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 Šabad 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 Šabad 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, Šabad 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 Šabad is not only embodied through the Gurū Granth Sāhib, but also encountered through the human enactment of the service, aurally, viscerally and phenomenologically.
SIKH ŠABAD KĪRTAN AS A MUSICAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2011

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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.

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||
Acknowledgements

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 Gurbāṇī.

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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Orthography

Terminology, transliteration and translation

Terminology and transliteration

This study relies on a large bank of native terminology, which draws primarily from Gurbāṇī, 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, Gurbāṇī 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 Gurbāṇī 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 Šrī Gurū Granth Sāhib: an online Gurbāṇī search engine, Sikhitothemax.com, and also on Manmohan Singh’s popular version of
the Šrī Gurū Granth Sāhib, both of which provide text in the original script, transliteration and translation in English. These sources are cited in the dissertation as STM and MMS respectively. In some places, I have abbreviated the Šrī 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

---

ū (long) as in the oo in cool
ɾ 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 svarṣṭi 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
c 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
da – is retroflex d
dḥa – is an aspirated retroflex
ḍa - 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
ḷa – 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
ğa – as in got
za – as in zebra
fa – as in father
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to this Study

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].

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 Šabad 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.”

The term Šabad kīrtan refers to the singing of Sikh hymns from the Gurū Granth Sāhib (Scripture of the Sikhs). Šabad 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

1 Ādi Granth, p. 885 (henceforth abbreviated as AG).
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.³

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

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 chaunīkī (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.\(^4\)

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

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. 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 Nirnāyk Committee) to invigorate the community with the rich musical tradition of Sikhism. 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 Śabād kīrtan led me

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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. 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 *ravanhaṭa*, 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.

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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8 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. 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 Punjabi 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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9 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 Śabād kīrtan services in the wee hours of the morning at Bhaini Sāhib, Ludhiana, to attending the annual winter festival of Gurmat Sangī 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 Śabād 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 Taksāl, both in Ludhiana, and Punjabi University, Patiala. At Dārbār Sāhib, Amritsar, I examined the performance practice of Śabād 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 Śabād 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 Šabad kīrtan.

Chapter Four examines the textual source of Šabad 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 Ṣabād 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 Ṣabād 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 Ṣabād kīrtan from a phenomenological perspective, placing it in a time/space continuum. I examine the schedule of Ṣabād 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 Šabad 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

Ethnomusicoclogical 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 Šabad 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.”¹ 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 Šabad 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

approach, allowing the plurality of voices that each played a significant role in the cultural interplay of the Śabad kīrtan experience to be heard.  

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. 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.” 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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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.”\(^5\) 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.”\(^6\) I wanted to undertake 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.\(^7\) 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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\(^6\) Ibid., 94.

state of interaction and change. 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. 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 Śabdar 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. 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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from the audience. 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. Paul Connerton describes the power of ritualized speech as an intoned, rhythmical speech, which distances itself from everyday language. 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. 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*. Qureshi offers an in-depth analysis of the musical

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aesthetics and structure of the Qawwali gathering and its emotional impact and spiritual arousal hāl.¹⁶

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.¹⁷ 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 Šabad kīrtan, I will examine emotion as central to the function, ontology and meaning of Šabad 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.¹⁸

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¹⁸ 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.\(^1\) 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

understanding the musical experience. 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.” 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.

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. Gurbāṇī 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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transformational power of memory on colonized people.\textsuperscript{24} The hymns of \textit{Gurbāṇī 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 \textit{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.\textsuperscript{25} In her research on \textit{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.\textsuperscript{26} 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.

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. 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, inherited memory and collective memory, episodic and flashback memory, and nostalgia, commemorative and selective memory. 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. 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

31 Shelemay, Let Jasmine Rain Down.
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.33

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.34 Swiss ethnomusicologist Regula Qureshi, in her

study of the Indian *sarangi*, also discovers the cultural meaning imparted on the *sarangi*, associated with preconceived, contested values.\(^{35}\)

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.\(^{36}\) 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 Ḍāḍhīs (hereditary musicians of Sikh balladry), examines the role of these

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\(^{35}\) Regula Burckhart Qureshi, “The Indian Sarangi.”

\(^{36}\) Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down.*
cultural performers in acting as agents of a socio-political forum.\textsuperscript{37} 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 Šabad kārtan 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.\textsuperscript{38} 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.\textsuperscript{39} 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, \textit{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.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{38}] Connerton, \textit{How Societies Remember}.
\item[\textsuperscript{39}] Suzel Ana Reily, \textit{Voices of the Magi}.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
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.\footnote{Kapila Vatsyayan, \textit{Bharata: The Natyasastra} (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996).} 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.

singing tradition were valuable sources on the early development of Šabad kīrtan.43

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.44

More recently, Sarah Van Doel produced a master’s thesis on Sikh music, providing a much needed comprehensive introduction to this area of study.45

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 Gurbāṇī has been pursued in the publications of Dr. Charan Singh and his grandson, Bhai Vir Singh, whose theoretical work on Šabad kīrtan, Par Hun Tak Mili Khoj, is considered seminal in this subject.46

Other important works in this field are Gobind Singh Mansukhani’s Indian Classical Music and Sikh Kīrtan, Gyani Dayal Singh’s Gūrmat Sangeet Sikhīya and Sārdār Harmandir Singh’s Gurmat Sangeet (first volume), which are also highlighted in my study.47

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

45 Sarah Van Doel, "Sikh Music: History, Text, and Praxis" (Tufts University, 2008).
46 Bhai Vir Singh, Gurmat Sangeet Par Hun Tak Mili Khoj (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, 1958).
47 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.  

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.  

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. Bhai Avatar Singh has published two volumes of traditional hymns that are believed to date back several centuries. Bhai Giani Dyal Singh and Professor Kartar Singh have written other collections of hymns. 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 Gurbāṇī along with analyses of compositions and theoretical observations about Sikh

music. Bhai Baldeep Singh, of Anād Society, has worked extensively to research and collect the earliest recordings of *shabad kīrtan*. 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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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.¹

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.

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. 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

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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.\(^5\)

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.⁶

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.⁷

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.⁸ 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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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. 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. Thus a Hindu-Islam syncretism and common ground was forged through the movements of Hindu-Bhakti and Muslim-Sufism.

