with the first daily *kīrtan* services during the time of Gurū Nānak. (3) The fact that the Gurūs drew from the local music and poetic traditions of the people provides evidence that hymn singing should be accessible to all people.

## **Part Two: “Jyōtīan dī Kīrtan” Congregational Singing and Oral recitation of**

### ***Bāṇī***

ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ ॥  
ਦੁਖੁ ਪਰਹਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਘਰਿ ਲੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

*Sing, and listen, and keep love in your heart.  
Your pain shall be sent far away, and peace shall come to your home.*<sup>23</sup>

The importance of the oral-aural experience of *Gurbāṇī* has been stressed throughout the Scriptures, an intimate part of the Sikh daily discipline right from the

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<sup>21</sup> Miriam Therese Winter, “Prophetic Sound after Vatican II,” in *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience*, ed. Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet R. Walton, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 152.

<sup>22</sup> *AG*, p. 398.

<sup>23</sup> *AG*, p. 2.

time of Gurū Nānak.<sup>24</sup> In the *Paṛī* of *Japjī Sāhib*, Gurū Nānak provides a three-part prescription for happiness by singing, listening to and keeping *Gurbāṇī* in the heart. *Śabad kīrtan* has acted as a crucible of collective memory and identity, used to inspire devotees in conquest, celebration and transcendence and acting as a significant unifying force binding the congregation through a turbulent history.

Memorization (keeping in the heart) and thus, “singing from the heart” is a significant part of the religious discipline and daily practice of the Sikh. In religious education, much emphasis is placed on learning *gurbāṇī* by heart with regular competitions in which youth receive awards for reciting scriptural passages with accuracy. Most of my informants, many who were MA students in the *Gurmat Sangit* Department at Punjabi University, had successfully memorized the *Pāñch Bāṇī* (five prescribed prayers recited daily by all initiated Sikhs) and would often recite a specific verse to express a key philosophical point.

Memorization of *Gurbāṇī* (for both reciting and singing) is in fact the preferred mode of imbibing the messages of *Gurbāṇī* and in some cases, reading from the Scripture is frowned upon and even prohibited.<sup>25</sup> William Graham observes: “Memorization is a particularly intimate appropriation of a text, and the capacity to quote or recite a text from memory is a spiritual resource that is tapped automatically in every act of reflection, worship, prayer, or moral deliberation or crisis.”<sup>26</sup> For the Sikh, keeping the words of the scripture in the heart can guide and transform the

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<sup>24</sup> *Amṛtdhari* Sikhs (initiates) are required to read /recite five prescribed hymns each day as per the dictum of *Japjī Sāhib*, *Jāp Sāhib*, *Svaiyā*, *Rahirās*, *Kīrtan Sōhilā*.

<sup>25</sup> The congregation is strictly prohibited from reading scripture in the inner sanctum of the Harmandir Sāhib, as I found out myself during attendance at a prayer session.

<sup>26</sup> William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 160.

consciousness of the devotee. Thus, the words become essentially part of the “inner voice.”

The transformational power of evoking imagined space has been a subject of interest in ethnomusicology. Thomas Csordas, for example, investigates how religious healing is engaged through embodiment, imagination, and memory.<sup>27</sup> The power of an imagined, transcendent space can be no more appropriately explored than in the singing and recitation of the *Anand Sāhib* and the *Rahirās Sāhib*, both sung as part of the daily five hymns.

One of the most popularly recited hymns in the *Gurbānī*, the *Anand Sāhib*, is a liturgical hymn comprising forty stanzas, set in *Rāgā Rāmkalī*. Composed by Gurū Amardās, the *Anand Sāhib* is sung communally in a call-and-response format at the conclusion of all congregational gatherings and ceremonies. Similar to a benediction, this hymn seeks God’s grace and blessings, expressing exultation at the union with God. Harbans Singh writes:

Gurū Amar Dās’s composition centers upon the experience of *anand* (bliss, supreme beatitude) resulting from the individual’s soul merging with the Supreme Soul, which is attained through constant remembrance of God under the direction of the Gurū. Herein, *anand* is a positive spiritual state of inner poise and equanimity wherein one is freed from all suffering, malady, and anxiety.<sup>28</sup>

This hymn narrates the aesthetic experience of supreme bliss, in which all celestial musicians, nymphs, fairies and *Rāgās* themselves join in singing the Glory of the Lord in *rāgās* in a state of continuous rapture. In this state of ecstasy, the devotee is immersed in “*har rasa*,” the nectar of divine ecstasy. In its sung form, it is

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas J. Csordas, "Imaginal Performance and Memory in Ritual Healing."

<sup>28</sup> Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, 1:142.

customarily shortened to the singing of the first five and final verses. [Transcription  
7.8 and 7.9]

“Anand Sāhib”

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ਅਨੰਦੁ  
ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥  
ਅਨੰਦੁ ਭਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਵਜੀਆ ਵਾਧਾਈਆ ॥  
ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਪਰੀਆ ਸਬਦ ਗਾਵਣ ਆਈਆ ॥  
ਸਬਦੇ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਹਰੀ ਕੇਰਾ ਮਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਵਸਾਇਆ ॥  
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

*rāmkalī mahalā 3 anandhu  
ik oankār satigur prasādh ||  
anand bhaeiā mērī māē satigurū mai pāeiā ||  
satigur ta pāeiā sehaj sētī man vajīā vādhāīā ||  
rāg rathan paravār parīā sabad gāvan āīā ||  
sabadō ta gāvahu harī kērā man jinī vasāeiā ||  
kehai nānak anand hōē satigurū mai pāeiā ||1||*

*Rāmkalī, Third Mahala, Anand ~ The Song Of Bliss:  
One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Gurū  
I am in ecstasy, O my mother, for I have found my True Gurū  
I have found the True Guru, with intuitive ease, and my mind vibrates  
with the music of bliss.  
The jeweled melodies and their related celestial harmonies have come to sing  
the Word of the Shabad.  
The Lord dwells within the minds of those who sing the Shabad.  
Says Nānak, I am in ecstasy, for I have found my True Gurū. ||1||<sup>29</sup>*

**Figure 7.9. Melodic Outline of Rāga Rāmkalī**

Raga Ramkali



Mukh Ang



<sup>29</sup> AG, p. 917.

Figure 7.10. *Anand Sāhib*<sup>30</sup>

## *Anand Sahib*

*Raga Ramkali - tintal*  
(first Pauri)

Lyrics by Guru Amardas  
Composed by Dr. Gurnam Singh  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

Raam ka li ma ha la tee jaa ek ohkar sat guru parisad. A nan da bhai yaa may ree

Percussion commences

7 maa ay A nan da bhai yaa may ree maa ay

13 sa ti gu roo mai paai ya sa ti gu roo mai paai ya

19 saha ja say tee

25 man va jee yaa vaa dhaa ee yaa sat guru ta paai yaa

31 saha ja say tee mana va jee yaa va dhaa ee yaa

37 raa ga ra tana pari vaa ra pari ya raa ga ra tana pari

43 vaa ra pari ya sa ba da gaa van aai ya

<sup>30</sup> Transcribed by author from live recording of Dr. Gurnam Singh, Glen Rock, NJ, August, 2009.

45 sab do ka gaa vaha ha ree ke ra ma na ji ni va

55 saa i aa ka hai naa na ka anan da ho a

65 ka hai naa na ka anan da ho a sa ti gu roo mai

67 paaiaa sa ti gur roo mai paaiaa sa ti gu roo mai paaiaa sa ti gu roo mai

75 ay ma na may ri yaa too sada rahuhar naa lay  
naal rahu too ma na may ray doo kha visa rana

Liturgy continues on in this repeated melody

### ***So Dar:* the Evening Prayer**

Another hymn popularly sung in a congregational setting is the evening supplicatory prayer, *So Dar Rahirās*. This hymn can be heard daily as it is recited and chanted by Sikh congregations throughout the world. It is also included in the *pāñch baṇī* (five required hymns to be recited daily by initiates). The *Rahirās Sāhib*, as it is commonly referred to, is a collection of hymns by five Gurūs: Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan and Gurū Gōbind Singh, composed in two *Rāgās*: *Āsā* and *Gūjarī*. The entire prayer (a cluster of hymns) went through several stages of development until it reached its current form in the nineteenth century.



Pashaura Singh explains that originally only the *Sō Dār* text was sung as recorded in the *Vār* of Bhai Gurdas. A century later, the *Sō Purakh* text was added to the liturgy and gradually the *Anand Sāhib* and *Mundāvanī* were added. The inclusion of Gurū Gōbind Singh's compositions, which had a more protective flavor, were added in the nineteenth century, ratified by the *SGPC*, Sikh religious council.

1. *Sō Dār* – (literally, “That Door”) is set in *Rāgā Āsā*. Composed by Gurū Nānak, this hymn was sung during his time.
2. *Sō Purakh* – (literally, “That Supreme Being”) is also set in *Rāgā Āsā*. This hymn is a collection of four hymns, the first two by Gurū Rām Das, followed by a hymn by Gurū Nānak and concluding with a hymn by Gurū Arjan. This hymn praises the Supreme Being who is transcendent, yet in all.
3. *Anand Sāhib* (shortened version)<sup>31</sup> is set in *Rāgā Rāmkalī* by Gurū Amardās. Refer to above description of the *Anand Sāhib*.
4. *Mundāvanī* and *Śalōk* – both by Gurū Arjan form an epilogue to the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, relating the spiritual values of Divine worship.
5. *Bēnatī Chaupai*, *Savaiyā* and *Dōharā* – composed by Gurū Gōbind Singh, seek the protective powers of the Supreme Being. It is generally believed by Sikhs that the singing of Gurū Gōbind Singh's hymns evokes *vīr ras* (the aesthetic feeling of courage and bravery).

This hymn, like the *Anand Sāhib*, invokes an imagined space of bliss. Leading the pilgrim on an imagined journey of ecstasy. It commences with *Sō Dār*, the

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<sup>31</sup> First five and final stanzas.

Divine Threshold to the Lord's presence:

*Where is That Door of Yours, and where is That Home, in which You sit and take care of all?*

*The Sound-current of the Nād vibrates there for You, and countless musicians play all sorts of instruments there for You.*

The hymn continues with a description of the Divine Spectacle, where all natural and supernatural phenomena vibrate and sing praises and glories to The Creator.

The word “gāvahi” (literally “are singing”) is reiterated through the hymn, stressing a continuous state of being.

*There are so many Rāgās and musical harmonies to You; so many minstrels sing hymns of You.*

*Wind, water and fire sing of You. The Righteous Judge of Dharma sings at Your Door.*

*Chitr and Gupt, the angels of the conscious and the subconscious who keep the record of actions, and the Righteous Judge of Dharma who reads this record, sing of You.<sup>10</sup>*

“Sō Dār”

ਸੋ ਦਰੁ ਰਾਗੁ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਸੋ ਦਰੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੇਹਾ ਸੋ ਘਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥

ਵਾਜੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਦ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਸੰਖਾ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਰਾਗੁ ਪਰੀ ਸਿਉ ਕਹੀਅਹਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਗਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਪਵਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਜਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਆਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਤੁਧਨੋ ਚਿਤੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣਨਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

*sō dar rāg āsā mahalā 1*

*ik oankaar satigur prasād ||*

*sō dar tērā kēhā sō ghar kēhā jit behi sarab samālē ||*

*vājē tērē nād anēk asankhā kētē tērē vāvanehārē ||*

*kētē tērē rāg parī sio kehīahi kētē tērē gāvanehārē ||*

*gāvan tudhanō pavan pānee baisantar gāvai rājā dharam dhuārē ||*

*gāvan tudhano chit gupat likh jānan likh likh dharam bīchārē||*

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<sup>10</sup> AG, p. 8.

*That Doorstep. Rāg Āsā, First Mehlā:  
One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:  
Where is That Door of Yours, and where is That Home, in which You sit and take care of all?  
The Sound-current of the Nād vibrates there for You, and countless musicians play all sorts of  
instruments there for You.  
There are so many Ragas and musical harmonies to You; so many minstrels sing hymns of  
You.  
Wind, water and fire sing of You. The Righteous Judge of Dharma sings at Your Door.  
Chitr and Gupt, the angels of the conscious and the subconscious who keep the record of  
actions, and the Righteous Judge of Dharma who reads this record, sing of You.<sup>113232</sup>*

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<sup>32</sup> AG, p. 8.

Figure 7.11 *Sō Dār*<sup>33</sup>

## *Sodar di Chaunki*

Raga Asa

Lyrics by Guru Nanak Dev  
Traditional folk melody  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

so da ra te ra ke ha so gha ra ke haa ji ta ba he sa ra ba sa maa le vaa je te re naa da a ne ka a

<sup>7</sup> sankhaa ke te te re raa ga pa ri sio ka hi a hi \_\_\_\_\_ ke te te re vaa va na haa re gaa va ni tu dha no pa va na paa ni bai

<sup>13</sup> san ta ra \_\_\_\_\_ gaaveraa jadharamadu aa re ga va na tu dha no chi ta gupa ta likhi jaa na ni \_\_\_\_\_ likhi likhidharamubi

<sup>19</sup> chaa re g va na tu dha no i sa ra bra ha maa de vi so ha na te re sa daa sa vaa re ga va na tu dha no indra in dra sa ni

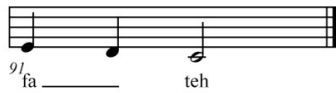
<sup>25</sup> bai te de va ti aa da ri naa le gaa va na tu dha no si dha sa maa dhi an da ri \_\_\_\_\_ gaa va na tu dha no saa dha bi

<sup>31</sup> chaa re gaa va ni tu dha no ja ti sa ti san to khi gaa va na tu dha no vi ra ka raa re gaa va na tu dha no pan di ta pa ra ni ra

<sup>37</sup> khi su ra \_\_\_\_\_ ju ga ju ga ve daa naa le ga va na tu dha no mo ha ni aa ma na mo ha na \_\_\_\_\_ su ra ga ma chha pa i

<sup>43</sup> aa le ga va na tu dha no ra ta na u paa e te re je te aa th sa thi ti ra tha naa le ga va na tu dha no jo dha ma haa ba la

<sup>33</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet*, 213-215.



### *Āratī*

In addition to folk poetic elements evident in *Śabad kīrtan*, there are references to Hindu religious practices. Both *Āratī* and *Anjulīyā* are two additional composition styles in *Śabad kīrtan* repertoire. *Āratī* is the Hindu ritual of waving of the oil lamp in front of the deity for propitiation, while *Anjulīyā* is a Hindu ritual of

deity propitiation through water libations. The Gurus entirely rejected any ritual worship of images. However, they borrowed these important parts of Hindu ritual and reinterpreted them as an “inner” ritual, an interior experience, asserting that salutations and oblations are only to be offered to the Supreme Lord that exists within and not to an external idol. The *Āratī* hymn, composed by Gurū Nānak in *Rāgā Dhanāsarī*, is a prominent prayer sung/recited daily by Sikhs. It is also a popular hymn sung communally by most Sikh congregations.

“Āratī”

ਰਾਗੁ ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥  
ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਬਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ ॥  
ਧੂਪੁ ਮਲਆਨਲੋ ਪਵਣੁ ਚਵਰੋ ਕਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਬਨਰਾਇ ਫੁਲੰਤ ਜੋਤੀ ॥੧॥  
ਕੈਸੀ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਭਵ ਖੰਡਨਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਰਤੀ ॥  
ਅਨਹਤਾ ਸਬਦ ਵਾਜੰਤ ਭੇਰੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*rāg dhanāsarī mahalā ॥*  
*gagan mai tāl rav chand dīpak banāe tārikā mandal janak mōtī ॥*  
*dhūp malānalō pavan chavarō karē sagal banarāe fūlant jōtī ॥1॥*  
*kaisī āratī hōe ॥ bhav khandanā tērī ārathī ॥*  
*anahatā sabad vājant bhērī ॥1॥ rehāo*

*Rāg Dhanāsarī, First Mehlā:*

*Upon that cosmic plate of the sky, the sun and the moon are the lamps. The stars and their orbs are the studded pearls.*

*The fragrance of sandalwood in the air is the temple incense, and the wind is the fan. All the plants of the world are the altar flowers in offering to You, O Luminous Lord.*

॥1॥

*What a beautiful Āratī, lamp-lit worship service this is! O Destroyer of Fear, this is Your Ceremony of Light.*

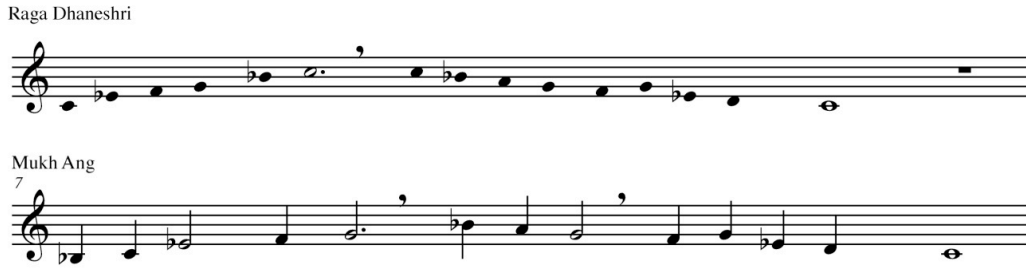
*The Unstruck Sound-current of the Shabad is the vibration of the temple drums.*

॥1॥Pause॥<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> AG, p. 13.