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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 *sadhguru* (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.\(^\text{11}\)

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.\(^\text{12}\) 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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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

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Several reliable sources, which provide information on the Gurūs 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). The period of the Gurūs may be divided into two phases: The birth of Sikhism (first through fifth Gurū) and militant Sikhism (sixth through tenth Gurū).

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15 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). 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.

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. In the hymn titled Mājh kī Vār, he addresses:

16 First Mughal emperor of India invaded the country and seized control in 1526.
18 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.”

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.”

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 Kartarpur (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.

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.

19 Manmohan Singh, Śrī Gurū Granth Sāhib, 482-483.


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 hymnmal 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

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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.\(^\text{23}\) 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.

\(^{23}\) *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 Bahādūr 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.”

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).

He built up the Sikh’s military power by implementing the principles of mīrī pūrī (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 (pūrī).

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 Hargobind’s seven-year imprisonment at Gwalior Fort.

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 Hargobind) 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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25 Ibid., 39.
successor, Aurangzeb, who held great contempt for Sikhs, had Gurū Hārī Rāī poisoned at the age of 31.\(^28\)

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.\(^29\) 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.

\(^{28}\) Ibid. 48-50.
\(^{29}\) Ibid. 66-67.
The Khālsā Mahima (praise to the Khālsā), composed by Gurū Gobind 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

Gurū Gobind 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.\textsuperscript{31}

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.

\textsuperscript{31} 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.\textsuperscript{32}

Table 3.1:

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<th>Correlation Table of Emperor and Guru</th>
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<td>Aurangzeb</td>
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<td>1. Guru Nānak - 1549-1559</td>
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<td>2. Guru Angad - 1564-1572</td>
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<td>3. Guru Amarādīa - 1574</td>
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<td>5. Guru Arjan - 1589-1606</td>
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<td>6. Guru Harōbānd - 1595-1604</td>
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<td>7. Guru Har Rāḥī - 1606-1661</td>
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<td>8. Guru Har Kāṅkhā - 1656-1664</td>
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<td>9. Guru Tāḥ Bahādur - 1621-1675</td>
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<td>10. Guru Gōbind Singh - 1660-1708</td>
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</table>

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.\textsuperscript{33} Banda retaliated aggressively, using powerful strategies and tactics he was able to establish

\textsuperscript{32} Patwant Singh, \textit{The Sikhs}, 65-66.
\textsuperscript{33} Khushwant Singh, \textit{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. 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. His empire, weakened through internal divisions, political mismanagement, and irreligiosity, 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. In 1873, the Singh Sabha, a reformist movement, was organized to restore the credibility of Sikhs

34 Ibid., 93-111.
35 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.
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.⁴⁷

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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⁴⁷ 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 a large. In this survey, I have consider 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

“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

“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

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.

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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1 AG, p. 1291.
2 AG, p. 682.
sound and the other face looking in the direction of Western monotheistic religions, particularly Islam in respect to emphasis on written text.⁴ 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.⁵ 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.”⁶

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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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. 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. [Figure 4.1]

**Figure 4.1. A Standard Version of the *Gurū Granth Sāhib***

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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.10 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.11

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).12

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10 These small hymnals (pōthīs) are popularly considered the Mohan Pōthī or Goidval Pōthī because they were compiled in the city of Goidval, 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.
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.”\(^\text{13}\) 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.”\(^\text{14}\) 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.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{13}\) McLeod, Historical Dictionary, 22.
\(^\text{14}\) Ibid. 22.
\(^\text{15}\) Denoting that it is Ādi (the first and primary), Shrī (Beloved), Gurū Granth Sāhib, and suffixed with “ji” (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 *Gurbāṇī*. 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, *Gurbāṇī* can also refer to the hymns of the Hindu and Sufi bhagats (saints).

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.” 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*. 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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16 Some scholars delimit the term *Gurbāṇī* as exclusively “baṇī of the Gurūs” while *Bhagat Baṇī* denotes the hymns of the bhagats.
Figure 4.2. Languages found in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*

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

*Sindhi* – Gurū Arjan

Sanskrit – Gurū Nānak, Gurū Arjan and others

*Lehndī* or *Western Punjabi* – Gurū Arjan

*Gujaratī* 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 *Gurbāṇī* 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 *Japī 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:

- Slōkas Sahskriti - Pages 1,353 - 1,360
- Gatha - Pages 1,360 - 1,361
- Phanhas - Pages 1,361 - 1,363
- Chaubolas - Pages 1,363 - 1,364
- Slōkas of Kabir; Pages 1,364 - 1,377
- Slōkas of Sheikh Farīd; Pages 1,377 - 1,384
- Swaiyas; Pages 1,385 - 1,409
- Slōkas of the Gurūs; Pages 1,410 - 1,426
- Slōkas of Gurū Tegh Bahādur; Pages 1,426 - 1,429
- Mundāvanī; 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.\(^\text{19}\) 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ŭk Ōngkār</th>
<th>There is only one universal creator God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Sat Nām</em></td>
<td>His name is Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kartā Purakh</em></td>
<td>Creative Being Personified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nirbhau</em></td>
<td>He is without fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nirvāir</em></td>
<td>He is without hate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Akāl Mūrat</em></td>
<td>He is timeless and without form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ajūni Saibhang</em></td>
<td>He is beyond birth and death, self- illuminated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gūr Parsād</em></td>
<td>By Guru’s Grace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(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

\(^{19}\) 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”. 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. Pashaura Singh comments “the morning prayer, Japūji, 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.” This hymn collection is musically performed in the evening kīrtan session titled Sō Dar dī chaunkī (service of Sōdar) at many Gūrdwāras throughout India and will be referred to later in this dissertation.

20 AG, pp. 8-9.
(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. 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]

|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|

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

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

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Metrical format also played a significant role in the organization of the hymns. All set in varying lengths of padas (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. **Āśtapadīs**: 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 (Pauṛīs)
7. Poems of Bhagats (various saints)

The following chart provides examples of the indexing for hymns set in Rāgā Śrī and Rāgā Gauṛi 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Composition:</th>
<th>Page/s:</th>
<th>Composer/s:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Gurbānī</em></td>
<td>14-53</td>
<td>Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aṣṭapadī</em> (Octets)</td>
<td>53-71</td>
<td>Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Arjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>More Gurbānī</em></td>
<td>71 to 74</td>
<td>Gurū Nānak, Gurū Arjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pahrei</em> (The Hours)</td>
<td>74 to 78</td>
<td>Gurū Nānak, Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chhant</em> (Lyrics)</td>
<td>78 to 81</td>
<td>Gurū Rām Dās, Gurū Arjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vanjara</em> (Merchant Songs)</td>
<td>81 to 82</td>
<td>Gurū Rām Dās</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Śrī Rāgā Kī Vār Mahalla IV</em></td>
<td>83 to 91</td>
<td>Gurū Nānak, Gurū Amar Dās, Gurū Rām Dās,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bhagat Banī</em></td>
<td>91 to 93</td>
<td>Bhagat Kabīr, Bhagat Trilochan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5. Index of Hymns in Rāgā Gauṛī

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

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 (raḥāō) and several verses. The example given below, an aṣṭapadī (verse of eight stanzas) in Rāgā Dhanāsārī, 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

\[ \text{Gurmukhī script:} \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨੀ ਭਗਵਾਨੀ ੧ ਅਂਤਰਧਾਰੀਆ} \\
\text{੨੪੧੧ ਮਿੱਟੀਵਿੰਦੀ ਪਹਾਣੀ।} \\
\text{ਬੁੱਧ ਮਹਾਤਮਾ ਵਿਵਿਧੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵੇ} \\
\text{ਹੋਵੇੜੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨੀ ਸੱਧਾਨੀ ਤੁਲੀ ਦੰਡੇ ਵੇ ਵੇ} \\
\text{ਚਕਾ ਵਰਮ ਚੜਾ ਚੱਲੁਂਦਾ ਪੁਣ ਛਾਪੇ ਵੇ} \\
\text{ਸਭਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਕੁਸੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਸੁਧਿ ਭਵੇੜੀ ਵੇ} \\
\text{ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਬੁੱਧ ਸੁਆਣ ਦਰਸ਼ਾਣੀ ਤੰਦਗੀ ਵੇ} \\
\text{ਬੀਜੇਬਦੁੱਖ ਤੁਲਣਾ ਰਾਹੋੜੀ ਵੇ} \\
\text{੨੪੧੨ ਵਧੋੜੀ।} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[ \text{Transliteration:} \]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dhanāsarī mahalāī 1 ghar 2 Aṣṭapadī} \\
\text{ik oankār satigur prasād ||} \\
\text{gur sāgar ratanī bharapūrē ||} \\
\text{amṛta sant chugehi nehī dūrē ||} \\
\text{har ras chōg chugehi prabh bhāvai ||} \\
\text{saravar mahī hans prānapati pāvai ||1||} \\
\text{kiā baq bapurā chhapārī nāī ||} \\
\text{kīchaṛ dūbai mail n jāī||1|| rahāō ||} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[ \text{English:} \]

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

\text{One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Gurū = Invocation} \\
\text{The Guru is the ocean, filled with pearls.} \\
\text{The Saints gather in the Ambrosial Nectar; they do not go far away from there.} \\
\text{They taste the subtle essence of the Lord; they are loved by God.} \\
\text{Within this pool, the swans find their Lord, the Lord of their souls. ||1|| = (First Verse)} \\
\text{What can the poor crane accomplish by bathing in the mud puddle. It sinks into the} \\
\text{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”

\[ \text{24 AG, p. 685.} \]
\[ \text{25 Photo by author, taken at Mastuana Sāhib Gurdwāra, October 19, 2006.} \]
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 Mundāvanī and a compendium of rāgās, the Rāgāmālā. The Mundāvanī 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.26 The Mundāvanī 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 Mundāvanī is also recited as the conclusion of the Rahirās, the daily evening prayer.

Mundāvaṇī:

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||

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||

Rāgmālā:

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

Rāgmālā literally meaning “a garland of rāgās” appears after the Mundāvanī 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.²⁹

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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²⁷ AG, p. 1429.
²⁸ AG, p. 1429.
different parts of India spanning four centuries. The third category of contributors includes *Bhagats* and *Bhats* who were contemporaries of the Gurūs. The *Bhats*, who served as bards in the courts of the Gurūs, composed mostly panegyrics of the Gurūs. 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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30 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.

31 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

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

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.”

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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.\(^{33}\) 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]

\(^{33}\) 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*. 
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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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. 35 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 Gurbāṇī 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 Kānaṛā comments: “The false thinking of both performers and listeners is destroyed when they participate in devotional singing.” Through continuous encounter with Gurbāṇī, 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.”36 The Japīī itself expresses this very thought, instructing the devotee to: “Gaviye, suniye man rakhiye bhao, dukh parhar sukh ghar le jaye”

36 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).  

This oral dimension can be aptly explored by examining the actual practice of encountering Gurbani 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 Gurbani. 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.”

To memorize, kanthastha (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 Gurú 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.

37 M1, Japji, AG, p. 1.
CHAPTER FIVE: MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ŚABAD KĪRTAN

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 Māru — 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.¹

This chapter explores the historical, musical and textual influences that lead to the development of Šabad 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 (*sวางr*) can be observed throughout the evolution of praise singing leading to the complex musical system of Šabad 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.² 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*).³ These metered hymns recited in

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³ Ibid., 25.
three basic tones -Anudāta, Udāta and Swarita, formed the basis for many later singing styles in India.  

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 Anuṣṭubh meter. During this period, several singing styles were also employed.

The Classical period (A.D. 100 – 1200) produced the tradition of “saint-singers” who preached through sung poetry. 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. Their poems contain a dhruvapad (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. 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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4 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.
5 The Anuṣṭubh meter consists of a sixteen-syllable line, broken into two eight-syllable half-lines by a break in the middle of the line.
7 Poets such as Jaydeva (twelfth-century) were considered as saints who composed spiritual poetry to song.
8 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 Šabad compositions.
prabhanda through his composition *Gitagovinda*, a hymn of praise in Sanskrit to Lord Krishna. He assigned rāgās, such as Rāmkali, Vasant, and Gūjarī and the rhythm cycles of the seven-beat *rupak*, and twelve-beat *ektāl* to his poems.  

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.” 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*).

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. Many poets of the Bhakti movement (devotional revival) adopted this style, including saints such as Kabir, Nāmdev,

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12 Kabir, Nāmdev and Ravidās.