**Figure 7.12. Melodic Outline of *Rāgā Dhanāsari***



**Figure 7.13. *Āratī***<sup>35</sup>

### *Arati*

*Raga Dhanasari*  
*Kaherva Tala - 8 beats*

**Lyrics: Guru Nanak**  
**Traditional folk melody**

ga ga na mai thaa la ra vi chan da dee — pa ka ba nay taa ri kaa man Da la

ja na ka mo — tee — dhu pa ma la aa na lo pa va na cha va ro ka re sa ga la ba na raa yi phoo

lan ta jo — ti — kai see aa ra ti ho yi bha va khan da na tay ree aa ra ti

### Summary

If one surveys the entire corpus of the *Guru Granth Sahib* from a phenomenological perspective, one can observe a causal relationship between the socio-political situation and the music composed and performed. From Gurū Nānak to Gurū Gōbind Singh, a great variety of musical styles arose, blending folk and classical, sacred and secular, hymnal and martial elements, all incorporated in this

<sup>35</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar*, 217-219.

sacred music repertoire. The hymns of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* reflect the changing socio-political conditions of their times. This chapter has explored a variety of popular hymns from the folk tradition of Punjab. These hymns may be perceived as a musical roadmap and cognitive archive for the numerous events that happen in the daily life of the Sikh layperson, forming a sonic adhesive that both creates and binds community from birth to death.



## CHAPTER EIGHT: *KĪRTAN CHAUNKĪ*: AFFECT, EMBODIMENT AND MEMORY

This chapter explores the role of *Śabad kīrtan* as it unfolds throughout the early morning Sikh musical service, the *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaunḱī*. Examined through an ethnomusicological lens that stresses the importance of human meanings and human evaluation in the musical process, *Śabad kīrtan* is not exclusively an abstract, musical concept to be analyzed, but a process of social interaction to be experienced. Furthermore, this musical process, understood phenomenologically, is dependent on time and place, unfolding as a series of social interactions and psycho-emotional experiences that both guide and are guided by the musical process. Thus, an investigation into how *Śabad kīrtan* unfolds through a *kīrtan chaunḱī* service is vital in developing a hermeneutics of Sikh music. Such an approach would consider the hermeneutical process as a hermeneutic circle in which understanding the part and the whole are co-dependent.<sup>1</sup>

The chapter is divided into three sections: the first explores the liturgical language of the hymns themselves (*gurbānī*) that render an encounter with *Śabad kīrtan* as an aural experience, an embodied experience and a phenomenological experience. The second section examines the history and organization of a service of *Śabad kīrtan* (*kīrtan chaunḱī*) and the language embedded in the experience. The

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<sup>1</sup> For further reading on hermeneutic process refer to publications by Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Hans George Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (London: Continuum Publishing Group, 1992 [1975]), 164-169, and Paul Ricoeur's *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 57-58.

third section considers the social interaction of *Śabad kīrtan* through an analysis of the first service of the day, the *Āsa Dī Var dī chaunkī*, examining how *Gurbāṇī* is mirrored in the practice of praise.

### Part One: Exploring the Language of the Hymns

#### **Kīrtan *Chaunkī* as an aural experience**

“ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ”  
*Gāvīai sūṇīai man rakhīai bhāo*<sup>2</sup>

*Sing (and listen) to the praises (of God) and keep them in your heart.*

While traditionally semiotics has been associated with the auditory/vocal mode of communication (the primary subject of linguistics), ethnomusicological research adopts a broader definition to include the importance of visual and physical modes of behavior communication (kinesics) and interpersonal movement (proxemics) in the study of music. Sounds themselves, imparted with many levels of signification, are often ingredients of a trained set of behaviors. Sounds, such as the blowing of the *Nārasimha* (large tuba-like instrument) that announce the arrival of the *Gūru Granth Sahib*, alert the congregants to their beloved scripture as it is brought into the inner chamber of the *Gūrdwāra*.

Judith Becker in her 2004 study of trancing, music and emotion “*Deep Listeners*,” writes of the listening experience as a dynamic interpretive process of meaning making. She coined the term “habitus of listening” to refer to the process of

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<sup>2</sup> “Sing (and listen) to the praises (of God) and keep them in your heart.” From *Japjī Sahib*, 5<sup>th</sup> *paurī*. Harbans Singh Doabia, trans., *Sacred Nitnem* (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 2004), 24.

listening as a series of socially constructed and semiotically ascribed psycho-physical responses to sonic stimuli around us.<sup>3</sup> Like the deep structure of an iceberg, the underlying ways in which one is habituated to react and respond to sound forms constitute a “habitus of listening.”<sup>4</sup> Participation in a habitus of listening includes accepted and often prescribed psycho-emotional behaviors and responses to music encoded through liturgies. Liturgies are embodiments of these expressive acts, scripted performances infusing their participants with affective responses. Judith Becker compares scripts to liturgies:

Scripts are like liturgies in that they prescribe a more or less fixed sequence of events but the definition extends beyond liturgy to include as well the affective, phenomenological responses that tend to infuse the participants of the liturgy.<sup>5</sup>

In Sikhism, the script may be analyzed through the musical service, the *kīrtan chaṅkī*. Because *śabads* are typically sung within the framework of the religious ceremony, which involves congregational participation, the key to understanding the musical experience and to the connection between *śabad* and *kīrtan* is observation of the ways and behaviors of acting associated with the listening environment.

Listening, while generally considered the passive, receptive side of communication, in a Sikh service, requires complete and absolute attention to the musical message conveyed with an active desire and intention to receive spiritual nourishment, like a

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<sup>3</sup> Becker, *Deep Listeners*, 26.

<sup>4</sup> This term, borrowed from sociology, refers to learned perceptions of musical emotion and interactions with our surroundings. Judith Becker explains it nicely as: “a disposition to listen with a particular focus and to interpret the meaning of the sounds and one’s emotional responses to the musical event.” Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners*, 70.

<sup>5</sup> Becker, *Deep Listeners*, 82. In fact the original meaning of the Greek word leitourgia implies congregational participation.

thirsty traveler in the desert seeking water for survival. This may be understood as “deep listening.” In the eighth through the tenth *Paurī* (stanza) of *Japjī Sāhib* (the first of the five prescribed daily prayers), Guru Nānak expounds the importance of listening on the spiritual path: “*sunai sidh pīr sur nāth, sunai dharat dhaval ākās...*”<sup>6</sup> The very act of entering the *Gūrdwāra* and prostrating in front of the *Gūru Granth Sahib* immediately positions one within a group consciousness. Like a soldier reporting for morning duty, the devotee who enters into this religious sanctuary offers his mind and body to the transformational event. The listening experience during a Sikh service may very well be compared to the Sufi *sama*’, the experience of listening to spiritual music. Ethnomusicologist Regula Qureshi, in writing on Qawwali, quotes a famous eleventh- century Persian Sufi and scholar and adds:

The concept of *sama*’ in Sufism comprises first and foremost that which is heard, the ‘divine message which stirs the heart to seek’ (Hujwiri, 1970, 404).<sup>7</sup> That message is normally assumed to consist of a poetic text, which is set to music, that is, a mystical song. Indeed, Sufism considers poetry to be the principal vehicle for expression of mystical thought and feeling. Ultimately, the, the *sama*’ concept is focused on the listener – in accord with its literal meaning (‘listening’ or ‘audition’).<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, G.S. Mansukhani describes the Sikh process of listening as a “tuning into”, in which the hymn itself acts as a catalyst whereby the listener can become connected with the Divine. Just as one turns the dial on one’s radio to

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<sup>6</sup> “A mortal becomes a perfect saint, a religious guide, a spiritual leader, and a great *yogī*, by hearing the Name of God. The reality of the earth and bull supporting it and of heaven becomes known by hearing the Name of God.” from stanzas 8-10 of *Japjī Sahib*. Doabia, *Sacred Nitnem*, 24.

<sup>7</sup> In Ali ibn Uthman al - Hujwiri, *The "Kashf al-Mahjub", the Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism by al-Huwiri*, ed. Gibb Memorial Series, trans. R.A. Nicholson, vol. 17 (London: Luzac; first published 1911, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> Regula Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan*, 82.

connect to the frequency of one’s favorite radio station, the Sikh listener tunes into the resonance and musical frequency of the hymn to align with the Divine. Mansukhani uses the example of two string instruments, which, when tuned to each other exactly, vibrate in resonance automatically. He explains that when the mind is in tune, the effect of the hymn on the mind and emotions of the listener is heightened.<sup>9</sup> Judith Becker defines this form of attunement as deep listening in which the listener is “necessarily influenced by the place, time, the shared context, and the intricate and irreproducible details of one’s personal biography.”<sup>10</sup>

### ***Kīrtan Chaṅkī* as an Embodied Experience**

ਰੰਗਿ ਹਸਹਿ ਰੰਗਿ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਚੁਪ ਭੀ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਹਿ  
*Rang hasēh rang rōvēh chūp bhī kar jāh*  
*When one becomes dyed in God’s love, they sometimes laugh,*  
*Sometimes weep or become silent.*<sup>11</sup>

The effect of deep listening as a way of embodying the Gurus’ messages is continuously expounded in the hymns of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Through deep participatory listening, the devotee is aroused to psycho-emotional aesthetics states of devotion (*bhaktī rasa*), religious ecstasy (*amṛta rasa*) or exhilaration (*vīr rasa*).<sup>12</sup>

The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* abounds with *śabads* which urge the devotee to embody the messages by listening to, tasting, smelling, touching and singing the words and becoming emotionally intoxicated by them, as in Guru Arjan’s beloved *śabad* in *Rāg Āsa*: “*Har ras pīvat sad hī rāta, ān rasā kina mah lah jāta*” – *He, who drinks God’s*

<sup>9</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 87.

<sup>10</sup> Becker, *Deep Listeners*, 71.

<sup>11</sup> *AG*, p. 473.

<sup>12</sup> For more on *Rasa* theory, consult Kapila Vatsyayan, *Bharata: The Natyasastra*.

*elixir, ever remains imbued. All other relishes wear off in a moment.*<sup>13</sup> Additional *śabads* describe the physiological effects of the devotee, who becomes saturated with the Divine Name, as in the twentieth *Śalōk* of *Āsā Dī Vār* (Ballad of Hope), in which Gūru Nānak explains that when one is dyed with God’s love, one sometimes laughs, sometimes weeps or becomes silent “*Rang hasēh rang rōvēh chup bhī kar jāh*”. *Śabad kīrtan* is thus directly tied to affective responses and embodiment. This is similar to the autonomic nervous system responses to which Judith Becker refers.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 8.1. *Kīrtaniyas* immersed in the *Śabad* at the *Adutti Gurmat Sangīt Sammellan*, Jawaddi Taksal, Ludhiana, December 2006. (Author on far left)<sup>15</sup>**



<sup>13</sup> *AG*, p. 377.

<sup>14</sup> ANS refers to the autonomic nervous system which controls the physiological processes that occur automatically, in responses to a perception that triggers an emotional response, such as increased heart rate, shivering, weeping, tears, laughter, changes in breathing. Refer to Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners*, 10.

<sup>15</sup> Photo by author, December 8, 2006.

Sociologist Simon Frith, in *Music and Identity*, comments: “performance produces people, it creates and constructs the experience both as a musical experience and aesthetic experience, a subjective within the collective.”<sup>16</sup> Performance of *Śabad kīrtan* puts into play an emotional effect between the performer and the audience where identity is both constructed and reconstructed.

### ***Kīrtan Chaṅkī* as a phenomenological experience**

ਸ਼ਾਸਿ ਸ਼ਾਸਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਰਾਧੇ ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਾ  
*Sās, sās Nānak arādhe āth pahar guna gāva*  
 Breath after breath, Nānak begs to sing (God’s) praises  
 eight *pahars* (eight watches of the day)<sup>17</sup>

Most research on Sikh music has focused on the musicological, historical and philosophical aspects of this genre with little attention given to a contextual analysis, which includes an investigation of the musical event as an embodied experience, situated in a particular time and space.<sup>18</sup>

Time, which in the Sikh view is seen as both temporal and transcendental, is a guiding force of scriptural importance in Sikh devotional worship. Continuously expounded throughout the *Gūru Granth Sahib*, Gūru Nānak writes in a *śabad* in *Rāgā Sūhī*: “*Sās, sās Nānak arādhe āth pahār guna gāva*” (*With each and every breath, Nanak adores You; twenty-four hours a day, I sing Your Glorious Praises.*)<sup>19</sup> Breath

<sup>16</sup> Simon Frith, “Music and Identity” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Thousand Oaks, 1996), 108.

<sup>17</sup> *AG*, p. 749.

<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive list of publications on Sikh music, refer to the bibliography.

<sup>19</sup> *AG*, p.749 (translation from Sikhithemax.com)

after breath, Nānak begs to sing (God’s) praises (the eight *pahārs*). Likewise, a *kīrtan chaunkī* is guided by a cyclical division of time, and may be analyzed on several distinct levels: (1) musical–rhythmic and melodic, (2) time and place, and (3) physical. These cycles unfold from the rhythm cycles that define the musical arrangement of the *śabad* to the daily schedule in which *kīrtan chaunkīs* are organized to the physical act of circumambulation, which takes place around each *gūrdwāra*. This weave of phenomenological interaction pulsates throughout the hours, days, weeks and months continuously bringing to mind both a historical and transcendental consciousness, always connected to the present moment through song. Musical time theory is also adhered to in the presentation of *kīrtan chaunkīs* in which the twenty-four hour cycle of day is divided into eight *pahārs*, three-hour units.<sup>20</sup>

[Table 8.1]

**Table 8.1. The Eight Pahārs**

<b>Name of Pahār</b>	<b>Timing</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	6 a.m. to 9 a.m.
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	9 a.m. to 12 a.m.
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	12 a.m. to 3 p.m.
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of day	3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

<sup>20</sup> In Indian system of calculation, the day is broken up into eight, three-hour periods called “*pahār*.” Accordingly singing God’s praise through the eight *pahārs* would be equivalent to singing continuously over the twenty-four hour period. For a further investigation of time from a Sikh perspective, refer to Gurbhagat Singh and Jasbir Kaur ed., *When Light Kindles Light: A Sikh View of Time and Death* (Ludhiana: Sant Giani Amir Singh Ji, 2006).



2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	9 p.m. to 12 p.m.
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	12 p.m. to 3 a.m.
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of night	3 a.m. to 6 a.m.

## **Part Two: Encountering the *Kīrtan Chaṅkī***

### ***The Kīrtan Chaṅkī***

*Śabad kīrtan* unfolds in time and space through the *kīrtan chaṅkī* or hymn-singing service. *Chaṅkī*, which literally means “quarter,” refers to both a four-foot high wooden platform from which the choir would sing hymns to the congregation and to the session of hymn-singing itself, which typically consists of singing by a choir of four singers (a *rāgī jatha*).<sup>21</sup> According to Kahn Singh Nabha, famed scholar and encyclopaedist of Sikhism, a *kīrtan chaṅkī* should consist of four *rāgīs* who must adhere to the correct procedures for *kīrtan*.<sup>22</sup> Bhai Vir Singh, renowned poet and scholar and eminent figure in Sikh Renaissance defines a *kīrtan chaṅkī* as used in *Gūrmāt Sangīt* as a group of *rāgīs* involving four people, two singers and one percussionist playing *jōrī* (two hand drums similar to tabla) or *pakhāwāj* (double barreled drum). He further adds that there must be at least three musicians.<sup>23</sup> A *kīrtan chaṅkī* can also be referred to as *Śabad chaṅkī* or *śabad kīrtan chaṅkī*. All major *gūrdwāras* hold at least four *kīrtan chaṅkīs* daily. From early morning to late

<sup>21</sup> Harbans Singh, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, 4: 452.

<sup>22</sup> Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurushabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*, 165 –166.

<sup>23</sup> Bhai Vir Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet: Hun Tak Mili Khoj*, 38.

evening, these worship services are tied to a calendar of festival days of gurus and saints.

**Figure 8.2. Students performing *kīrtan* at Punjabi University, Patiala<sup>24</sup>**



*Kīrtan chaṁkīs* may be classified into several groupings by both event (time and space) and musical style. Events are either related to the historical events within the Sikh calendar or personal events of the human life cycle (birth, marriage, death), with prescribed and recommended hymns appropriate for each occasion and time of day. All services commence and conclude with a reverential reference to the holy book, the *Gūru Granth Sahib*, which is considered the embodiment of the Guru. I have divided services into three main groups: (1) daily services at the *Gūrdwāra*, (2)

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<sup>24</sup> Photo by author, October 12, 2006, Punjabi University, Patiala.

special services related to the Sikh religious calendar and (3) services related to personal events.

### **Development of the *Kīrtan Chauṅkī* system**

Historically, the system of hymn singing services, *kīrtan chauṅkīs*, evolved over the course of the tenure of the first five Gūrus. Gūru Nānak (1469-1539) initiated the first two sessions of *kīrtan* at Kartarpūr. The poet and theologian, Bhai Gūrdas (1558-1637), who lived during the reign of the first five Gurus, recorded his testimony of the earliest services by Gūru Nānak at Kārtārpūr in a collection of ballads (*Vārs*). In the first *Vār*, verse 38, he writes: “*Sōdar* and *Āratī* were sung and in the earliest morning hours *Japjī* was recited.”<sup>25</sup> Mansukhani comments that the first session, a pre-dawn service, included the recitation of *Japjī Sahib* followed by *Śabad kīrtan*, in turn followed by an evening session in which the hymns *Sōdar* and *Āratī* were sung.<sup>26</sup> He further clarifies that during the final years of his life, Gūru Nānak instructed Gūru Angad Dēv, second guru (1504-1552), to add the early morning service, *Āsa Di Vār Di Chauṅkī*. *Kīrtan* singing during Gūru Angad Dēv’s tenure is mentioned in a ballad (*Vār*) composed by a famous *rebābī* duo, Bhai Balwand and Satta, who accompanied Gūru the on the *rebāb*.<sup>27</sup> [Table 8.2]

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<sup>25</sup> Bhai Gūrdās, *Vārān Bhai Gūrdās*, trans. Dr. Jodh Singh, 68.