Haridās, Surdās. Tansen (1506 – 1589), one of Swāmī Haridās’ closest disciples, further popularized *dhūrād* 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 *dhūrād*.\(^{14}\)

This period also bore witness to the mystical poetry of the Sufi saints who sang in their unique style of *Sufiāna Qalam*.\(^{15}\) They introduced several compositional styles: *Kafī, Dōhara* and *Śloka*. These will be further explored in Chapter Seven.

**The Development of Šabad 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 Šabad 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 Šabad 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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\(^{15}\) For an excellent detailed style 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.”

After his four preaching odysseys, he settled in Kartarpūr and established it as the first center of Gurmat Sangī (Sikh music). Here, the beginning of kīrtan in an institutional format began with the liturgical singing of the Japī Sahib in the morning and Sō Dār and Āratī in the evening, as is confirmed in the ballad of Bhai Gurdas. Gurū Nānak borrowed from classical and folk forms of Indian poetry like Śalōk, Pauṛī, chant, Vār and Sōhila, and added his own poetry including Bārāh-Mahā (a calendar poem), Ārtī, 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.” 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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17 Surinder Singh Kholi, Bhai Gurdas – The Great Sikh Theologian (Punjabi University: Patiala, 2007)
18 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.

The third Gurū Amār Dās (1479-1574) wrote 907 hymns in seventeen rāgās, composing hymns in both classical and folk poetic forms, including padas, aṣṭapadi, 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 Gurbāṇī, the Sukhmanī Sāhib. He played a

20 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 ((chaṇkī), in which both Sikh rāgī and Muslim rabābī performed. These were the Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaṇkī, Anand dī Chaṇkī, Charan Kamal dī Chaṇkī, Sodar dī Chaṇkī, Kalyāṇ dī Chaṇkī.²¹ 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, Ḍhāḍī, who accompanied themselves on the Ḍhāḍ (small double-barreled drum) and sārangī (bowed instrument). He is also linked with accompaniment on the taus (string bowed instrument). Gurū Hargobind also initiated the chalna chaṇkī (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 Jaijāvantī 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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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.”²² 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.*”²³

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.²⁴ 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.²⁵

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²³ This hymn is in the *Dasam Granth*, p. 1347.
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 Ranjīt 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 šisyā 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 (gharānās) and the Sikh institutions of learning (takasāls). The musical notation of these rāgās were only committed to writing in the late nineteen and early twentieth centuries during the Singh Sabha period.26

Unlike the gharānās 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.27 [Figure 5.1]

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27 For a description of each taksāl, see G. Singh, 2000, 169-174.
1. Damdamā Taksāl in Talwandi
2. Budhā Jōr Taksāl in Punjab
3. Mastūānā Taksāl in Sangrur
4. Sēvā Panthī Taksāl in Punjab
5. Damdamī Taksāl in Chowk Mehta
6. Daudharpur Dī Taksāl in Daudharpur
7. Singhan Vālā Taksāl in Singhan
8. Haraganā Dī Taksāl in Haragana
9. Taran Tāran Taksāl in Taran Taran
10. Sikh Missionary College in Amritsar
11. Kalērā Vālā Taksāl in Nānaksar
12. Rakāhganj 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.28 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.29 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.30

28 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.
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 Abbotabād (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, Gurbāṇī 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.\(^{31}\)

During the turn of the century, the Nāmdhārī Sikh community played a prominent role in fostering the awareness and dominance of Šabad 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 Šabad kīrtan, inviting some of the finest rabābīs and classical musicians to teach at their center, Nāmdhārī 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.\(^{32}\)

\(^{31}\) Navtej K. Purewal, Shabad Kīrtan Across Text, Tradition and Boundaries: A Social History of the Rābābī Tradition. (Routledge Press). Forthcoming. Cf. on the present condition of these rabābīs now in Pakistan.

**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 rababīs, the trained, hereditary Muslim performers of kīrtan, who were forced to evacuate India and leave their service at Gūrdwāras. The rababīs, who possessed many old compositions, where 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 (chaunkīs) 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.33

33 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 Śabād 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 nādhārit 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 Gūrmat 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 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.\textsuperscript{34}

The last twenty years have witnessed a flourishing revival of Sikh music spreading globally throughout the Sikh diasporas. There are various schools specializing in Gūrmat 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.

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||

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 Rāgāmāḷā, a compendium of rāgās, at the close of the scripture. The 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 srāṇj, meaning ‘to be dyed or colored,’ alludes to the rāgā’s capacity to effect and influence the emotions.

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1 AG, p. 351.
2 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). 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 2nd 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, Śārngadēva (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). 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.”

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical syllable/ abbreviation</th>
<th>Musical syllable Western</th>
<th>Step/interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shadaj /Sa</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōmal re</td>
<td></td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rishabh /Re</td>
<td>Re</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōmal ga</td>
<td></td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gandhar /Ga</td>
<td>Mi</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Madhyam /Ma</td>
<td>Fa</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tīvra ma</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pancham /Pa</td>
<td>Sol</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōmal dha</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dhaivat /Dha</td>
<td>La</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōmal nī</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Nīshad /Nī</td>
<td>Ti</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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♭, E♭, A♭, B♭ and one sharpened tone, F♯. Sa is equivalent to “C♮”. The table given below provides a representation of 2 ½ octaves. Notes of the lower octave are indicated by a dot below the note: , while the upper octave is indicated by a dot above the note: . [Figure 6.1]

Figure 6.1. A Correlation of Indian Sargam (solfege) with Western Notation. (Sa is equivalent to “C”)
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: \(1+1+\frac{1}{2}+1+1+\frac{1}{2}\). [Figure 6.2]\(^6\) By following this intervallic pattern, the rāgā can begin on any note.