<sup>26</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 94.

<sup>27</sup> *Rebābīs* are minstrels from the *Mirāsī* caste who played the stringed instrument, the *rebāb*.

**Table 8.2. *Kīrtan* Services Established During the Tenures of Gurū Nānak Gurū Angad and Gurū Arjan**

<b>Gurū</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Late morning</b>	<b>Noon/Afternoon</b>	<b>Evening</b>	<b>Night</b>
<i>Gurū Nānak</i>	<i>Japjī Sāhib</i>				<i>Sodar and Āratī</i>
<i>Gurū Angad</i>	<i>Japjī Sāhib and Āsā Dī Vār</i>				<i>Sodar and Āratī</i>
<i>Gurū Arjan</i>	<i>Āsā Dī Vār Chauṅkī</i>	<i>Ānand dī Chauṅkī</i>	<i>Charan Kamal dī Chauṅkī</i>	<i>Sodar dī Chauṅkī</i>	<i>Sukhasan dī Chauṅkī/ Kalyāṅ dī Chauṅkī</i>

Macauliffe refers to the daily routine during Gūru Angad's time with these words:

It was Gūru Angad's practice to rise three hours before day, bathe in cold water, and engage in meditation and introspection. Meanwhile, the musicians sang *Āsā kī Vār*. At its completion, the Guru arose from his attitude of contemplation.... After this, he used to hold court, when Balwand and Satta, (the latter was the former's son according to some, and his brother, according to others) two famous minstrels of the time, entertained the company with vocal and instrumental music. The *Sōdar* was then repeated and food distributed as in the morning. After that, followed further singing of sacred hymns, and then the Guru and his disciples retired to rest.<sup>28</sup>

Along with the compilation of the hymns into the *Ādi Granth Sāhib* and the installation of the *Gūru Granth Sāhib* in 1604 at the *Dārbār Sahib*, the fifth Gurū, Arjan Dēv (1563-1603) also added three more services, bringing the *kīrtan chauṅkī* number to five daily services.<sup>29</sup> In addition to implementing this regime of services, Gurū Arjan also established an amateur class of musicians, *rāgīs*, who became

<sup>28</sup> Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion, Sacred Writings*, 2:15.

<sup>29</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar*, 47.

proficient in singing *kīrtan* in *rāgās*.<sup>30</sup> During the tenure of the sixth Gurū, Hargōbind (1595-1644), a new class of singers, called *Dhādī* (ballad singers), sang *vārs* (ballads) expressing the heroic deeds of old warriors and Guru's soldiers. These *vārs* were sung at the conclusion of the evening sessions of *kīrtan*. According to renowned Sikh musicologist, Dr. Gurnam Singh, after the Gūru period and up to the partition, fifteen *kīrtan chaunkīs* were performed by both Sikh *rāgīs* and Muslim *rebābīs* at *Dārbār Sāhib*.<sup>31</sup> Following partition (the independence of India from Britain in 1947, resulting in the division of the Indian subcontinent into Pakistan and India), only Sikh *rāgīs* were permitted to sing at *Dārbār Sāhib*. Currently there are fifteen *kīrtan chaunkī* performed daily, while most *gūrdwāras* hold at least two services daily.

### ***Kīrtan Chauṅkī at Dārbār Sāhib***

The *Dārbār Sāhib* is an ideal site from which to experience the musical mosaic of this *kīrtan* service. Completed in the fifteenth century during the time of Fifth Gurū, Arjan, this religious complex acts as both a geographic and spiritual axis of the Sikh universe, much like the Vatican to a Catholic. In 1604, the *Gūru Granth Sahib* was installed in the inner sanctum of the *gūrdwāra* and a daily schedule of *kīrtan* services was established. From 2:45 a.m. to 9:45 p.m., one can witness a variety of musical outpourings of hymns at the *Dārbār Sāhib* complex. A schedule

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<sup>30</sup> Mansukhani, *Sikh Kīrtan*, 103.

<sup>31</sup> Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar*, 49.

of fifteen *kīrtan chaṅkīs* is performed daily at *Dārbār Sāhib*.<sup>32</sup> The following chart provides the details and timings of each service. [Table 8.3]

**Table 8.3: Fifteen *Kīrtan Chaṅkīs* at *Dārbār Sāhib***

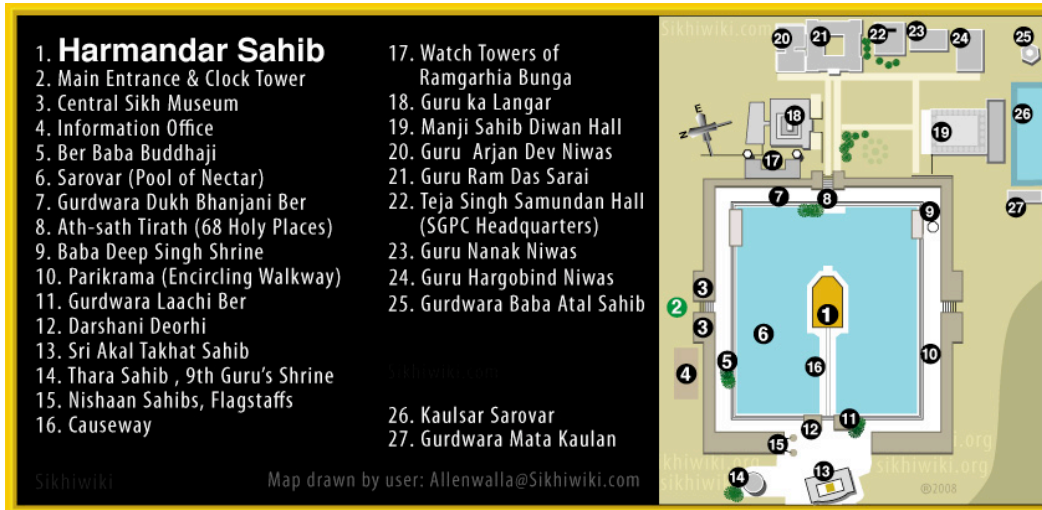
Name of <i>Pahār</i>	Name of Hymn Service	Daily timings for <i>Rāgī Jathas</i>	Description
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the night	<i>Tīn Pahār dī Chaṅkī</i>	2:45 a.m. to 3:50 a.m.	1 <sup>st</sup> session of the day
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaṅkī</i>	3:40 a.m. to 7:15 a.m.	2 <sup>nd</sup> session
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Bilāwil dī Chaṅkī</i>	6:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> sessions
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Bilāwil dī Chaṅkī</i>	9:00 a.m. to 12:00	5 <sup>th</sup> - 7 <sup>th</sup> sessions
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Ānand dī Chaṅkī</i>	12 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.	8 <sup>th</sup> session. Concludes with <i>Paurī</i> and <i>Anand Sāhib</i> hymn followed by <i>ārdās</i> prayer
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Charan Kamal dī Chaṅkī</i>	1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	9 <sup>th</sup> session. In which hymns of various <i>rāgās</i> appropriate to this time are performed including <i>Rāga Sārang</i> and other afternoon <i>rāgās</i> .
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Charan Kamal dī Chaṅkī</i>	3:00 p.m. to 4:20 p.m.	10 <sup>th</sup> session. <i>Kīrtan</i> in <i>Rāgā Dhanāsarī</i> and other <i>rāgas</i> of the time ending with the hymn “ <i>Charan Kamal prabh ke nit dhaivon</i> ” and “ <i>Gagan main thaal</i> ”. Followed by <i>Anand Sāhib</i> and <i>ārdās</i> prayer

<sup>32</sup> This schedule has been drawn from both the bi-monthly *kīrtan chaṅkī* schedule provided to all *rāgī jathas* at *Dārbār Sāhib* and field notes, audio recordings and interviews made by the author July 1-16, 2009.

4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Charan Kamal dī Chauṅkī</i>	4:20 p.m. to 5:35 p.m.	11 <sup>th</sup> session
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the day	<i>Sōdar dī Chauṅkī</i>	5:35 p.m. to 6:40 p.m.	12 <sup>th</sup> session. Hymns of the time period are sung followed by <i>reheras</i> prayer
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the night	<i>Sōdar dī Chauṅkī</i>	6:40 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	13 <sup>th</sup> session.
1 <sup>st</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the night	<i>Āratī dī Chauṅkī</i>	7:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.	14 <sup>th</sup> session. Also known as <i>Sukh Āsan Dī Chauṅkī</i> in which evening <i>rāgas</i> are performed concluding with the <i>Kīrtan Sōhila</i> , a praise song that is recited at the closure of the evening service.
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>pahār</i> of the night	<i>Kalyāṅ dī Chauṅkī</i>	9:30 p.m. to 10:30 (end of daily sessions)	15 <sup>th</sup> and final session.
	<i>Kānarā dī Chauṅkī</i>		

Figure 8.3 below shows the *Dārbār Sāhib complex*. 1, 13, 14 and 19 are regular locations where *kīrtan* is held. Each form of *kīrtan* performed at *Dārbār Sāhib* is linked to its own historical, ideological and social space. While these services often interface sonically (one can overhear *rāga*-based *kīrtan* renditions from within the inner sanctum of *Dārbār Sāhib* intermingle with the call and response-style *kīrtan* from the walking processions) and draw from the same textual repertoire of *Gūru Granth Sahib*, they each possess their own unique links with Sikh history, in time and location.

Figure 8.3. Layout of *Dārbār Sāhib*<sup>33</sup>



### Musical Format for a *Kīrtan Chaunkī*

Figure 8.4. Musical format of *kīrtan chaunkī*

(1) *Shān* - an instrumental prelude as a presentation on string instruments with percussion accompaniment of *joṛī*, *pakhawāj* or *tabla*.

(2) *Mangalācharaṇ*: an invocation in which the singer offers a prayer in the form of a *Śalōk* (verse) or short passage from the *Gūru Granth Sāhib* in praise of God or the Gūru. This composition is sung in a slow tempo of either *ektāl* (a 12-beat cycle following *khyāl*-style), *chartāl* (a 12-beat cycle following *dhrupad* style)

(3) *Śabad* in *Dhrupad* style: the singer recites a hymn from the classical *dhrupad* or *khyāl* style entirely based on *rāgā*.

(4) *Śabad rīt*: the singer recites a hymn in a light-classical style of singing still based on *rāgā*.

(5) *Paurī*: the final composition of a *kīrtan chaunkī* related to the folk style of singing *vārs*. The *Paurī* is also sung in a special rhythm cycle of four beats.

<sup>33</sup> www.sikhiwiki.com [accessed January 8, 2009]



### **Part Three: Experiencing a *Kīrtan Chaunkī*: The *Āsā Dī Vār* Service**

The congregation's involvement in a *kīrtan* service is never more evident than in the early morning *Āsā Dī Vār* service, perhaps the most popular service performed in *gūrdwāras* around the world. Broadcasted live from local *gurdwāra*'s loudspeakers every day of the year in the wee hours of the morning, this service, which encourages congregational interaction, provides an ideal musical and liturgical resource for study of a *kīrtan* service, which we now examine here. This sung poetry combines singing, intoning, chanting and purely musical interludes, all woven into a non-stop outpouring of worship music lasting three hours. At *Dārbār Sāhib*, the *Āsā Dī Vār Dī Chaunkī* commences daily at 2:55 a.m. and continues until 6:05 a.m. This three-hour service completely occupies the fourth quarter of the night. The *Āsā Dī Vār* is based the traditional ballad-style poem, *vār*. The *Āsā Dī Vār* consists of 24 sections containing 24 *Paurīs* (stanzas) and forty *Śalōks* (Staves, poems of varying units divided unevenly into 24 units) composed by Gūru Nānak and fourteen *Śalōks* by second Gūru, Gūru Angad Dēv. There are also six *Chhants* (praise songs) comprising four stanzas each, popularly referred to as 24 *Chhakas* (quatrains) composed by Gūru Rām Dās, which were added. Each of these simple praise songs is sung before the set of *Śalōks*.

While each section touches upon several different themes related to the human condition, the central point emphasizes the path of liberation from bondage and preparation to union with the Divine. Pashaura Singh, a renowned scholar of Sikhism, describes *Āsā Dī Vār* as “a prolonged meditation that is deeply concerned with *inter alia*, the nature of divine grace, and the means of achieving awareness of

higher realities through progressively hearing, cognizing, accepting and speaking the True Word.”<sup>34</sup> Along with singing the set poetic collection, the musicians will punctuate the singing with illustrative hymns from the *Gūru Granth Sāhib* and passages from Bhai Gurdās and Bhai Nand Lāl. The sections of the *Āsa Dī Vār* are detailed below. [Figure 8.5]

**Figure 8.5. The sections of the *Āsa Dī Vār* are detailed below:**

**(1) *Chhakkas or Chhants*** – The lyrics are sung in a duet format. Usually in simple 6-beat, *dādra tāl* or 12-beat *ektāl drūt*. Typically sung in unison by *rāgīs*.

**(2) *Śalōk***– These are recited with simple *tabla* accompaniment by one member of the ensemble. The final phrase of the *śalok* is sung by the ensemble which leads the into the next verse form, *paurī*. Sung-recitation by individual *rāgīs*, alternating between *rāgīs*.

**(3) *Paurī***– These stanzas are sung by the *rāgīs* in duet form in *Rāg Āsa* to the folk tune of *Tūnde Āsa Rāj kī dhūnī* at medium speed. The stanza is sung the first time in unison by *rāgīs* and the second time, recited by *tabla* player. At this time, there is no musical accompaniment, thus bringing attention to the message itself.

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<sup>34</sup> Pashaura Singh, *The Guru Granth Sahib, Canon, Meaning and Authority*, 17.

The melodic aspect of this musical liturgy is generally believed to have developed from the folk-based *rāgā, Āsā Dēs*. It is commonly accepted that tune for this raga has been handed down in its original form since the time of Gurū Nānak. The verses of the *Āsā Dī Vār* are sung to the tune (*dhūnī*) of a famous *vār*, folk ballad of *Tūnde Āsaraj* (“maimed king of *Āsā*,” which recounts the valor of a maimed king *Āsā*).<sup>35</sup>

While the entire *Āsa Dī Vār* is assigned in *Rāg Āsā*, it is common to find *rāgī jathās* insert *shabads* in other related *rāgas* (other morning *rāgas* such as *Tōdī, Bhairō, Bhairavī*) along with *Rāg Āsa*.

### **Language of Embodiment used in the *Āsā Dī Vār***

The *Āsa Dī Vār* is a poetic exegesis saturated with the language of embodiment and affective responses. Throughout the entire poem, the devotee is urged to completely embody this experience of the Divine. Below are selected samples of the sung poetry as it unfolds through the first stanza. It commences with a *chhant*, followed by the *mūlmantra* (the statement of faith), musical directions, and concludes with a *Śalōk* and *Paurī*. The first *chhant* provides glimpse into affective power of the lyrics in which the devotee describes an embodied experience of the Divine.

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<sup>35</sup> The author had an opportunity to track down a Rajesthani folk musician in Patiala, Punjab who played this tune on his ravanhatta (bowed folk instrument of Rajesthan), Patiala, 2008.

### Chhant

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ//  
ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੪ ਛੰਤ ਘਰੁ ੪//  
ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮਿੰਤ ਭਿਨੇ ਲੋਇਯਾ ਮਨੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਰਤੰਨਾ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜੇ//  
ਮਨੁ ਰਾਮਿ ਕਸਵਟੀ ਲਾਓਆ ਕੰਚਨੁ ਸੋਵਿਨਾ//  
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰੰਗਿ ਚਲੂਲਿਆ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੋ ਭਿਨਾ//  
ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮੁਸਕਿ ਝਕੋਲਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਜਨਮੁ ਧਨੁ ਧੰਨਾ//ੴ//

*Har amrita bhinnē lōiṇā manu prēm ratannā Rām Rājē.  
Man Rām kasvaṭī lāīā kañchan) soviṇnā.  
Gūrmukh raṅg chalūliā mērā manu tanō bhiṇnā.  
Janu Nānak muski jhakōliā sabhu janamu dhanu dhañnā.*

*(My) eyes are wet with God's Nectar and my mind is dyed with love of  
God, O Supreme King.*

*God has applied his touch-stone (of love) to my mind and it has  
become (most pure and valuable like) the most pure gold.  
I have been dyed by the Gurū, with (ever-lasting Divine) color and my  
mind and body have been drenched in it.*

*The slave (of God), (Gurū) Nānak, has been perfumed with the divine  
musk (of His love) and his birth (life) is (now) supremely blessed.<sup>36</sup>  
from Āsa Dī Vār, Chhant, Guru Rām Dās, Ghar 4. First Chakka*

### Statement of Faith (Mūlmantar)

ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਰਿਭਉ ਨਰਿਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ  
ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ//

*Ik Ōṅkār Sat Nām Kartā Purakh Nirbhau Nirvair Akāl Mūrat Ajūnī  
Saibhaṅg Gur Prasād.*

*God, Who pervades all, is only one. His Name is True (ever-lasting).  
He is the Creator. He is without fear. He is inimical to none. He  
never dies. He is free from births and deaths. He is self-illuminated.  
He is realized by the kindness of the True Gurū.*

<sup>36</sup> *The Sacred Āsa Dī Vār*, ed. Harbans Singh Doabia (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1988), 16.

## Introduction and Musical Direction

ਵਾਰ ਸਲੋਕਾ ਨਾਲਿ, ਸਲੋਕ ਭੀ ਮਹਲੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਕੇ ਲਖਿ ਟੁੰਡ ਓਸ ਰਾਜੈ ਕੀ ਧੁਨੀ

*Āsa Mahalā Paihlā*

*Vār Salōkā nāl Salōk bhī Mahalē Paihlē kē likhē, Tuṅḍē As Rājai kī dhunī.*

*(Divine Hymn of) Gurū Nānak in (Rāgā) Āsā.*

*This Vār (Hymn) is along with Salōk. The Salōks are also of the first Gurū and should be sung to the tune of the ballad of Tuṅḍē Asrāj, the son of the king of Āsā, whose hands were cut off on a false charge and who finally became a king.*

*Śalōk*

**ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਉਹਾੜੀ ਸਦ ਵਾਰ//  
ਜਨਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੋ ਦੋਵਤੋ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨ ਲਾਗੀ ਵਾਰ//੧//**

*Salōk(u) Mahalā Paihlā*

*Balihārī Gur āpnē diohārī sad vār.*

*Jin(i) māṅas tē dēvtē kīē karat na lāgī vār.*

*Salōk of Gurū Nānak*

*I am a sacrifice to my Gurū (not only once but) a hundred times a day,  
Who has made demigods, out of men, without any delay*

*Paurī*

**ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ//  
ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ//  
ਦਾਤਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਤੂੰ ਤੁਸਿ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਸਾਉ//  
ਤੂੰ ਜਾਣੋਈ ਸਾਭਸੈ ਦੇ ਲੈਸਹਿ ਜਿੰਦੁ ਕਵਾਉ//  
ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ//੧//**

*Āpīnai āp(u) sājiō āpīnai rachio Nāō.*

*Duyī kudrat(i) sājīai kar(i) āsaṅ(u) DiTHō chāō.*

*Dātā kartā āp(i) tūṅ tus(i) dēvēh karēh pasāō.*

*Tūṅ jāṅōī sabhsai dē laisēh jid(u) kavāō.*

*Kar(i) āsaN diṭō chāō.*

*God created Himself (in the visible form of creation) and also created the Name (His Supreme Power of creating the entire creation).  
And He Himself created the second thing i.e. Nature (or illusory condition of life) and then seated Himself in it and is seeing the same with delight.  
O God, you (alone) are the Giver and the creator; You bestow (everything) and thus shower Your kindness.  
You are the Knower of all; You give life and take it with one Word.  
(Thus) seated, You see (the creation) with delight.*

The *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chauṅkī* service follows a prescribed sequence of events with much congregational involvement. The *Āsa Dī Vār* ballad is interrupted periodically throughout the service and interwoven with other hymns that are sung, recited, intoned or chanted. [Figure 8.6] Each expressive act, from the introductory lines of the *Āsa Dī Vār* to the concluding *Ardās* are part of a musical and choreographic archive, acting as a vehicle to bring to mind a collective memory, uniting the community to a common past. Through an active process of ongoing signification and phenomenological hermeneutics, the community dismembers and remembers itself. Embedded in the language of the service are an embodied ideology and identity, which support a particular “semiotics of culture.”<sup>37</sup> Anthropologist Paul Connerton, writing on how societies remember, explains that the power of ritualized speech (intoned, rhythmical speech that distances itself from everyday language) creates a place in which community is constituted (and I would add reconstituted).<sup>38</sup>

Investigating the rhetorical and responsorial patterns that surface throughout the entire service provide strong support for a hermeneutics of Sikh music that

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<sup>37</sup> George E. Marcus, "Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, 165-193 (Berkeley: University of California, 1986).

<sup>38</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 66-68.

incorporates an understanding of the essential contribution of each sonic and gestural act as part of the theoretical formula.

**Figure 8.6. Bhai Chanak Singh *Rāgī* Ensemble Performs *Āsā Dī Vār* at Keshgarh Sāhib Gūrdwāra, Anandpur Sāhib.<sup>39</sup>**



### **Liturgical repertoire of the *Āsā Dī Vār dī Chauṅkī***

The entire *chauṅkī* incorporates a variety of liturgical passages from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* along with congregational responses that are sung, lilted, recited, and chanted and enacted through standing, sitting, prostrating, carrying a palanquin, partaking in *prasād* and drinking *amṛta jal* (blessed food and water). Selected hymns such as the *savaiye* by Bhaṭ Bal reinforce and complement themes sung in the *Āsa Dī Vār*. Tables five and six illustrate the organization and distribution of liturgy during

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<sup>39</sup> Photo by author taken at Keshgarh Sāhib Gūrdwāra, Anandpur Sāhib, July 19, 2009

the service.

ਸੋਈ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਲੁ ਭਣਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਕਰਹੁ ॥

“So speaks Bal, the poet: Blessed is Guru Rām Dās; joining the  
Sangat,  
the Congregation, call Him blessed and great.”<sup>40</sup>

Figure 8.7 lists the series of liturgical passages included in the presentation of *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṁkī*. Figure 8.8 provides an analytical division of *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṁkī* into six units.

**Figure 8.7. Liturgy of the *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṁkī***

*Āsa Dī Vār* - Ballad of Hope

Selected hymns – *śabads* that reinforce and complement themes

Selected *mangalācharaṇas* – hymns of invocation

*Hukamnāmā* – Word of the day drawn from the *Guru Granth Sahib*

*Savaiye of Bhaṭṭas* – panegyrics composed by ballad singers

*Anand Sahib* – Verses of Bliss

*Ardās* – Congregational prayer

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<sup>40</sup> *AG*, p. 1405.



ਸੋਈ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਲੁ ਭਣਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਪੰਨਿ ਪੰਨਿ ਕਰਹੁ ॥

“So speaks Bal, the poet: Blessed is Guru Rām Dās; joining the Sangat, the Congregation, call Him blessed and great.”<sup>40</sup>

Figure 8.7 lists the series of liturgical passages included in presentation of *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṁkī*. While Figure 8.8 provides an analytical division of *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṁkī* into six units.

**Figure 8.7. Liturgy of the *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṁkī***

*Āsa Dī Vār* - Ballad of Hope

Selected hymns – *śabads* that reinforce and complement themes

Selected *mangalācharaṇas* – hymns of invocation

*Hukamnāmā* – Word of the day drawn from the *Guru Granth Sahib*

*Savaiye of Bhaṭṭ*– panegyrics composed by ballad singers

*Anand Sahib* – Verses of Bliss

*Ardās* – Congregational prayer

**Figure 8.8. The Organization of *Āsa Dī Vār* into Seven Units**

1. Stanzas 1 – 4  
*Śabad*
2. Stanzas 5 – 8  
*Śabad*
3. Stanzas 9 – 12  
*Śabad*  
Processional of *Gurū Granth Sāhib* into *Dārbār Sāhib*  
*Savaiyes* by *Prēm Singhs*  
*Mangalācharaṇ*  
*Hukamnāma*
4. Stanzas 13 -14  
*Anand Sāhib* and distribution of *Prasād*  
*Ardās*
5. Stanzas 15-16  
*Śabad*
6. Stanzas 17-18  
*Śabad*
7. Stanzas 19-24  
Completion of *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṁkī*

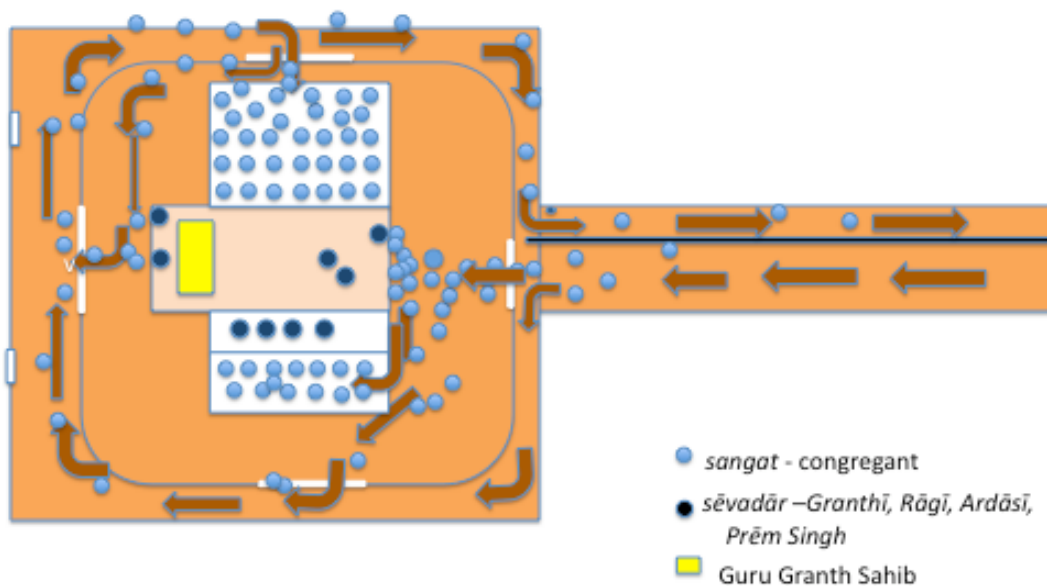
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<sup>40</sup> *AG*, p. 1405.

Throughout the entire three-hour service, there is a general movement of congregants entering the *Gūrdwāra*, prostrating before it and offering money to the *Gurū Granth Sahib*. Following this, they circumambulate around the *Harimandir* (inner sanctum) and either find a seat in the hall (first or second floor) or depart through the same causeway. During the reading of the *Hukamnāmā*, all must be seated while during the *Ardās*, congregants are required to stand with folded hands, facing the Guru Granth Sahib. The flow and organization of participants in the service are illustrated in the figure below. [Figure 8.9] The arrows illustrate the general movement of congregants as they approach and move around the *Gūrdwāra*.

**Figure 8.9. Flow of Congregational Movement at *Dārbār Sāhib***

**Flow of congregational movement at *Darbar Sahib***



The next table, drawn from transcription and analysis of an *Āsa Dī Vār dī chaṅkī* during fieldwork performed at *Dārbār Sāhib*, July 2009, provides a structural transcription of the entire service by hymns, mode of performance and performers. The *kīrtan* recital examined here is presented by Bhai Ōmkar Singh *rāgī jathā*. This presentation of *Āsa Dī Vār*, a typical representation, follows a complex format of steps sonically choreographed. Commencing with a medley of invocational prayers, *mangalācharaṇas* recited by the *rāgī jathā* and followed by a continuous weave of recitation, singing and chanting, the Guru is welcomed and celebrated by the congregation. [Table 8.4]

**Table 8.4. Standard Performance Format of *Āsa Dī Vār dī Chauṅkī* at *Dārbār Sahib*<sup>41</sup>**

Items Presented	Mode	Execution	Composer/ <i>Rāgā</i> / <i>AG</i> page number
1. A medley of invocational prayers “ <i>Mangalācharaṇas</i> ”	Recitation	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	
2. <i>Āsa Dī Vār</i> commences with a celebratory praise announcing the composer and tune in which this <i>vār</i> is to be sung.	Sung recitation	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i> (head <i>rāgī</i> )	M1. <i>Rāgā Āsā</i> , 462 - 475
3. The <i>Āsa Dī Vār</i> commences with the first <i>chhant</i> and continues through the first four sections including <i>Śalōk</i> and <i>Paurī</i> : first through fourth <i>chakka</i>	<i>Chhant</i> – sung <i>Śalōk</i> – sung recitation <i>Paurī</i> – sung (1 <sup>st</sup> time, then recited 2 <sup>nd</sup> time).	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>  <i>Paurī</i> is recited by <i>tabla</i> player	M4, <i>Rāgā Āsā</i> , 448
4. <i>Śabad</i> selection from GGS: “ <i>Prabh tērē Pag ki dhur</i> ”	Sung	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i> ( <i>congregants may join in</i> )	M5, <i>Rāgā Tōḍī</i> , 716
5. <i>Āsa Dī Vār</i> continues: fifth through eighth <i>chakka</i>	Sung and recited	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	
6. <i>Śabad</i> selection from GGS: “ <i>Dhan Dhan karō mila sangata.</i> ”	Sung	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	Bhāt Bal, <i>Savaiye</i> , 1405
7. <i>Āsa Dī Vār</i> continues: ninth through twelfth <i>chakka</i>	Sung and recited	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	
8. The twelfth hymn: “ <i>Prabh mil mai</i> ” is interrupted by the sounding of the <i>Nārasimhā</i> horn,	Blowing of the <i>Nārasimhā</i> horn	Volunteer congregants	M5, <i>Rāgā Malār</i> , 1272

<sup>41</sup> *Āsa Dī Vār*, by Bhai Omkar Singh *jatha*, *Dārbār Sahib*, Amritsar, July 10, 2009.

which announces the arrival of the <i>Gurū Granth Sāhib</i> carried on a palanquin from the <i>Akāl Takhat</i> (administrative office).			
	Standing with folded hands. As <i>GGS</i> passes them, as an act of deference they prostrate, placing their forehead on the ground then return to a standing position.	Everyone	
9. As this processional takes place, the congregation is chanting “ <i>Satanām wāhēgurū</i> ”	Chanting, remain standing	Congregation	
10. The <i>GGS</i> is placed on the <i>pihara sahib</i> (small raised platform), and arranged with a variety of richly-colored <i>rūmālas</i> (scarves), the congregational concludes with the Sikh salutation: “ <i>Wāhēgurūjī kā khalsā, Wāhēgurūjī kī fatēh!</i> ”	Chanting, chanting remain standing	Congregation	
When the <i>GGS</i> has been on the <i>pihara sahib</i> , all congregants take seats once again on the floor.	Seated	Everyone	
11. <i>Savaiye</i> : “ <i>Ji mat gahī jaidēv.</i> ”	Sung recitation produced with long drawn out syllables and short	<i>Head granthī</i>	<i>Bhaṭ Bal Jālap, Savaiye, 1394</i>

	syllables that end in an uprising of the voice		
12. <i>Savaiye</i> (panegyrics) of the <i>Bhāṭs</i> (ballad singers). This morning's selections are dedicated to praises of third Guru Amardās.	Recitation (notice recitation styles)	<i>Prēm Singhs</i> (Beloved brethren)	<i>Savaiyes</i> various <i>Bhāṭs</i> , 1389-1409
13. Eleventh and final <i>savaiye</i> concludes with <i>savaiye</i> : “ <i>ham avaguṇa bharē, ēk guṇa nahīn, amṛta chād ek aradāsa bhāṭ ki rehetā ki, Guru Rāmdās rākho saraṇāyī</i> ” in which the congregation joins in for the recitation	Sung recitation	<i>Prēm Singh</i> and congregation	<i>Bhāṭ Bal, Savaiye</i> , 1406
14. Two <i>Mangalācharaṇs</i> : (1) “ <i>So kahe atal guru seviye ah sahaj subhay</i> ” (2) “ <i>Sadan sachā patsha sir saha de saho</i> ”	Recitation	<i>Head granthī</i> leads the congregation	<i>M5, Śālōk</i> , 1425 <i>M5, Śālōk</i> , 1426.
15. <i>Hukamnāma</i> with the praise: “ <i>Satānām Śrī Wāhē Gurū sahib jī</i> ” <i>Dhanāsarī Mahala Panchavān</i> : <i>Jah, jah pēkō, tah, tah, hazūra....</i> ”	Recitation	<i>Head granthī</i>	<i>M5, Rāgā Dhanāsarī</i> , 677
16. <i>Āsa Dī Vār</i> continues with the 13 <sup>th</sup> <i>chhant</i> : “ <i>Jin mastaka dur har likhiye, sat guru milia raam raje.</i> ”	Sung and recited	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	<i>M4, Rāgā Āsā</i> , 450

17. After the completion of this section, the ensemble sings a <i>śabad</i> : “ <i>Hai hazoora katha dur patharo...Kabira ka swami rahiya suami.</i> ” (mixed <i>Rāgā Bhairavi</i> ). (Bell from the clock tower can be heard sounding 5 o’clock am).	Sung	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	<i>Bhagat Kabīr, Rāgā Bhairō, 1160</i>
18. The 14 <sup>th</sup> <i>chhant</i> is sung by the ensemble	Sung and recited	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	
19. <i>Anand Sahib</i>	<i>dharnā</i>	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i> and congregational response	<i>M3, Rāgā Rāmkalī, 917</i>
20. Following the <i>Anand Sāhib</i> , the congregation rises and stands with hands joined in a prayer position and stands silently as <i>ardāsī</i> (assigned person who, standing directly in front of the Guru Granth Sahib, leads the congregation in the (official prayer and petition <i>ardās</i> ). The <i>ardāsī</i> initiates the <i>ardās</i> with the phrase: “ <i>Bōlō jī wāhē gurū</i> ” (Respond dear congregants: “Wonderful is God”).	Recitation	<i>Ardāsī</i> assigned person who, standing directly in front of the Guru Granth Sahib, leads the congregation in the <i>ardās</i>	
21. <i>Ardās</i> (official prayer and petition)	Recitation Throughout the prayer, congregants are requested to respond. <i>Ardāsī</i> : “ <i>Khalsā jī, bōlō jī</i> ” (holy	<i>Ardāsī / sangat</i>	

	brethren, please repeat) Sangat: “ <i>Wāhē gurū, wāhē gurū, wāhē gurū.</i> ” Wonderful is God, Wonderful is God, Wonderful is God.		
22. The prayer concludes with the Congregational praise: <i>Wāhē Gurū jī kā khalsa, wāhē Gurū jī kī fatēh!</i>	Chanting praise/all sit down following The <i>ardās</i>	Congregation	
During the proceeding period, <i>prasād</i> , (lit. Sanskrit: blessed food, sweet pudding) is distributed to seated congregants	Seated	Congregation	
23. The <i>Āsā Dī Vār</i> continues at the 15 <sup>th</sup> section: “ <i>Tu hare tera sabho ko....</i> ” Section 16 <sup>th</sup> is sung	Sung and recited	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	
24. A <i>śabad</i> from <i>GGS</i>	Sung	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	
25. <i>Āsā Dī Vār</i> section 17 and 18	Sung and recited	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	
26. <i>Śabad</i> : “ <i>Ham mane arabi....</i> ”	Sung	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	<i>M5, Rāgā Gaurī, 247</i>
27. <i>Āsā Dī Vār</i> section 19 to 24	Sung and recited	<i>Rāgī Jatha</i>	



### Annotation of *Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaṅkī*

Thus commences the *Āsā Dī Vār* hymn. The *Rāgī jathā* commences this beautiful rendition of *Āsā Dī Vār* with the celebratory praise: “*Ekōnkār Satgur prasād, Āsā Mahalā Pahlē,*” announcing the composer and tune in which this *vār* is to be sung. The traditional announcement of this *Vār* is sung in a free chanted style in *Rāg Āsā* composed by Gurū Nānak. Following this, the first *Chhant* is sung full-heartedly with *tabla* in *ektāl drūt* (twelve beat cycle). “*Hara amṛta bhinnē lōiṅā man prēm ratanā Rām Rājē.*” (*My eyes are wet with God’s Nectar and my mind is dyed with love of God, O Supreme King*).