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

Raga Bilaval

Intervals: \(1 + 1 + \frac{1}{2} + 1 + 1 + \frac{1}{2} = 6\) 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

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

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\(^6\) 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

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.7 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

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. Mājh 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.⁸

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

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

⁸ 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! ||1||

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 rāgā (pure rāgā), (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). Additionally, Gurū Nānak introduced a new rāgā by combining North and South Indian rāg forms (the word Dakhaṇī – meaning “south” is suffixed to these rāgās). He also popularized the singing of rāgās derived from folk music (Mājh, Āsā, Bihāgarā, Wadhans, Sūhī, Mārū and Tūkhārī fall into this category). [Table 6.2]

Table 6.2. Rāgās in the Gurū Granth Sāhib

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Rāgā (Shuddha rāgā)</th>
<th>Rāgā variation (Chhayalag/ Sankīran rāgās)</th>
<th>Page number in AG</th>
<th>Popular liturgy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rāgā Sirī</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rāgā Mājh</td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rāgā Gaurī</td>
<td></td>
<td>151</td>
<td>Sukhmanī Sāhib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gaurī Guārērī</td>
<td></td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gaurī Dakhaṇī</td>
<td></td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gaurī Chētī</td>
<td></td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gaurī Bairaṅgaṇī</td>
<td></td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 AG, p. 849.
11 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gauri Purabi Dipaki</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gauri Purabi</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gauri Dipaki</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gauri Malaw</td>
<td>214</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gauri Malaa</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gauri Majh</td>
<td>218</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Gauri Sorado</td>
<td>330</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Ragas Aasa</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aasa Kafti</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asawari Sudhang</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Gujar</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Devgandari</td>
<td>527</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devgandar</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bihagara</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Waqhans</td>
<td>557</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waqhans Dakhani</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sorath</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dhanasar</td>
<td>660</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jaisri</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Toori</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bairari</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tilang</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tilang Kafti</td>
<td>726</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Suhri</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suhri Kafti</td>
<td>751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suhri Lalit</td>
<td>793</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bilawal</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bilawal Dakhani</td>
<td>843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bilawal Mangal</td>
<td>844</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bilawal Gond</td>
<td>874</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Gond</td>
<td>849</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Ramkali</td>
<td>876</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ramkali Dakhani</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natarayan</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mali Gauri</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Maru</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maru Dakhani</td>
<td>1033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maru Kafi</td>
<td>1014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Tukhari</td>
<td>1107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Kirtan Sohilá**
- **Asa Di Var**, **Rahiras**, **Kirtan Sohilá**
- **Rehras**
- **Alahuния**, **Ghoриян**
- **Lavаn** *(Wedding ceremony)*
- **Anand Sahib**
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 Šabad 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: “अग गाँध सुद गांधी” (Twenty-four hours a day, I sing His Glorious Praises).\(^{12}\) 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]\(^{13}\)

\(^{12}\) AG, p. 626.
\(^{13}\) Mansukhani, Sikh Kīrtan, 143-152.
Many hymns allude to their singing time in the poetic symbolism. For example, a hymn by Gurū Nānak in Rāgā Šrī (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):\(^{14}\)

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\(^{14}\) 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 Šabad kīrtan

In Šabad 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.15 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.”16 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.

15 AG, p. 938-946. 
16 AG, p. 953.
Yak araj gufatam pēis tō dhar gōs kun karatār ||
hakā kabīr karīm tū bēaib paravadagār ||1||
dunīā mukāmē fānī tehakēk dil dānī ||
mam sar mūe ajarāīl girafateh dil hēch an dānī ||1|| 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. ||1||
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. Refrain17

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

mājh mehalā 3 ||
amṛṭa varasai sehaj subhāay ||
guramukh viralā kōi jan pāay ||
amṛṭa pī sadā ihripataśay kar kirāpā trisanā bujhāvaniā ||1||
ho vāri jō vārī guramukh amṛṭa piāvaniā ||
rasanā ras chākh sadā rahai rang rātī sehajay har guṇi gāvaniā ||1|| rahāō ||

17 AG, p. 721.
Mājh Third Mehma:
*The Ambrosial Nectar rains down, softly and gently.*
Those who drink it in are satisfied forever. Showering His Mercy upon them, the Lord quenches their thirst.

*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. ||1||Pause||

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). 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 ṣabads and are sung as the announcement of the hymn. The standard sequence of the title begins with

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18 *AG*, p. 119.
the name of the \textit{rāgā}, followed by the author's name (or in the case of the Gurus, the word “\textit{Mahalā”}). The next musical direction is the style of poetry and concludes with the word “\textit{Ghar}” followed by a number from one to seventeen. [Figure 6.4]

\textbf{Figure 6.4. Title organization of a Śabād}

\begin{tabular}{llll}
Mājhe Mahalā 5 Chaupadē & Ghar 1 \\
\uparrow & \uparrow & \uparrow & \uparrow \\
Rāgā & author & poetic style & rhythm (?)
\end{tabular}

\textbf{Poetic/ Singing Styles}

I have already explored the \textit{rāgās} and authors in the \textit{Gurū Granth Sāhib}, so I will now turn briefly to the other two other musical directions: poetic forms/singing styles and \textit{ghar}. Along with the indications of \textit{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 \textit{padas}, \textit{aśtapadī}, and \textit{ārati} in the medieval classical style (\textit{prabandh} and \textit{dhrupad}) and employed the singing styles of folk poetry for hymns drawing from folk forms: \textit{chhant}, \textit{alāhuṇīā}, \textit{paurī}, \textit{vār} etc. These will be explored in the following chapter.

\textbf{Ghar}

Coming up with a single definition for \textit{ghar} has been a challenge for scholars of Sikh music, because this term was absent from medieval musical terminology, and \textit{ghar} is no longer practiced in the \textit{gurbāṇī} tradition. Consequently, determining its
exact meaning has been difficult.²⁰ Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha offers two possible meanings for ghar: related to rhythm (tālā) or related to tone (swārā).²¹ 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).²²

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 śabda kīrtan, which draws from the classical rhythms of dhrupad, khyāl and the folk rhythms.

**The Rhythms of Śabda 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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²² 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”), khālt (weak stressed beat, indicated with the symbol “O”), and thālt (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

Table 6.4. Rhythm Cycle Tintāl

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ध</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ध</td>
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<td>त</td>
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<td>ध</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>सं</td>
<td>thālī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>khālī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>thālī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 dhruvapada 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 dhruvapada 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.²³

While the tabla has become the most popular percussion instrument for Šabad 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 šabads performed in dhrupad style that are played on the jōṛī (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). Šabad 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

Šabad kīrtan falls into the category of “song”. While classical music gives primacy to music over text, in Šabad 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 Japī in the ambrosial hours of early morning and the singing of Sō Dar (Evening Prayers) and

Āratī in the evening.” 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.” Consequently, a service of Śabad kīrtan involves both sung and chanted expressions.