After the fourth *chhant* (verse), the *rāgīs* sing a shabad composed by Gurū Arjan in *Rāgā Tōḍī*: “*Prabh tērē pag kī dhūr,*” (O God, I am the dust of Your feet).<sup>12</sup> After this, they return to the *Āsā Dī Vār* and again, after the eighth *chhant*, sing another *shabad*: “*Dhan dhan karō mil sangat dhan dhan karō*” (Joining the congregation, call him blessed and great).<sup>13</sup> Following the twelfth *chhant*, the *rāgī jathā* sings another hymn: “*Prabh milbē kī chā*” (My mind wanders through the dense forest. It walks with eagerness and love, hoping to meet God).<sup>14</sup>

This hymn is interrupted by the sounding of the *Nārasimha*, (a large ceremonial horn), which announces the arrival of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Like a beloved friend, the sacred scripture is welcomed into the inner sanctum of the *Dārbār Sāhib* with pomp and circumstance. The congregational call and response chant: “*Satanām Śrī wāhēgurū sahibjī*” commences and is continued as the *Gurū Granth*

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<sup>12</sup> AG, p. 716.

<sup>13</sup> AG, p. 1405.

<sup>14</sup> AG, p. 272.

*Sāhib* is carried on a small *palkī* (palanquin) by a processional of devotees to the inner sanctum of the *Harimandir*. When it has been placed on the *pihara sahib* (small raised platform), and arranged with a variety of richly colored *rūmālās* (scarves), the congregational concludes with the Sikh salutation: “*Wāhēgurūjī kā khalsā, Wāhēgurūjī kī fatēh!*”<sup>15</sup>

The following section of the *Āsa Dī Var dī Chauṅkī* consists of the recitation of famous *savaiyes* (panegyrics) of the *Bhaṭṭs* (ballad singers) by Prēm Singhs (assigned congregants).<sup>16</sup> The *Bhaṭṭs* (bards) were ballad singers who lived during the time of the early Gurūs, whose job it was to compose ballads and martial songs that weave narrative and descriptive poetry with themes of war and the heroic deeds of their forefathers. In the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* (pp. 1389-1409), these non-*rāgā* poems act as eulogies to the first five Gurūs, expressing profound love and devotional adoration for the singular Divine light that was contained in each Gurū.

This morning’s selections are dedicated to praises of third Gurū Amardās. Eleven *savaiyes* are recited by different Prēm Singhs, concluding with a *savaiye* of *Bhaṭ Bal* in which the congregation joins in for the recitation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Khalsa* belongs to the Lord and the victory belongs to the Lord.

<sup>16</sup> *Prem Singhs* are congregant members who are assigned to sing selected hymns of the *Bhatts*.

<sup>17</sup> *AG*, p. 1406.

ਹਮ ਅਵਗੁਣਿ ਭਰੇ ਏਕੁ ਗੁਣੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਛਾਡਿ ਬਿਖੈ ਬਿਖੁ ਖਾਈ ॥  
 ਮਾਯਾ ਮੋਹ ਭਰਮ ਪੈ ਭੂਲੇ ਸੁਤ ਦਾਰਾ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਲਗਾਈ ॥  
 ਇਕੁ ਉਤਮ ਪੰਥੁ ਸੁਨਿਓ ਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਤਿਹ ਮਿਲੰਤ ਜਮ ਤ੍ਰਾਸ ਮਿਟਾਈ ॥  
 ਇਕ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਭਾਟ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਕੀ ਗੁਰ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਸਰਣਾਈ ॥੪॥੫੮॥

*I am overflowing with sins and demerits; I have no merits or virtues at all. I abandoned the Ambrosial Nectar, and I drank poison instead.*  
*I am attached to Maya, and deluded by doubt; I have fallen in love with my children and spouse.*  
*I have heard that the most exalted Path of all is the Sangat, the Guru's Congregation.*  
*Joining it, the fear of death is taken away.*  
*Kīrat the poet offers this one prayer: O Guru Rām Dās, save me!*  
*Take me into Your Sanctuary! ||4||58||*

At this point, the head *granthī* leads the congregation in series *mangalācharaṇas*, commencing with a *Śalōk* by Gurū Arjan Dēv.<sup>18</sup>

ਸਜਣੁ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਹਾਂ ਦੈ ਸਾਹੁ ॥

*My Friend is the True Supreme King, the King over the heads of kings.*

Following this, the head *Granthī*, Singh Sahib Giani Jasvinder Singh leads the congregation in two invocations, after which he announces the *hukamnāma* with the praise: “*Satānām Śrī Wāhēgurū sāhib jī Dhanasrī Mahala Panchavān: Jeh, jeh pēkhō, teh, teh, hazūra*” (Where ever I look, I see You manifesting there). Following this, the *rāgī* ensemble continues with the *Āsā Dī Vār*, recommencing with the thirteenth *chhant*. After the completion of this section, the ensemble sings a *śabad* by *Bhagat Kabīr*:

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<sup>18</sup> *AG*, p. 1425.

ਸੋ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਜੋ ਮਨ ਸਿਉ ਲਰੈ ॥  
ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਕਾਲ ਸਿਉ ਜੁਰੈ ॥

*He alone is a Mullah, who struggles with his mind,  
and through the Guru's Teachings, fights with death.  
He crushes the pride of the Messenger of Death.*

This is followed by the fourteenth *chhant* after which the *rāgī* ensemble leads the congregation in the *Anand Sāhib*, or Psalm of Bliss, composed by Gurū Amardās in *Rāgā Rāmkalī* in a call and response style accompanied by the *tabla*.<sup>19</sup>

ਅਨੰਦੁ ਭਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥  
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਵਜੀਆ ਵਾਧਾਈਆ

*I am in ecstasy, O my mother, for I have found my True Guru.  
I have found the True Guru with intuitive ease and my mind vibrates in bliss.*<sup>20</sup>

Following the *Anand Sāhib*, the congregation rises and, with hands joined in a prayer position, stands silently as the *ardāsī* (an assigned person who, standing directly in front of the Guru Granth Sahib, leads the congregation in the *ardās* or official prayer and petition). The *ardāsī* initiates the prayer with the phrase: “*Bōlō jī wāhē Gurū*” (Respond dear congregants: “Wonderful is God”). Throughout the prayer, congregants are requested to respond with “*wāhē Gurū*.”

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<sup>19</sup> *AG*, p. 917.

<sup>20</sup> *Anand Sāhib* consists of 40 stanzas. Conventionally a shorter form of this hymn, often referred to as “*Chhōti Ānand Sāhib*” which consists of the first five and final stanzas are sung during the service. The first two lines of the first stanza are presented here to impart the flavor of this hymn.

*Ardāsī*: “*Khalsā jī, bōlō jī*” (Holy brethren, please repeat)

Congregants: “*Wāhē gurū, wāhē gurū, wāhē gurū.*” (Wonderful is God, Wonderful is God, Wonderful is God).

The *ardās*, the formal prayer recited communally at the closure of all Sikh rituals, may be considered the “memory kernel” of Sikh theology and heritage. Derived from the Persian, *Arz-I-Dasht*, “petition,” the *ardās* encapsulates the 400-year history of Sikhism. Commencing with a delineation of its founding fathers, “Gurūs,” this invocation serves as a genealogy of Sikh gurus and martyrs in their struggle for religious identity and freedom. The words, ritually uttered, invoke a common Sikh heritage, acting as a vehicle to bring to mind a collective memory and unite the community to a common past. Reciting the *ardās* becomes a social process in which the community is activated through sound, shared time and shared space. Such performative utterances create a place in which community is daily reconstituted. During the *ardās*, all are required to stand and engage in this shared memory through congregational response.

The *Āsā Dī Vār* continues at the fifteenth stanza and is interrupted two more times during which *śabads* are sung (between the sixteenth and seventeenth stanza, and eighteenth and nineteenth stanza, concluding with twenty-fourth stanza).

### **Contested Melodies and Contested Practices**

The *Āsā Dī Vār* service provides perhaps one of the best examples of the persistence of tradition over time. The fact that this service that had its origins during the time of the second Gurū and is still one of the most popular services in Gūrdwāras throughout India and abroad bears witness to the strength of this worship community.

Throughout the ballad *Rāgīs* sing a variety of hymns that draw from the both the classical and folk music genres.

Many of the hymns are also sung to traditional melodies (*prāchin rīts*), as well as to popular, yet contested melodies of popular Hindi film tunes and love songs. From those who are staunch supporters of a traditionalist approach to *kīrtan* (singing only in the prescribed *rāgās* of the hymns), adoption of popular tunes to which Sikh hymns are sung is entirely inappropriate and a subject of controversy.

During a discussion with a Sikh priest at a *Gūrdwāra* in New Jersey, who prefers to remain anonymous, I was provided with four examples of hymns that borrowed tunes of both popular film and Sufi *ghazals*. Two examples of *Śabads* that borrow from film tunes are *Rākh lēhu ham tē bigarī*<sup>21</sup> (Save me! I have disobeyed You) sung to the popular Hindi filmi tune “*Tu Sajana Barkha Bahār*” and the hymn: “*Kanṭhē mālā jihavā rām*”<sup>22</sup> (The mala is around my neck, and the Lord’s Name is upon my tongue) sung to the filmi tune “*Nazar Ke Sāmne Jigar ke pās*”. The *Śabad* *Āō Jī Tū Āō Hamāra*<sup>23</sup> is sung to the tune of a popular Urdu *ghazal* by Gulam Ali “*Fāslē Aisē Bhī Hōngē*” while “*Har Kīyā Kathā Kahāñiyā Mērē Piyārē*” (The True Guru has preached the sermon of the Lord<sup>24</sup> is set to the Punjabi folk song “*Hō Javē Jē Pyār*” sung by famous Qawali singer Nustrat Fateh Ali Khan.

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<sup>21</sup> *AG*, 856.

<sup>22</sup> *AG*, 479.

<sup>23</sup> *AG*, 1018.

<sup>24</sup> *AG*, 452.

While the singing of *Śabads* to filmi tunes remains a controversial issue, it is, no doubt becoming the most prevalent form of singing hymns. Another issue that is highly controversial is the restriction placed on women's participation in *kīrtan* services at *Dārbār Sāhib*. Generally speaking, women's presence and participation in Sikh services is equivalent to men, and while technically, any baptized Sikh can lead the singing of *kīrtan* or perform the duties of a *Granthī*, women are banned from leading religious services at the Golden Temple. The first demand to allow women to do religious service at the Golden Temple was made in 1940 however, the male-dominated SGPC prevented a resolution from being passed. To the present, this ban has not been lifted. This is an issue that demands investigation and consideration for further study.<sup>25</sup>

This chapter has explored *Śabad kīrtan* as a lived musical experience through the *kīrtan chaunḳī*. I have mapped out the sonic movements of *Āsā Dī Vār* service to show how the Divine Word as *Śabad* is not only embodied through the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, but also encountered through the human enactment of the service, aurally, viscerally and phenomenologically. An understanding of the musical service requires an awareness of the habitus of listening, how the service is sonically choreographed, along with the expected behavior and response of the congregant. Supported by explanatory tables and

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<sup>25</sup> for more on the feminist perspective on Sikhism see Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

diagrams, along with context-rich description, this chapter has attempted to present a hermeneutics of Sikh music, which considers the embodiment of the experience as it unfolds sonically throughout the early morning service.



## CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION: “*Mil Sangat Dhan dhan karahu*”

ਸੋਈ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਬਲੁ ਭਣਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਪੰਨਿ ਪੰਨਿ ਕਰਹੁ ॥  
ਜਿਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਲਗਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਨਰਹੁ ॥੫॥੫੪॥

*sōī rāmadās gur baly bhaṅ mil sangat dhann dhann karahu ||  
jih satigur lag prabh pāīai sō satigur simarahu narahu*

*So speaks BALL the poet: Blessed is Guru Rām Dās; joining the Sangat, the Congregation, call Him blessed and great. Meditate on the True Guru, O men, through Whom the Lord is obtained.*<sup>1</sup>

The above hymn, which is sung during the *Āsā Dī Vār* service, provides a perfect segue into the conclusion of this dissertation. This study has examined the role of *Śabad kīrtan* in the construction of Sikh identity and memory. Through a detailed description of the musical system, I have explored the prescribed musical and textual repertoires and practices and how they are currently being performed at the *Dārbār Sāhib* temple complex in Amritsar, Punjab.

The initial chapters provided necessary historical, theoretical, and theological foundations for Sikh music, focusing on both the development of the Sikh faith and the Sikh doctrine. These were followed by a comprehensive analysis of Sikh music as laid out in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. The two concluding chapters were devoted to an investigation of the process of music making and the *Śabad kīrtan* service.

Guided throughout by a phenomenological approach, I considered the role of time and space, the “how, when and where” of *Śabad kīrtan*, as primary in interpreting how *Śabad kīrtan* infuses communal identity and memory into the participants. From early morning to late evening at *Dārbār Sāhib*, *Śabad kīrtan* provides a sonic weave of phenomenological interaction pulsating throughout the

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<sup>1</sup> *AG*, p. 1405.

hours, days, weeks and months. Through this singing, a historical consciousness always connected to the present moment is continuously brought to mind.

### *Śabad Kīrtan as a Musical Reconstruction of Memory*

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated how hymn-singing services form the magnetic core of Sikh gatherings. As an intimate part of Sikh life from birth to death, *Śabad kīrtan*'s rich kaleidoscope of singing and performance styles act as a musical and cognitive archive infused with communal memories. In exploring the role of *Śabad kīrtan* in the construction of memory, I considered four aspects: (1) the song texts and tunes, (2) *Rāgā* and *Rasa*, (3) *Śabad kīrtan* and embodiment and (4) *Śabad kīrtan* and the congregation, each which I will briefly review now.

#### **Song text and tune**

In Chapter Seven, I examined how the song texts and in some cases tunes themselves encode memories of places, events in Sikh history, and people of the past, acting as a cognitive archive of an inherited memory of group identity. I provided examples of liturgical hymns, which, when they are communally sung, create spaces both imagined and lived. An example is of this is the *Rahirās*, an evening liturgy, in which the collection of hymns, which evolved over the span of two hundred years, alludes to the socio-political conditions of early Sikh faith. The early morning *Āsā Dī Vār* is another musical liturgy full of references to the socio-political situation during the era of Gurū Nānak.

Additionally, the tunes constitute an integral part of Sikh historical memory. For example, many of the Sikh lifecycle hymns for birth, marriage and death draw on

simple folk melodies. Additionally, the Gurūs employ contrafactum (the phenomena of borrowing pre-existent melodies and adding an new text) in many hymns, with directives to these tunes in the hymn titles themselves. This is evident in the folk tunes, or “*dhunīs*,” that are prescribed for the *Vārs*, such as the folk tune, “*Ṭundē Asa Rāj Kī Dhunī*” used in the morning *Āsā Dī Vār* service.

### ***Rāgā and Rasa***

Exploring *Śabad kirtan* through the lens of phenomenology, I have suggested the relevance of a wider vision towards the study of *Śabad kīrtan*, which takes into account both the musical and extra-musical features of *Śabad kīrtan* as powerful stimulators of collective, personal and transcendental memory. I considered how the treatment of *Rāgās* in Sikh music promoted remembrance and explored how the act of singing in prescribed *rāgās* evoked sounds of the past.