**Presentation:**

**The Kīrtan Chaũķī**

In her book “Gurmat Sangit Da Sangit Vigian,” Dr. Varinder Kaur Padam provides a standard layout for a series of daily kīrtan chaunkīs 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 Chaũķīs. Table 6.5 shows the layout of a typical service for the early morning chaunkī, the Bilāwal dī Chaũķī followed by the musical analysis of hymns for each of these pieces in the service. [Figure 6.4]

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item presented</th>
<th>Śabad</th>
<th>Execution</th>
<th>Rāgā/author</th>
<th>Page in AG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shān</td>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Bilāwal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mangalācharan</td>
<td>“Danḍot banda anik bār”</td>
<td>Sung/Chanted invocation</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Śabad - dhrūpad ang</td>
<td>“Aisī prīti karō man mērē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M5</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Śabad</td>
<td>“Ṣānta pāyi gur satigur pūrē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M5</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Hū hari prabh āp agam”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M3</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Recommended Rāgās: Āsāwarī, Gūjarī, Dēvgandārī, Dēvgandār, Waḍhans, Tōdī, Sūhī, Sūhī Kafi, Sūhī Lalit, Gōnd, Bilāwal Gōnd, 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
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 Dr. Gurnam Singh
Arranged by Jan Protopapas
“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|| Šałōk

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beats</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic syllables in Carnatic</td>
<td>Dhin</td>
<td>dhin</td>
<td>Dhāṅgētirakita</td>
<td>Tū</td>
<td>nā</td>
<td>Kat</td>
<td>tā</td>
<td>Dhāṅgē tirakita</td>
<td>Dhin</td>
<td>nā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic syllables in Carnatic</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The Mangalācharan 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 Pauṛī.

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. The musical outline of each variant of the rāgā is provided along with references for each style of Basant.

Figure 6.7. Āśabād in Rāgā Basant: “Basant Chaṇīyā Phūlī Banarāī”

basant mahalā 3 ||basant chariā fūlī banarāī ||
ēhi jīā jant fūhī har chit lāi ||1||in bidhi iku man hariā hōi ||
har har nām jāpī dhīn rāṭī gurumukh hounai kauthi dhōi ||1|| rāhō ||
satīgur bāṇī sabdē sunāe ||ihu jag hariā satīgur bhāe ||2||
fal fūī lāgē jān āpē lāe ||mūl lagai tān satīgur pāe ||3||
āpī basant jagath sabh vārī ||nānaku pūrai bhāg bhagat nīrāl ||4||5||17||

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||

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)

27 AG, 1176.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>प</td>
<td>ह</td>
<td>शि</td>
<td>अं</td>
<td>किट</td>
<td>इ</td>
<td>डिट</td>
<td>ब्र</td>
<td>कठी</td>
<td>नाल</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhā</td>
<td>Dhā</td>
<td>Dhin</td>
<td>tā</td>
<td>kiTa</td>
<td>tā</td>
<td>Dhin</td>
<td>tā</td>
<td>tiTa</td>
<td>katā</td>
<td>Gadi</td>
<td>gana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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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)**
4. Šabad 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,

29 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6h9ZLRXM8k](www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6h9ZLRXM8k) [accessed January 14, 2011]
peaceful yet serious. Figure 6.12 provides a melodic outline of the Rāgā, followed by the hymn in both native notation [Figure 6.13] and Staff notation [Figure 6.14].

**Figure 6.12. Melodic Outline of Rāgā Śrī**

![Melodic Outline of Rāgā Śrī](image)

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30 Gurnam Singh, *Guru Nanak Bani*, 30-31
31 This transcription is corresponds to the hymn in Figure 6.13.
Figure 6.13. Native notation for Hymn in Rāgā Śrī

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SaRe - GaRe</td>
<td>SaRe - GaRe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jā - ṇa</td>
<td>Re - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni - ṇa</td>
<td>Re - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re GaRe</td>
<td>Nī - ṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ja ra</td>
<td>Sa - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni - ṇa</td>
<td>Re - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa - Sa</td>
<td>Sa - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čhā</td>
<td>Sa - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re GaRe</td>
<td>Ni - ṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re - Sa</td>
<td>Re - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni - ṇa</td>
<td>Re - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re GaRe</td>
<td>Ni - ṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ra - Sa</td>
<td>Sa - Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SaSa Pa Pa Pa</td>
<td>Ma Dha Ma Ga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GaRe - SaRe</td>
<td>Nā - ṇā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.14: Šabad in Rāgā Śrī³²

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 Binna Jiō Jal Bal Jāō”

19.  

Rāg srīrāg mahalā pahelā 1 ghar 1 ||

mōū tu mandar āsarehi ratanī ta hōhi jaKRāō ||
kasāṭūr kungū agar chandan lip āvai chāō ||
mat dhēkh bhūlā vīsārāi ārā chit na āvai nāō ||1||

har bin jiō jal bal jāō ||
mai āpanā gur puchh dhēkhīā avar nāhī thhāō ||1|| rehāō ||

Rāg Sīree Rāag, 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||

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 “Tūnde Āsā Rāj”(The Maimed King of Āsā). [Figure 6.15 and 6.16]

All Paurīs employ a four-beat folk rhythm cycle called Paurī tālā. This is provided in the table below. [Table 6.8]
Table 6.8. Pauṇī Tāla: Four-Beat Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>亮眼</td>
<td>亮眼</td>
<td>亮眼</td>
<td>亮眼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ġē</td>
<td>īTa</td>
<td>tā</td>
<td>ġētá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of the compositional repertoire of Śabad Kīrtan would not be complete without mentioning the Partāl, a unique composition found exclusively in Sikh Śabad kīrtan. Partāl is a musical composition that employs different tālās for different sections of the hymn. In the SGGS, there are 49 Partāl Śabads. The example below is the transcription of a popular Partāl 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 the 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 Kānārā*

**Mana Jaapo Raam Gopal**

*Rāgā KanaRa - Partal - Ghar 5*

**Lyrics:** Guru Ramdas AG 1296
Composer: Dr. Gurnam Singh
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

---

*Bīr Tala*  
Refrain (rahaū)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ma na</th>
<th>jaa po</th>
<th>raa</th>
<th>ma</th>
<th>go</th>
<th>paa</th>
<th>laa</th>
<th>ma ma</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>raa</th>
<th>ma go</th>
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<th>laa</th>
<th>ha ri</th>
<th>ra</th>
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<th>ja</th>
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<th>laa</th>
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<tr>
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<th>ma</th>
<th>kha</th>
<th>gha</th>
<th>Rī</th>
<th>ta</th>
<th>ka</th>
<th>saal</th>
<th>ha</th>
<th>ri</th>
<th>ho</th>
<th>ho</th>
<th>kl</th>
<th>ra</th>
<th>paa</th>
<th>laa</th>
<th>ma</th>
<th>na</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>jaa po</th>
<th>raa</th>
<th>ma go</th>
<th>paa</th>
<th>laa</th>
<th>(instrumental interlude)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**1st Verse (antarā)**

*Panj Tala*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tu ma re</th>
<th>gu</th>
<th>na</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>ga</th>
<th>ma</th>
<th>a go</th>
<th>cha</th>
<th>ra</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ay ka</th>
<th>jee</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>kiyaa</th>
<th>ka</th>
<th>thai</th>
<th>bee</th>
<th>chaa</th>
<th>ree</th>
<th>raa</th>
<th>ma</th>
<th>raa</th>
<th>ma</th>
<th>raa</th>
<th>ma</th>
<th>laa</th>
<th>la</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tu ma re</th>
<th>jee</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>kha</th>
<th>tha</th>
<th>ka</th>
<th>thaa</th>
<th>too</th>
<th>too</th>
<th>too</th>
<th>hhee</th>
<th>jaa</th>
<th>ne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Go To Measure 2*

| bu | ha | ri | ja | pu | bha | yee | ni | haal | ni | haa | la | ni | haa | la | ma | na |
2nd Verse
Chartal  Slowly

ha ma ray_ ha ra praan sa thaa

swaa mee ha ri mee_____ taa____

Fast (percussion plays double speed - dogore)

ha ma ray_ ha ra praan sa thaa

swaa mee ha ri mee_____ taa____

swaa mee ha ri mee_____ taa____

3rd Verse
Tintal  Fast

jaa ko bhaa_ ga ti ri lee o ree su haa g

hau ba li ba lay_ hau ba li ba lay_ ja na nua na ka ha ri ja pa_____ bha ee nee

hau la nee haa la nee haa la ma na

Go To Measure 2

Go To Measure 3
Kānarā mahālā 4 partāl ghar 5 ||

man jāpahu rām gupāl || har ratan jāvēhar lāl ||

har guramukh ghar takasāl || har hā hā kirāpāl || rahāā ||

tumarē gun agam agāchar ēk jī khāi kathāi bichārī rām rām rām lāl ||

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.

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. ||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. ||Pause|| = 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

36 AG, p. 1297.
Table 6.9. Rhythmical Structure of *Parā*

**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 |
| iDM | qw-kiDM | iDM | –qw-kiDM | iDM | nDw | Dw | Dw | qrikt | iDM | nDw | qrikt | iDM | –qw-kiDM | iDM | –qw-kiDM | iDM | nDw | Dw | Dw | qrikt |
| 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:** *Panjtāl*: Fifteen-beat cycle

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| iDM | –qw-kiDM | iDM | Dw | Dw | iqt | kqw | gdI | gn |
| Dhin –ta -ka | Dhin dhin dha dha | tin | ta | 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 |
| Dhā | Dhā | Dhin | tā | Kiṭa | tā | Dhin | tā | tiṭa | katā | Gāḍī gana |
| X | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 4 |

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

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 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”

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.¹

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.”²

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.

¹ AG, p. 642.  
² Mansukhani, Sikh Kīrtan, 101.
Part One: Śabād kīrtan and Punjabi Folk Music Influence

Śabād 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.³

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.⁴ 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

---
application of Śabad kīrtan and theoretical inclusion in the Banī of the Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib.⁵

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.⁶ 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 Šabads

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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⁵ Gurnam Singh, "Sacred Music of Punjab."
⁶ Alka Pandey, Folk Music and Musical Instruments of Punjab, 28-30.
Table 7.1: Thematic Classification of Popular Hymns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Shabad</th>
<th>Rāgā/Author</th>
<th>AG page #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Lifecycle Songs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>“Apune Har Pah Binatī Kahīār”</td>
<td>M4, Rāgā Dēvgandārī</td>
<td>AG, 561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>“Pūṭā Mātā kī Āsīś”</td>
<td>M5, Rāgā Gūjarī</td>
<td>AG, 689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement- Kurmāyī:</td>
<td>“Sat santōkh kar bhaō kūram kūrmāyī”</td>
<td>M4, Rāgā Sūhī</td>
<td>(AG, 776)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding Processions- Ghōṛīān</td>
<td>“Dēh tējan jī rām ūpāiyā rām”</td>
<td>M4, Rāgā Sūhī</td>
<td>(AG, 575-579)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding ceremony- Lāvān</td>
<td>“Lāvān”</td>
<td>M4, Rāgā Sūhī</td>
<td>(AG, 773-74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding songs - Chhants</td>
<td>“Mārēhis vē jan houmai bikhīyā”</td>
<td>M4, Rāgā Sūhī</td>
<td>(AG, 776)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirges – Alāhuṇiān</td>
<td>“Dhan Sirandā sachā pātīsāh”</td>
<td>M5, Rāgā Wadhans</td>
<td>(AG, 578-579)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads at time of Cremation</td>
<td>“Jai ghar kīrat ākhiyāṭ”</td>
<td>M1, M4, M5, Rāgā Gaurī Īlāji, Rāgā Asū, Dhanāsārī, Rāgā Gaurī Purābī</td>
<td>(AG, 1-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Seasonal/Temporal śabads</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads for spring</td>
<td>“Maulī dharatī mauliyā akāś”</td>
<td>Bhagat Kabīr, Rāgā Basant</td>
<td>(AG, 1193)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads for the rainy-season</td>
<td>“Rāṇē Kailās tathā Mālādē Kīdhunī”</td>
<td>M1, Var Rāgā Malār Paurī</td>
<td>(AG, 1279)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads for the twelve months - Bārāh Mahā</td>
<td>“Har Jēti Jurandā Lōryāṭ”</td>
<td>M5, Rāgā Mājh</td>
<td>(AG, 134)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads on division of a day into 4 “watches”-Pahare</td>
<td>“Pahilai Paharai nain salōnāristyē”</td>
<td>M1, Rāgā Tūkhārī</td>
<td>(AG, 1110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads for Day and Night – Dinrai</td>
<td>“Sēvī Satiguru āpana har smirarī chīn sabh rain”</td>
<td>M5, Rāgā Mājh</td>
<td>(AG, 136)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads for The Lunar Days – Titthi</td>
<td>“ēkam ēkānkarī nīrālā”</td>
<td>M1, Rāgā Bilāval</td>
<td>(AG, 838)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabads for the seven days of the week-Vār Sat</td>
<td>“Ādī Vār ādī purakh hai sōī”</td>
<td>Bhagat Kabīr, Rāgā Gaurī</td>
<td>(AG, 841)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Songs for Love/devotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaññan -</th>
<th>“Chētnā Hai To Chēth Lai Nis Din Mai Prāṇī”</th>
<th>M9, Rāgā Tilang</th>
<th>(AG, 726)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Songs of Separation - Biraharē | “Pārabrahm Prabh Simarīyai” | M5, Rāgā Āsā | (AG, 431) |