Assigned to all hymns, including liturgical hymns for births, weddings, and death, *rāgās* were perceived as a melodic imprint imbued with a *rasa* (aesthetic sentiment), which could capture the heart and mind of the listener. Liturgical hymns in *Rāgā Wadhans* are associated with engagement and death, while hymns in *Rāgā Sūhī* appeal to the joy of union such as in the wedding ceremony, and hymns in *Rāgā Rāmkalī* are associated with introspection. Additionally, seasonal hymns in *rāgās* such as *Basant* and *Malhār* imbue the splendors of the seasons and temporal spaces with transcendental meanings.

The aesthetic power of music on emotion is continuously referred to throughout the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. Hymns urge the devotee to imbibe the elixir of

Divine ecstasy “*har ras*” or become saturated with the Divine nectar “*amṛta ras*.” Through the *rāgā*, *rasa* (aesthetic emotion) is encoded into the hymn, producing not only an emotional series but igniting a multiplicity of emotional memories. For example, hymns such as the *Śabad Hazārē* by Gurū Arjan (a hymn he wrote when he was separated from his father, Gurū Rām Dās for a long period of time) or those composed by Tegh Bahadur (who was imprisoned and ultimately beheaded for protecting the religious rights of Hindus), are known to induce the emotion of *bairāg ras* (longing and separation). On the other hand, hymns by Gurū Gōbind Singh are associated with a martial spirit of strength and might and promote *vīr rasa*. Additionally, the *Vārs* sung by the *Ḍāḍhīs* also instill bravery and heroism (both considered producing *vīr rasa*). Thus, the singing of hymns in the prescribed *rāgās* can evoke a flood of emotional memories.

### ***Śabad kīrtan* and embodiment**

I have also considered *Śabad kīrtan* as a complex symbolic sound system imparted with many levels of signification, guided by a set of trained behaviors, which I have referred to as a “habitus of listening.” Key musical and liturgical phrases set up a trajectory of spaces, both imagined and remembered. *Śabad kīrtan* also incorporates a scripted liturgy that, in performance, infuses the congregation with a series of emotions, thoughts and anticipated responses, which Becker refers to as “an historically enacted ontology” of sound and meaning.<sup>6</sup>

I examined this space through an exploration of the *Āsā Dī Vār dī Chauṅkī*, which, by encouraging congregational interaction, provided an ideal musical and

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<sup>6</sup> Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners*, 127.

liturgical resource for the study of a *kīrtan* service. This sung poetry combines singing, intoning, chanting and purely musical interludes, all woven into a non-stop outpouring of worship music lasting three hours. A transcript of the service reveals how the *śabad kīrtan* experience is embodied through group participation.

### ***Śabad kīrtan* and the congregation**

The practice of commemorating events in Sikh history through song has played a vital role in perpetuating Sikh identity and inherited memory. It is through congregational involvement with *Śabad kīrtan* that the individual remembers himself. By inducing this process of remembering, these events draw together community members into a ritual body, thus asserting a communal identity, a “*communitas*” of values that are reaffirmed and reinforced.<sup>7</sup> By participating and documenting over fifty such events, I was able witness and assess the degree that congregation played in the event. Shelemay suggests, “ethnographic observations of performances can provide insights into the social and cultural factors that shape our psychology of remembering.”<sup>8</sup>

G.S. Mansukhani explains how the impact of congregational singing of *shabad kīrtan* can free one from the autobiographical self (the self of the ego and duality):

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<sup>7</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96.

<sup>8</sup> Shelemay, *Song and Remembrance Amongst Syrian Jews*, 8.

(G)roup singing helps the devotee to purge himself of his caste-consciousness or professional status and thus deflates his ego...[this] gradually strengthens the personal relationships between the members of the *sangat* and God.”<sup>9</sup>

From *Rāgā*-based *kīrtan*, sung by trained *rāgīs* adhering to the classical musical prescription of the Gurūs, to *Vārs* (folk melodies) sung by *Dādhīs* (ballad singers), to the congregational call and response style of singing, the multifarious renditions of *kīrtan* at the *Dārbār Sāhib* stand witness to the persistence over time of the *Śabad kīrtan* experience.

### *Music of Transcendent Memory*

The practice that reunites Sikh identity is *nām simran* (literally: remembering the Divine Name). This is a meditation practice in which sacred words or syllables are repeated mentally or verbally in order to invoke memory beyond discursive memory. Prescribed by Gurū Nānak and his early successors, *nām simran* is a practice built into the definition of Sikhism. W.H. McLeod, authority on Sikhism maps out the fundamental beliefs and practices of all Sikhs remarking that *nām simran*, doctrine of the divine Name, is an essential feature found in all varieties of Sikhism.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, I am reminded of an unforgettable encounter I had with an elderly Sikh gentleman during a three day festival of *Gurmat Sangīt* at Jawaddi Taksal in December 2006. This elderly person earnestly approached me at the close of the evening concerts, stating that the Gurū had sent him to relate an important

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<sup>9</sup> G.S. Mansukhani, *Indian Classical Music and Sikh Kīrtan*, 132.

<sup>10</sup> W.H. McLeod, "Who is a Sikh?," in *Sikhs and Sikhism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 99.

message to me. Eager to hear this message from God, I listened attentively as he explained that the Gurū informed him that my real research was not on studying *Śabad kīrtan*, but on studying the *Śabad* itself, the Name of God, the Primordial vibration. His message was thought provoking, urging me to a deeper level of introspection, to consider the source of sound itself. This type of contemplation, *nām simran*, moves one beyond an imagistic, narrative identity to a pre-narrative, transcendental memory. Here, memory does not link itself to a place or time; there are no actors; there is no stage. Perhaps this can be the only true, absolute memory for Sikhs.

#### *The Importance of this Study*

Over the past ten years, a growing interest and awareness of Sikh music has flourished amongst the Sikh community globally. This enthusiasm however, has been predominantly limited to the Sikh community at large with western scholarship primarily focused on the sociological, political and theological issues of Sikhism.

While my initial interest in Sikh music was geared towards examining this musical system and the influences of popular culture and mass media on this religious singing tradition, as I attended more and more *Śabad kīrtan* gatherings, it became apparent that congregational involvement played a dynamic and inseparable role in the maintaining the Sikh musical experience. Thus, an examination of the social interaction around the *kīrtan* event would become an essential consideration of the overall analysis of this music.

This study is of significance to the field of ethnomusicology in several ways. First and foremost, to those who are unfamiliar with this music, this study provides

both a socio-historical and musical analysis of Sikh music. This study also provides access to the immense musical wealth within the *Śabad kīrtan* repertoire as a virtual archive of Sikh history and memory. This study will add to a growing body of work on the connection between music and multiple layers of memory (*heterotopia*) that are activated through sound. It will additionally contribute to the development of a critical theory of music making and experience as a phenomenological process, intimately linked to a time/space continuum. It will also support an understanding of the critical role of affect in music listening and of how deep listening leads to a place where semiotic meanings of identity are developed, realized and contested.

Additionally, this study offers an introduction to a hymnody of Sikh music including a standard repertoire and classification of songs, themes and services. I hope this study will act as a springboard for future research in Sikh music, especially considerations of the diverse ways it is experienced in congregational settings and of how song is tied to memory and imagination. A more thorough and comprehensive study of *kīrtan chaṅkī* services and stylistic variations would yield not only greater awareness of this dynamic singing congregation, but help to explain how and why it has been maintained over time.

For the majority of the Sikh population, including many non-Sikhs who attend *Gūrdwāras*, the 400-year-old tradition of *Śabad kīrtan* continues to provide a space for reflection on cultural memories and identities, and spiritual transcendence. The music contributes to both an act of remembrance, bringing to mind events and people from history and a reminder of one's spiritual responsibility, along with a non-discursive, supra-cognitive level of remembrance in which one achieves a state of



rapture. Serious study of this tradition as a place of remembrance and construction of identity is long overdue. I conclude this dissertation with a hymn by Gurū Rām Das, which celebrates a state of elevated consciousness through *Rāgā Bilāwal*.

ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲਾ ੪

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਃ ੪ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਉਤਮੁ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਗਾਵਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਦੁ ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਰਾਗੁ ॥  
ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਣਿ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਧਰਿ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਪੂਰਾ ਭਾਗੁ ॥  
ਸਭ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਰੈਣਿ ਗੁਣ ਉਚਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਉਰਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗੁ ॥  
ਸਭੁ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਮਨੁ ਖਿੜਿਆ ਹਰਿਆ ਬਾਗੁ ॥  
ਅਗਿਆਨੁ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਮਿਟਿ ਗਇਆ ਗੁਰ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਚਰਾਗੁ ॥  
ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜੀਵੈ ਦੇਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਇਕ ਨਿਮਖ ਘੜੀ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਗੁ ॥੧॥

*bilāval kī vār mehalā 4*

*ik oa(n)kār satigur prasād ||salōk mahala 4 ||*  
*har outam har prabh gāviā kar nād bilāval rāg ||*  
*oupadēs gurū sun maṇiā dhur masatak pūrā bhāg ||*  
*sabh dinas rainḡ guṇ oucharai har har har our liv lāg ||*  
*sabh tan man hariā hōeiā man khiṛiā hariābāg ||*  
*agiān andhērā miṭṭ gaeiāgur chānaṇ giān charāg ||*  
*jan nānak jīvai dēkh har eik nimakh gharī mukh lāg ||1||*

*Vār of Bilāwal, Fourth Mehla:*

*One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru:Salok, Fourth Mehla:  
I sing of the sublime Lord, the Lord God, in the melody of Rāgā Bilāwal.  
Hearing the Guru's Teachings, I obey them; this is the pre-ordained destiny written  
upon my forehead.  
All day and night, I chant the Glorious Praises of the Lord, Har, Har, Har; within my  
heart, I am lovingly attuned to Him.  
My body and mind are totally rejuvenated, and the garden of my mind has blossomed  
forth in lush abundance.  
The darkness of ignorance has been dispelled, with the light of the lamp of the Guru's  
wisdom. Servant Nanak lives by beholding the Lord.*

*Let me behold Your face, for a moment, even an instant! ||1||<sup>11</sup>*

<sup>11</sup> AG, p. 849.

## Appendix A: The Sikh Calendar

### SIKH CALENDAR

The Sikh Calendar draws from both the Gregorian calendar and the Hindu lunar calendar. This calendar known as the *Nānakshāhi* calendar marks the important festival days associated with Sikh history, especially *Gurpūrbs* (festivals marking events in the lives of the Gurūs). The Sikh calendar is composed of twelve months as follows:

#### Months

##### **Sikh month**    **Begins**

<i>Chēt</i>	March 14
<i>Vaisakh</i>	April 14
<i>Jēth</i>	May 15
<i>Harh</i>	June 15
<i>Sāwan</i>	July 16
<i>Bhadon</i>	August 16
<i>Asu</i>	September 15
<i>Katik</i>	October 15
<i>Maghar</i>	November 14
<i>Pōh</i>	December 14
<i>Māgh</i>	January 13
<i>Phāgan</i>	February 12

#### Principal Events

<i>Nānakshāhi</i> Date	Gregorian Date	Event
<i>Chēt</i> 1	March 14	Accession of Gurū Har Rai and <i>Nānakshāhi</i> New Years Day
<i>Chēt</i> 6	March 19	Gurū Hargōbind's demise
<i>Vaisakh</i> 3	April 16	Gurū Angad's demise Accession of Gurū Amar Dās Gurū Harkrishan's demise Accession of Gurū Tēgh Bahādur

<i>Vaisakh</i> 5	April 18	Birth of Gurū Angad Birth of Gurū Tēgh Bahādar
<i>Vaisakh</i> 19	May 2	Birth of Gurū Arjan
<b>Nānakshāhi Date</b>	<b>Gregorian Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<i>Jēth</i> 9	May 23	Birth of Gurū Amar Dās
<i>Jēth</i> 28	June 11	Accession Gurū Hargobind
<i>Harh</i> 2	June 16	Martyrdom of Gurū Arjan
<i>Harh</i> 21	July 5	Birth of Gurū Hargōbind
<i>Sāwan</i> 8	July 23	Birth of Gurū Harkrishan
<i>Bhadon</i> 17	September 1	Installation of <i>Gurū Granth Sāhib</i> in the Golden Temple by Gurū Arjan
<i>Asu</i> 2	September 16	Gurū Amar Dās's demise Accession of Gurū Rām Dās Gurū Rām Dās demise Accession of Gurū Arjan
<i>Asu</i> 4	September 18	Accession of Gurū Angad
<i>Asu</i> 8	September 22	Gurū Nānak Dēv's demise
<i>Asu</i> 25	October 9	Birth of Gurū Rām Dās
<i>Katik</i> 6	October 20	Installation of <i>Gurū Granth Sāhib</i> as Eternal Gurū at Hazoor Sahib
<i>Katik</i> 7 Nanded	October 21	Demise of Gurū Gōbind Singh at
<i>Maghar</i> 11	November 24	Martyrdom of Gurū Tēgh Bahādar, who Was beheaded in Delhi Accession of Gurū Gōbind Singh
<i>Pōh</i> 23	January 5	Birth of Gurū Gōbind Singh.
<i>Māgh</i> 19	January 31	Birth of Gurū Har Rāi
<i>Vaisakh</i> 1	April 14	The creation of the <i>Khalsa</i> (Sikh order)
<i>Pōh</i> 8	December 21	Martyrdom of Gurū Gōbind Singh's elder Sons, Ajīt and Jūjha
<i>Pōh</i> 13	December 26	Martyrdom of Gurū Gōbind Singh's Two younger sons.

## Sikh Events by Guru

<b>Gurū</b>	<b>Birthday</b> <i>Nānakshāhi</i> Gregorian	<b>Gurūship</b>	<b>Death</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Gurū Nānak	<i>Katik Pūranmashi</i>	from birth	<i>Asū</i> 8 Sept. 22
2 <sup>nd</sup> Gurū Angad	<i>Vaisakh</i> 5 April 18	<i>Asū</i> 4 Sept. 18	<i>Vaisakh</i> 3 April 16
3 <sup>rd</sup> Gurū Amar Dās	<i>Jēth</i> 9 May 23	<i>Vaisakh</i> 3 April 16	<i>Asū</i> 2 Sept. 16
4 <sup>th</sup> Gurū Rām Dās	<i>Asū</i> 25 October 9	<i>Asū</i> 2 Sept. 16	<i>Asū</i> 2 June 16
5 <sup>th</sup> Gurū Arjan	<i>Vaisakh</i> 19 May 2	<i>Asū</i> 2 Sept. 16	<i>Jēth</i> 2 June 16
6 <sup>th</sup> Gurū Hargōbind	<i>Harh</i> 21 July 5	<i>Jēth</i> 28 June 11	<i>Harh</i> 6 March 19
7 <sup>th</sup> Gurū Har Rai	<i>Māgh</i> 19 January 31	<i>Chēt</i> 1 March 14	<i>Katik</i> 6 October 20
8 <sup>th</sup> Gurū Harkrishan	<i>Sāwan</i> 8 July 23	<i>Katik</i> 6 October 20	<i>Vaisakh</i> 3 April 16
9 <sup>th</sup> Gurū Tēgh Bahādar	<i>Vaisakh</i> 5 January 5	<i>Vaisakh</i> 3 November 24	<i>Maghar</i> 11 October 11
10 <sup>th</sup> Gurū Gōbind Singh	<i>Pōh</i> 23 January 5	<i>Maghar</i> 11 November 24	<i>Katik</i> 7 October 21

## Appendix B: Transcriptions of 62 *Rāgās*

### TRANSCRIPTIONS OF ASCENDING/DESCENDING NOTES AND MELODIC MOVEMENT OF 62 *RĀGĀS*

Note: The following transcriptions provide an outline of the ascending and descending notes followed by the “*Mukh Ang*” (lit. key musical phrases). Breath is indicated by apostrophe. All transcriptions are based on the *rāgā* outlines in *Sikh Musicology* of Dr. Gurnam Singh.<sup>21</sup>

1.

Rag Shri



6 Mukh Ang



2.

Raga Majh



Mukh Ang



3.

Rag Gauri



7

Mukh Ang



<sup>21</sup> Dr. Gurnam Singh, *Sikh Musicology*, 29-278.

4.

Rag Gauri Guareri



Mukh Ang



5.

Rag Gauri Dakhani



Mukh Ang



6.

Rag Gauri Cheti



Mukh Ang



7.

Raga Gauri Bairagani



Mukh Ang





11.

Rag Gauri Malva



Mukh Ang



12.

Raga Gauri Mala

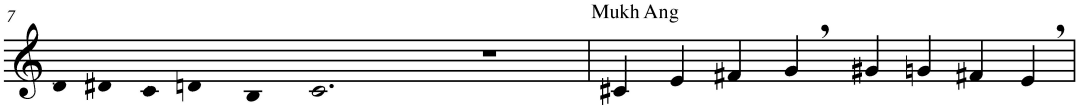


Mukh Ang



13.

Rag Gauri Majh





14

Raga Majh



Mukh Ang



15.

Raga Aasa



Mukh Ang



16.

Raga Asawari



Mukh Ang



17.

Raga Asavari Sudhang



Mukh Ang



18.

Rag Aasaa Kafi



Mukh Ang



19.

Raga Gujari



Mukh Ang



20.

Rag Devagandhari



Mukh Ang



21.

Rag Devagandhar



6

Mukh Ang



12



22.

Raga Bhihaagra



Mukh Ang



23.

Raga Wadhans



Mukh Ang



24.

Rag Vadhnas Dakhani



Mukh Ang



25.

Raga Sorath



Mukh Ang



26.

Raga Dhaneshri



Mukh Ang



27.

Raga Jaitsri



Mukh Ang



28.

Raga Todi

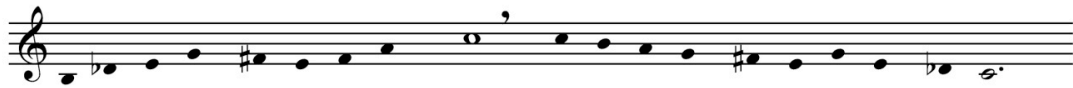


Mukh Ang



29.

Raga Bairari



Mukh Ang

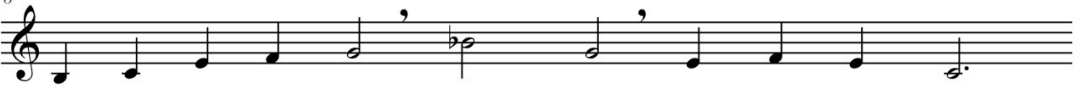


30.

Raga Tilang



Mukh Ang



31.

Rag Tilang Kafi



Mukh Ang



32.

Raga Suhi



Mukh Ang



33.

Rag Suhi Kafi



Mukh Ang



34.

Rag Suhi Lalit



Mukh Ang



35.

Raga Bilaval



Mukh Ang



36.

Rag Bilaval Dakhani



Mukh Ang



37.

Raga Bilaval Mangal



Mukh Ang



38.

Raga Gond



Mukh Ang



39.

Rag Bilaval Gond



Mukh Ang



40.

Raga Ramkali



Mukh Ang



41.

Rag Ramkali Dakhani



Mukh Ang



42.

Raga NaT Naraayan



43.

Raga NaT



44.

Raga MaaligauRa





45.

Raga Maru



Mukh Ang



46.

Rag Maru Kafi



47.

Rag Maru Dakhani



Mukh Ang



48.

Raga Tukhaari



Mukh Ang



49.

Raga Kedara



50.

Raga Bhairo



Mukh Ang



51.

Raga Basant



Mukh Ang



52.

Rag Basant Hindol



Mukh Ang



53.

Raga Saarang



Mukh Ang

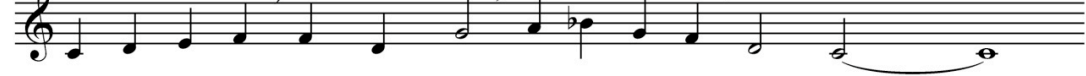


54.

Raga Malaar



Mukh Ang



55.

Raga KanRa



Mukh Ang



56.

Rag Kalyaan



Mukh Ang



57.

Raga Kalyan Bhopali



Mukh Ang



58.

Rag Prabhati



Mukh Ang



59.

Raga Prabhaati Bibhaas



Mukh Ang



60.

Rag Bibhaas Prabhaati



Mukh Ang



61.

Raga Prabhaati Dakhani



Mukh Ang



62.

Rag Jaijavanti



Mukh Ang



## Appendix C: Popular *Tālās*

### Popular *Tālās* used in *Śabad Kīrtan*

***Paṛī tāla***: 4-beat cycle

Beats	1	2	3	4
Rhythmical syllables in <i>Gurmukhī</i>	ਗੇ	ਤਿਟ	ਤਾ	ਗੇਤਾ
Rhythmical syllables	gē	tiTa	tā	gētā
clapping	X			

***Dādrā tāl***: 6-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6
ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ	ਧਾ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਾ
dhā	dhin	dhā	Dhā	tin	tā
X	0				

***Rūpak tāl***: 7-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਨਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਨਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਨਾ
Tin	tin	nā	dhin	nā	dhin	nā
0	2		2		3	

***Kehravā tāl***: 8-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ਧਾ	ਗੇ	ਨਾ	ਤਿ	ਨਾ	ਗੇ	ਧਿੰ	ਨਾ
dhā	gē	nā	ti	Nā	gē	dhin	Nā
X	0			0			

***Jhaptāl***: 10-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ਧਿੰ	ਨਾ	ਧਿੰ	ਧਿੰ	ਨਾ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਨਾ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਨਾ
dhin	nā	dhin	dhin	nā	tin	nā	tin	tin	nā
X	2		2			0		3	

***Ēktāl:*** 12-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ਧੀਂ ਧੀਂ	ਧਾਗੇ ਤਿਰਕਿਟ	ਤੂ ਨਾ	ਕਤ ਤਾ	ਧਾਗੇ ਤਿਰਕਿਟ	ਧਿੰ ਨਾ						
Dhin dhin	Dhāgē tirakita	Tū nā	Kat tā	Dhāgē tirakita	Dhin nā						
X	O	2	O	3	4						

***Chartāl:*** 12-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ਧਾ ਧਾ	ਧਿੰ ਤਾ	ਕਿਟ ਤਾ	ਧਿੰ ਤਾ	ਤਿਟ ਕਤਾ	ਗਦੀ ਗਨ						
Dhā Dhā	Dhin tā	Kiṭa tā	Dhin tā	Tiṭa katā	Gadī gāna						
X	0	2	0	3	4						

***Dīpchandī:*** 14-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
ਧਾ ਧਿੰ -	ਧਾ ਗੇ ਤਿੰਨ -	ਤਾ ਤਿੰਨ -	ਧਾ ਗੇ ਧਿੰ -										
Dha dhin -	Dha ge tin -	Ta tin -	Dha ge tin -										
X	2	0	3										

***Panjtāl:*** 15-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
ਧਿੰ -ਤਾ -ਕ	ਧਿੰ ਧਿੰ ਧਾ ਧਾ	ਤਿ ਟ ਧਿੰ ਧਿੰ	ਧਾ ਧਾਗੇ	ਨਧਾ ਤਰਕਿਟ										
Dhin-ta -ka	Dhin dhin dha	tin ṭa dhin dhin	Dha dhage	Nadhatirakiṭa										
X	2	3	4	5										

***Tīntāl:*** 16-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
ਧਾ ਧਿੰ ਧਿੰ ਧਾ	ਧਾ ਧਿੰ ਧਿੰ ਧਾ	ਤਾ ਤਿੰਨ ਤਿੰਨ ਤਾ	ਧਾ ਧਿੰ ਧਿੰ ਧਾ												
Dha dhin dhin dha	Dha dhin dhin dha	Ta tin tin ta	Dha dhin dhin dha												
X	2	0	3												
Sum	Thali	Khali	Thali												

**Bīrtāl:** 20-beat cycle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
ਧਿੰ	ਤਰਕਿਟ	ਧਿੰ	ਨਾ	ਧਿੰ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ	ਧਿੰ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਤਰਕਿਟ	ਤਿੰਨ	ਨਾ	ਤੰਨ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ	ਧਿੰ	-ਤਾ	-ਕ
dhin	tirakita	dhin	nā	Dhin	-Ta	-Ka	dhin	-Ta	-Ka	tin	tirakita	tin	nā	Tin	-Ta	-Ka	Dhin	-Ta	-Ka
<b>X</b>				<b>2</b>			<b>3</b>			<b>0</b>				<b>4</b>			<b>0</b>		



## Appendix D: *Śabad* in Indian notation

Hymn in *Rāgā Śrī* in Indian notation system

In sixteen-beat cycle (*tīntal*)

“*Hara bina Jīu Jala Bala Jau*”<sup>22</sup>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	<b>Rahāō (Refrain)</b>															
	SaRe - - GaRe				SaRe NiSa Pa Pa				Ma Dha Ma Ma				Ga Re - Sa			
	Jā - - u				Ha r- bi na				Jī - u Ja				La ba - la			
<b>X</b>	2				0				3							
	SaRe - - GaRe				- - - -				Sa N Dha Pa				Ma Pa Ni Sa			
	Jā - - u				- - - -				Mai - ā pa				nā - Gu ru			
	- Sa - Ni				Re Re Sa -				- Sa Pa Pa				Ma Dha Ma Ga			
	- Pū - chh				dē khē ā -				- a va ra				nā - hī -			
	GaRe - SaRe -															
	Thā - u -															
	<b>Antarā (Verse)</b>															
	- Sa - Ni				Re - Sa -				- Ma Ma Pa Pa				Ni - Sa Sa			
	- ū - sa				reh - - -				- Mō tī ta				Man - da ra			
	- Re Ga Re				Ni - Re Sa				- MaMa Pa Pa				Ni - Sa -			
	- ja ra -				ō - - -				- kasa tū r				Kun - gū -			
	- Sa Sa Ni				Re - Sa Sa				- Re - Re				ReNi - NiRe -			
	- a ga ra				Chan - da na				- lī - p				Ā - vai -			
	- Re Ga Re				Ni - Re Sa				Sa Ni Dha Pa				Pa - Ma Ga			
	- Chā - -				ō - - -				Ma t dē kha				Bhū - lā -			
	- Re Ga Re				Sa - - -				SaSa Pa Pa Pa				Ma Dha Ma Ga			
	wī - - sa				Rai - - -				Tēra chi ta nā				ā - vai -			
	GaRe - - SaRe															
	Nā - - ō															

<sup>22</sup> Gurnam Singh, *A Musicological Study of Guru Nanak Bani* (New Delhi: Manjit Singh, 1999), 27-28.

## Appendix E: Format of *Chaṅkīs*

Typical format of services including recommended *Śabads* and *rāgās*<sup>23</sup>

### 1. *Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaṅkī*

Item presented	<i>Śabad</i>	Execution	<i>Rāgā/author</i>	Page in <i>AG</i>
<i>Shān</i>	Rāgā Āsā			
<i>Mangalācharaṇ</i>	“ <i>Dandot banda anik bār</i> ”	<i>Instrumental prelude</i>	<i>Gaurī, M5</i>	256
<i>Shabad-dhrupad ang</i>	“ <i>Rāmīyā hō bārik tērā</i> ”	sung	<i>Āsā, Bhagat Kabīr</i>	478
<i>Chhant</i>	“ <i>Hari amrita bhinnē lōenā</i> ”	sung	<i>Āsā, M4</i>	448
<i>Śalōk</i>	“ <i>Ēkōngkār, satinām kartā purakh... </i> ”.	Tonal recitation	<i>Āsā,</i>	211
<i>Paurī</i>	“ <i>Āpīnai āp sājio</i> ”	Sung/recited rhythmically	<i>Āsā, M1</i>	212
<i>Śabad - rīt</i>	“ <i>Sēvak kō nikaTī hōyi Dikhāvē</i> ”	Sung	<i>Āsā, M5</i>	403

*Recommended Rāgās: Āsā, Gaurī Dakhani, Gaurī Bairagani, Rāmkalī, Mārū Dakhani, Prabhātī Dakhani, Bhairō, Basant Hiṇḍōl, Prabhātī, Prabhātī Bibhas, Bibhas Prabhātī, Prabhātī Dakhani.*

### 2. *Bilāwal dī Chaṅkī* (first session)

Item presented	<i>Śabad</i>	Execution	<i>Rāgā/author</i>	Page in <i>AG</i>
<i>Shān</i>		<i>Instrumental prelude</i>	<i>Bilāwal</i>	
<i>Mangalācharan</i>	“ <i>Dandot banda anik bār</i> ”	<i>Instrumental prelude</i>	<i>Gaurī, M5</i>	256
<i>Shabad- dhrupad ang</i>	“ <i>Aisī prīti karō man mērē</i> ”	Sung	<i>Bilāwal, M5</i>	807
<i>Shabad</i>	“ <i>Sānta pāyī gur satigur pūrē</i> ”	Sung	<i>Bilāwal, M5</i>	806
<i>Paurī</i>	“ <i>Hū hari prabh āp agam</i> ”	Sung/recited rhythmically	<i>Bilāwal, M3</i>	849

*Recommended Rāgās: Āsāwarī, Gūjarī, Dēvgandārī, Dēvgandār, Waḍhans, Tōḍī, Sūhī, Sūhī Kafī, Sūhī Lalit, Gōṇḍ, Bilāwal Gōṇḍ, Basant, Bilāwal,*

<sup>23</sup> Varindar Kaur Padam, *Gurmat Sangit Da Sangit Vigian* (Patiala: Amarjit Sahib Prakashan, 2005), 87-89.

3. *Bilāwal dī Chaṅkī* (second session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
<i>Shān</i>		Instrumental prelude	<i>Bilāwal</i>	
<i>Mangalācharaṇ</i>	“ <i>Danḍōt banda anik bār</i> ”	<i>Sung recitation</i>	<i>Gaurī</i> , M5	256
<i>Partāl</i>	“ <i>Bōlahu bheīyā rām nām</i> ”	Sung	<i>Bilāwal</i> , M4	800
Śabad	“ <i>Jīvahu nām sunī</i> ”	Sung	<i>Bilāwal</i> , M5	829
<i>Paurī</i>	“ <i>Hū hari prabh āp agam</i> ”	Sung/recited rhythmically	<i>Bilāwal</i> , M3	849

4. *Bilāwal dī Chaṅkī* (third session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
<i>Shān</i>		Instrumental prelude	<i>Bilāwal</i>	
<i>Mangalācharaṇ</i>	“ <i>Danḍot banda anik bār</i> ”	<i>Sung recitation</i>	<i>Gaurī</i> , M5	256
<i>Dhamar</i>	“ <i>Hamārai ēkai harī harī</i> ”	Sung	<i>Tōḍī</i> , M5	715
Śabad – rit	“ <i>Rūṛō man hari rangō lōrai</i> ”	Sung	<i>Tōḍī</i> , M5	715
<i>Paurī</i>	“ <i>Āpanā āpo pāyiyon</i> ”	Sung/recited rhythmically	<i>Gūjarī</i> ,	971

5. *Bilāwal dī Chaṅkī* (fourth session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
<i>Shān</i>		Instrumental prelude	<i>Wadhans</i>	
<i>Mangalācharaṇ Sloka</i>	“ <i>Phirata phirata prabh</i> ”	<i>Sung recitation</i>	<i>Gaurī</i> , M5	289
<i>Partāl/dhrupad</i>	“ <i>Suhāvī Kaun Suvēlā</i> ”	Sung	<i>Wadhans</i> , M5, ghar 1	562
Śabad	“ <i>Hari kō nām sadā sukhadāyī</i> ”	Sung	<i>Mārū</i> , M9	1008
<i>Paurī</i>	“ <i>Āpē kari kari vēkhadā āpē</i> ”	Sung/recited rhythmically		

6. Anand dī Chauṅkī

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
Shān		Instrumental prelude	Wadhans	
Mangalācharaṇ Sloka	“Phirata phirata prabh”	Sung recitation	Gaurī, M5	289
Partāl/dhrupad	“Suhāvī Kaun Suvēlā”	Sung	Wadhans, M5, ghar 1	562
Śabad	“Hari kō nām sadā sukhadāyī”	Sung	Mārū, M9	1008
Paurī	“Āpē kari kari vēkhadā āpē”	Sung/recited rhythmically		

Recommended Rāgās: Waḍhans Dakhaṇī, Dhanāsari, Tilang, Bilāwal Dakhaṇī, Mārū, Sārang,

7. Charan Kamal dī Chauṅkī (first session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
Shān		Instrumental prelude	Tilang	
Mangalācharaṇ	“Danḍōt banda anik bār”	Sung recitation	Gaurī, M5	256
Dhrupad	“Mai har har nām sōī”	Sung	Sūhī, M4	735
Śabad rīt	“Gur sajaN mērā mēli harē”	Sung	WaDhans, M4	562
Paurī	“Tū āpē hī āpi āpi”	Sung/recited rhythmically		

Recommended Rāgās: Waḍhans, Sūhī, Tōḍī, Sārang,

8. Charan Kamal dī Chauṅkī (second session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
Shān		Instrumental prelude	Tūkhārī	
Mangalācharaṇ	“Ādi gurē namē”	Sung recitation	Gaurī, M5	262
Dhrupad/partāl	“Nirguna rākhi līyaa”	Sung	Tūkhārī, M5	1117
Śabad rīt	“Ihī hamārai saphala kāj”	Sung	Mālī Gaurī, M5	987
Paurī	“vadhī hū vadha apār tērā”	Sung/recited rhythmically	Rāmkalī, M5	965

8. Charan Kamal dī Chaṅkī (third session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
Shān		Instrumental prelude	Gaurī Mājh	
Mangalācharaṇ	“Wahegurū satinām”	Sung recitation	Popular chant	
Dhrupad/partāl	“Hari rām rām rām rāmā”	Sung	Gaurī, M5	218
Śabad	“Charan kamal prabh kē nita dhiāō”	Sung	Bilāwal, M5	806
Śabad Sohila	“Gagan mai thāli ravi chand Dipak”	Sung	Dhanāsari, M1	13, 663
Anand Sāhib	“Anand bhaiyā mērī māē”	Sung Congregationally	Rāmkalī, M3	917
Paurī	“vadhī hū vadha apār tērā”	Sung/recited rhythmically	Rāmkalī, M5	965

9. Sōdar dī Chaṅkī (first session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
Shān		Instrumental prelude	Jaitsrī	
Mangalācharaṇ	“Phirata phirata prabh”	Sung recitation	Gaurī, M5	289
Dhuūpad	“Hari jū rākhi lēhu pati mērī”	Sung	Jaitsrī, M9	703
Śabad madhyalāya	“Hari janu rām nām guna gāvai”	Sung	Bairārī, M4	719
Paurī	“vadhī hū vadha apār tērā”	Sung/recited rhythmically	Rāmkalī, M5	719

Recommended Rāgās: Jaitsrī, Tūkhārī, Bairārī, Rāmkalī Dakhaṇī,

9. Sōdar dī Chaṅkī (second session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
Śabad	“Jīvanō mai Jīvan pāvīyā”	Sung	Āsā, M4	442
Chhant	“Hari juga juga bhagat ūpāiyā”	Sung	Āsā, M4	452
Sōdar	“Sōdar tērā kēhā sō ghar kēhā”	Sung congregationally	Āsā, M1	8

Recommended Rāgās: Jaitsrī, Tūkhārī, Bairārī, Rāmkalī Dakhaṇī

10. *Āratī dī Chaṅkī*

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
<i>Āratī</i>	“Gagan mai thāl ravi chand dīpak”	Sung congregationally	<i>Dhanāsarī, M1</i>	663
<i>Śabad</i>	“Saranī Āiō nāth nidhān”	Sung	<i>Kēdārā, M5</i>	1119
<i>Śabad</i>	“bisarat nāhi man tē harī”	Sung	<i>Kēdārā, M5</i>	1120

11. *Kalyān dī Chaṅkī* (second session)

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
<i>Shān</i>		Instrumental prelude	<i>Kalyān</i>	
<i>Mangalācharaṇ</i>	“Balihārī is jāti kō”	<i>Sung recitation</i>	<i>Ślōka, Bhagat Kabir</i>	1364
<i>Dhrupad/partāl</i>	“Hari jō nimāNiyā tū mān”	Sung	<i>Sōrath, M5</i>	624
<i>Śabad rīt</i>	“sakhīśahēlī mērīyā mērī jindaRīyē”	Sung	<i>Bihāgarā, M4</i>	538
<i>Paurī</i>	“Āpē jant ūpāiyān”	Sung/recited rhythmically	<i>Bihāgarā, M3</i>	556

Recommended Rāgās: *Kalyān, Kalyān Bhūpālī, Āsā Kāfī, Mājh, Kēdārā, Gaurī* variations, *Gaurī*,

12. *Kānarā dī Chaṅkī*

Item presented	Śabad	Execution	Rāgā/author	Page in AG
<i>Shān</i>		Instrumental prelude	<i>Sōrath</i>	
<i>Mangalācharaṇ</i>	“Bhai Nasan duramati”	<i>Sung recitation</i>	<i>Ślōka, M9</i>	1427
<i>Dhrupad/partāl</i>	“Bīta jaihē bīta jaihē”	Sung	<i>Jaijāvantī, M9</i>	1352
<i>Śabad rīt</i>	“Aisī māng gōbind hī sidh sādhikē”	Sung	<i>Kānarā, M5</i>	1298
<i>Paurī</i>	“Tū āpē hī sidh sādhikē”	Sung/recited rhythmically	<i>Kānarā, M4</i>	1313

Recommended Rāgās: *Kānarā, Jaijāvantī, Naṭ Nārāyan, Naṭ, Sōrath, Bihāgarā*

## Appendix F: Documentation and Videography

### Documentation: Videography 2006-2007

#### August 2006

- Bathinda, *Damdama Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Gurmat Sangīt Sammēllan* – 8/24/07

#### September 2006

- Patiala, Punjabi University *Gūrdwāra: Silver Jubilee Anniversary* - 9/4/06
- Amṛtsar, Baba Deep Singh *Gūrdwāra: Chalna Chaṅkī* after *Sukhāsana* - 9/15/06
- Amṛtsar, *Dārbār Sāhib: Śabad kīrtan* - 9/16/06
- Patiala, Interview with Jagpinder on Pilgrimage to Hemkunt- 9/28/06
- Amṛtsar, *Shahidī Smārak Gūrdwāra: Āsā Dī Vār* - 9/18/06

#### October 2006

- Village Jagraon: Jasvinder's *Kuṛmāyī* - 10/4/06
- Patiala, Dukh Niwarin *Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Parikrama Chaṅkī* - 10/11/06
- Amṛtsar: *Dīwālī* - 10/2006
- Amṛtsar, *Shahidī Smārak Gūrdwāra: Āsā dī Vār* - 10/22/06
- Amṛtsar, *Dārbār Sāhib: Chalna Chaṅkī* - 10/22/06
- Patiala, Punjabi University: *Gurmat Sangīt Festiva* - 10/28/06
- Patiala, Punjabi University: *Gurmat Sangīt Competition* - 10/28/06
- Sangrur, *Mastuāna Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Śabad kīrtan* for new saint installation - 10/30/06
- Anandpūr, *Keshgarh Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Gurmat Sangīt Sammēlla* - 10/20/06

#### November 2006

- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib: Satguruji's Birthday, Nagar Kīrtan* - 11/2/06
- Sangrur, Singh Sabha *Gūrdwāra: Gurū Nānak's Birthday* - 11/5/06
- Patiala, *Dukh Niwarin Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Parikram Chaṅkī* - 11/14/06
- Sangrur, *Mastuāna Sāhib Gūrdwāra; Gurū Nānak's Birthday* - 11/5/06
- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib: interview with Pyara Singh* - 11/12/06
- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib: Halē da Divan* with Gurdeep Singh - 11/29/06

#### December 2006

- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib: Jap Prayog - Halē da Divan* - 12/2/06
- Ludhiana, *Jawaddī Taksāl: Adutti Gurmat Sangīt Sammēllan* - 12/6/06
- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib: Pali Plays Dilruba* - 12/6/06

#### January 2007

- Sangrur, *Mahal Mubarrak Gūrdwāra: Prabhat Pheri* - 1/6/07

- Sangrur *Mastuāna Sāhib Gūrdwāra*: Sant Attar Singh Divas, *Nagar kīrtan* - 1/29/07
- Ludhiana *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Nagar Kīrtan* - 1/23/07

### **March 2007**

- Qadian: Anup's *Shukrana chauṅkī* - 3/21/07

### **April 2007**

- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Hōla Mahalla* 2007 - 4/12/07
- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Baba Chinda Divan* - 4/13/07
- Harayana, Jeevan Nagar – *Halē da Divan* - 4/15/07
- Ludhiana, *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: Pratap Academy *Halē da divan, Vaisakhi* - 4/16/07
- Amṛtsar: *Akhaṅd Kīrtan* - 4/18/07
- Ludhiana *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Antim ardās* and Pratap Academy *Halē da divan* - 4/20/07
- Ludhiana *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Āsā Dī Vār* at Bibi Narinder's house - 4/22/07
- Ludhiana *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Anand Karaj* - 4/25/07

### **May 2007**

- Nagarota: Niru's marriage - 5/4/07
- Bakaraha: Yadwinder's *Shukrana chauṅkī* and *Bhōg* - 5/20/07
- Amṛtsar: Rāgī Bhai Narinder Singh's interview - 5/22/07
- Anandpur Sāhib: Rāgī Bhai Jasvir Singh's interview - 5/24/07
- Anandpur Sāhib: *Āsā Dī Vār* by Rāgī Bhai Jasvir Singh - 5/26/07
- *Taran Taran Sāhib Gūrdwāra, Chalna Chauṅkī* - 5/22/07

### **June 2007**

- Ludhiana, *Jawaddi Taksal*: Bhai Sukhant Singh - 6/1/07
- Ludhiana *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Halē da divan* - 6/3/07
- Ludhiana *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: Harban Singh's initiation ceremony - 6/3/07
- Ludhiana *Bhaiṇī Sāhib*: *Anand Karaj* - 6/3/07



## Appendix G: Nine *rasas*

1. *Shṛṅgar*- Love, Attractiveness
2. *Hāsyam* - Laughter, Mirth, Comedy
3. *Raudram* - Fury
4. *Kārunyam* - Compassion
5. *Bībhatsam* - Disgust
6. *Bhayānakam* - Horror, Terror
7. *Vīram* - Heroic mood
8. *Adbhutam* - Wonder, Amazement
9. *Shantam* – Peace
10. *Amṛta Rasa /Har rasa* – Ecstasy

## Appendix H: Sound Recordings

### Musical Examples Recorded in MP3 format

Track	Figure	Page	Description
1	18	112	<i>Shān</i> in <i>Rāgā Āsā</i>
2	22	116	<i>Śabad</i> in <i>Rāgā Basant, Dhrupad Ang</i>
3	24	118	<i>Śabad</i> in <i>Rāgā Basant, Khyāl Ang</i>
4	27	121	<i>Śabad</i> in <i>Rāgā Śrī</i>
5	34	136	<i>Ghōṛīān</i> : “ <i>Deh Tejan Ji Rām</i> ”
6	37	141	<i>Lāvān</i>
7	41	151	<i>Anand Sāhib</i>
8	44	160	<i>Āratī</i>
9			<i>First Chhant</i> in <i>Āsā Dī Vār</i> : “ <i>Hara Amṛta Bhinne Loena</i> ” ( <i>M4, Rāgā Āsā, AG, 448</i> )
10	21	189	Processional singing of “ <i>Satanam, Śrī Wāhēguru Sāhib</i> ,” along with blowing of <i>Nārasimhā</i> horn
11	21	189	Congregational salutation: “ <i>Wāhēgurūjī kā khalsā, Wāhēgurūjī kī fatēh</i> ”
12	21	189	<i>Savaiyye</i> (panegyrics) of the <i>Bhaṭs</i> (ballad singers) ( <i>Bhaṭ Bal Jālap, Savaiye, AG, 1394</i> )
13	21	189	Congregational singing of the concluding <i>savaiyye</i> . ( <i>Bhāṭ Bal, Savaiye, AG, 1406</i> )
14	21	189	Recitation of the <i>Hukamnāma</i> “ <i>Satānām Śrī WāhēGurū sahib jī</i> ” <i>Dhanāsarī Mahala Panchavān</i> : <i>Jah, jah pēkō, tah, tah, hazūra....</i> ” ( <i>M5, Rāgā Dhanāsarī, AG, 677</i> )
15	21	189	Group singing the <i>Anand Sāhib</i> ( <i>M3, Rāgā Rāmkaṭī, AG, 917</i> )
16	21	189	Group recitation of the <i>Ardās</i> , Congregational prayer

\*Tracks 9-16 are all sound recordings from the early morning liturgical service, the *Āsā Dī Vār*, recorded by author at *Dārbār Sāhib*, Amritsar on July, 8-12, 2009.

## Glossary

- Ādi Granth* – literally the first scripture (in contrast with the *Dasam Granth*-Scripture of the Tenth Gurū)
- Alāhūnīā* – funeral dirge
- Amritdhārī* – an initiated Sikh
- Amṛta rasa* – celestial nectar
- Ananda Sāhib* – hymn of bliss
- Antarā* – verse of a hymn
- Armans*- embroidered fabrics that Sikhs use to decorate the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*
- Ārōh* – ascending notes of a *rāgā*
- Āsa Dī Vār* – ballad sung early in the morning
- Aṣṭpadī* – a composition type in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* with eight verses
- Avarōh* – descending notes of a *rāgā*
- Āvartan* – the name for each cycle of the *tāl*
- Bānī* – holy words of the Gurus, the hymns of the *GGs*, revealed words
- Bhagat* – a holy person who leads humanity towards God
- Bhagat Bānī* – hymns in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* by the saints
- Bhajan* – a Hindu devotional song, often of ancient origin
- Bhakti* – the act of personal devotional worship as one path to liberation
- Bhaṭ* – singers of panegyrics of the Gurūs
- Bōl* – mnemonic system whereby each sound of the tabla is assigned an onomatopoeia syllable
- Chaupai* – a quatrain (four-line stanza) with a syllable count of sixteen
- Chhant* – a folk composition style in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* of four to six lines, sung in a six-beat rhythm (*Dādra*)
- Chimta* – South Asian percussion instrument that consists of a bent, iron strip, usually about 122 cm long, with an iron ring set at the bend used in folk-style *kīrtan*
- Ḍādhī* – ballad singer
- Dādra* – a six-beat *tāla* used commonly in popular and light classical music.
- Dārbār* – literally “royal court,” the main worship hall in a Sikh *Gurdwārā*
- Dārbār Sāhib* – the holiest shrine for Sikhs (also called the Golden Temple)
- Dasam Granth* – The Scripture written by Gurū Gōbind Singh
- Dharamsala* – Sikh religious education center
- Dharnā* – a hymn sung in call and response style
- Dhōlak* – a classical North Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese hand drum
- Dhrupad* – a style of classical music popular during the time of the Gurūs
- Dhūnī* – folk tunes used in Sikh music
- Dikr* – Sufi religious ceremony where God’s name is continuously chanted
- Dōhara* – self-contained rhyming couplet in poetry found in folk poetry of Punjāb
- Ektāl* – a rhythm cycle of twelve-beats. Often used in *Mangalācharaṇ*
- Granth* – the title given to a religious official in the *Gurdwārā*
- Gurbānī* – liturgical poetry found in the *Gurū Granth Sahib*
- Gurdwārā* – Sikh temple

*Gurmat Sangīt* – a system of music prescribed in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, which draws from North Indian Classical music  
*Gurū* – a term for a teacher or spiritual guide  
*Gurū Amar Dās* – the third Gurū  
*Gurū Angad* – the second Gurū  
*Gurū Arjan* – the fifth Gurū  
*Gurū Gōbind Singh* – the tenth Gurū  
*Gurū Granth Sāhib* – the Sikh holy book and the final Sikh Guru  
*Gurū Hargōbind* – the sixth Gurū  
*Gurū Har Rai* – the seventh Gurū  
*Gurū Har Krishan* – the eighth Gurū  
*Gurū Nānak* – the first Gurū  
*Gurū Rām Dās* – the fourth Gurū  
*Gurū Tegh Bahadur* – the ninth Gurū  
*Harimandir Sāhib*- also known as the Golden Temple, located in Amritsar, Punjab  
*Japjī* – the morning prayers  
*Jōt* – the “light” of the spirit  
*Khālsā panth* – followers of the pure path  
*Khyāl* – the modern genre of classical singing in North India; its name comes from Urdu meaning “imagination”  
*Kīrtan* – the singing of the sacred hymns from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* to set music in classical *Rāgā* format  
*Kīrtanīyās* – amateur class of Sikh hymn singers  
*Langar* – free, communal meal at the *Gūrdwāra*  
*Mangalācharaṇa* – invocational praise sung prior to hymn  
*Manjī* – diocese  
*Mātrās* – beats  
*Mīrāsīs* – professional caste of Muslim singers who played the *rabāb* and pursued a Sikh way of life in food and dress and were given the title *rabābī* by Gurū Nānak  
*Mīrī Pīrī* – symbol for temporal and spiritual authority  
*Misls* – brigade of Sikh warriors  
*Mūl Mantra* – the foundational prayer for Sikhs  
*Nām Japna* – the practice of continuously reciting the Name of God  
*Nām Simran* – the practice of meditating on the *Nām*, Divine vibration  
*Nānak Panthīs* –followers of Gurū Nānak  
*Nagāras* – large, animal-headed drums used in the *Gurdwārā* to make announcements  
*Narasimha* – large brass horn blown to announce the arrival and departure of *Gurū Granth Sāhib*  
*Navdha Bhakti* – nine forms of devotion  
*Nitnem* – collection of five prayers recited daily by Sikhs  
*Padas*- literally “foot,” small sections (one to three lines) that make up a *Śabad*  
*Panthīs* –followers of Gurū Nānak  
*Paurī*– literally a “step,” this six to eight line folk-style *Śabad* is equivalent to a paragraph that elaborates on a central theme  
*Pōthīs* – small, hand-written hymnals

*Pūja* – daily Hindu prayers  
*Rabābī* – one who plays the *rabāb*, 4-stringed plucked instrument  
*Rāgā* – the basic organization of the thirteen musical notes in a composition, as per specific rules  
*Rāgī* – the formal name for a scholar and performer of Sikh devotional music  
*Rāgī jatha* – an ensemble of three or four *rāgīs* who sing together.  
*Rahāō* – a single line in the *Śabad* that houses the central theme of the prayer  
*Rasa* – the emotional state or quality of the *Rāgā* and *Rāginī*  
*Śabad* – hymn, also the mystical sound.  
*Śabad kīrtan* – hymn singing  
*Sanātan Sikhs* – conservative Sikhs  
*Sangat* – religious congregation or assembly  
*Śalok* – a composition type in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*  
*Sant Bhāsha* – popular language of poetry in medieval Indian  
*Sant sipahi* – a saint soldier  
*Sārangī* – a bowed, short-necked lute of India, Nepal and Pakistan  
*Sawaiya* – a panegyric, praise to a Guru a close relative of a *Śabad* defined by the arrangements of long and short, syllables at the end of the verses  
*Sikh* – an adherent of Sikhism  
*Singh Sabha* – a reformist movement  
*Tabla* – is a set of North Indian drums composed of a *Bhaya* (bass drum) and *Dhaiya* (Treble drum)  
*Taksāl* – seminary and school of *Gurmat Sangīt*  
*Tālā* – rhythmic cycles, a predisposed arrangement of beats in a certain tempo  
*Tat Khalsa* – radical group of Sikhs  
*Vār* – a folk-style narrative poem set to music. In the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, this ballad format is composed of *Ślōkas* and *Paurī* verse forms, using a simple four-beat ballad meter (*Paurī tālā*) with simple repeating rhymes  
*Vibhāg* – division of a *tālā* into several units

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