4. Ballads

| Vārs | Har amṛta bhīṅṅe lōṅṅā” | M1, 2, 4, 5, and Satta and Balwant in eighteen different rāgās | (AG, 462-475) |

5. Liturgical Hymns

| Anand Sāhib | “Anand bhaein mērī māē satigurū mai pāeiā” | M3, Rāgā Rāmkalī | (AG, 917-922) |
| Sō Dār Rahirās | “Sō dar tērā kēhā sō ghar kēhā” | M1, 3, 4, 5, 10 Rāgā Āsā and Rāgā Gūjarī | (AG, 451) |
| Arati | “Gagan mai tāl rav chand dīpak banē” | M5, Rāgā Dhanāsārī | (AG, 12-13) |
| Sukhmanī Sāhib | “Simaro, Simar Simar Sukh Pāvō” | M5, Rāgā Gaurī | (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.”

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7 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.” 8 Several rāgās included in the Gurū Granth Sāhib are linked to folk origins (Rāgās Āsā, Mājh, Wadhans, and Tūkhārī). 9 Rāgā Wadhans has been used extensively for folk compositions in lifecycle śabads pertaining to birth, marriage and death. 10 Two examples, Ghōṛīān and Alāhuṇīā set in Rāgā Wadhans, 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 Wadhans, 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,”

9 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.
the “spiritual consummation and bliss.” This popular Ghoriān, “Deh Tejan Ji Rām” in six-beat Dādra tāl, was transcribed from a recording of Bhai Avatar Singh.”

“Deh Tejan Ji Rām”

vadhans mahalā 4 ghorīā
ik oanīkār saīgur prasādh ||
dēh tējan ji rām oupāīā rām ||
dhann mānas janam pujn pāūā rām ||
mānas janam vaḍ punnē pācīā dēh su kanchan changārīā ||
gurumukh rang chalīāū pāvai har har nav rangarīā ||
ēh dēh us bā nki jīt har jāpī har har nām suhāvīā ||vaḍabhāgī pāvī nām sakāhī jan nānak rūm oupāūā ||1||

Wadahans, Fourth Mehla, Ghorées – 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. ||1||

Figure 7.2. Melodic outline of Rāgā Wadhanās

Raga Wadhans

Mukh Ang
Figure 7.3. “Deh Tejan Ji Rām”  

Deh Tejan Ji Ram  

**Raga Wadhans - Ghoriyan**  
**Dadra Tālā - 6 beats**  

Lyrics by Guru Ramdas  
Traditional folk tune  
Singer: Bhai Avatar Singh  
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

### Refrain (rahao)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gho ri dhēh</td>
<td>the ja na jee ram u pa ee aa raa ma dha na</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Verse (antarā)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maa na sa</td>
<td>ja na ma pa na pa</td>
<td>ee ma</td>
<td>raa m</td>
<td>ehe dhe su jhanam ma vadhi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Alāhunīā**

The *Alāhunīā* or dirge, another folk form in Punjabi, refers to a style of mourning song. Also sung in *Rāgā Wadhans*, this traditional folk lamentation expresses the sentiments of loss, sadness, and grief. In *Gurbāṇī*, this sorrowful experience is reinterpreted metaphysically as a means to point out the transience of existence and the ultimate consummation of marriage with the Divine. The hymn below, “*Dhann Sarindā sachāa Pātisāh***” is the first in a series of five *Alāhunīās* in the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. [Figure 7.4]

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“Dhann Sarindā sachāa Pātisāh”

vaṛṇ ghrādhām bhavī 9 ghar 5 alāhanīā

rhgu vfhMsu mhlw 1 Gru 5 AlwhxIAw

DMnu isrMdw scw pwiqswhu ijin jgu DMDY lwieAw

muhliq punI pweI BrI jwnIAVw Giq clwieAw

jwnI Giq clwieAw

iliKAw AwieAw ruMny vIr sbwey

kWieAw hMs QIAw vyCoVw jW idn puMny myrI mwey

jyhw iliKAw qyhw pwieAw jyhw purib kmwieAw

ā ga vaḍhans mahalā1 ghar 5 alāhanīā

ik oankār satigur prasād ||
dhann sirandhā sachā pātisāhu jīn jag dhandhhai āiyā ||
muhalat punī pā bhar t jāṁṛā ghat chalāeiā ||
jāṁ ghat chalāeiā likhīā āeiā runmē vīr sabāē ||
kāeiā hans thā vēchhōrā jāṁ din punmē mēṁ mēē ||
jēṁā likhīā thēhā pāeiā jēṁā puram kāmēiā ||

Raag Wadhans, 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||

\[13 \text{ AG, p. 578.} \]
Figure 7.4. *Alāhuṇīā in tīntāl*

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**Alahuniya** (Dirge)

*Rega Wadhans Tintal 16 beats*

Lyrics: Guru Nanak

Traditional folk tune

Arranged by Jan Protopapas

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Another lifecycle śabād is the Lāvāṅ, 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 Lāvāṅ is performed while the couple circumambulates a sacred fire. For each of the four rounds they make, a verse of the Lāvāṅ is sung. The
melodic outline of Rāgā Sūhī is provided (Figure 7.5), followed by a transcription of
the first verse of the Lāvān. [7.6]

“Lāvān”

sūhī mahalā 4 ||
har pehilarī lāv paraviraṅ karam dṛṅāeīā bal rām jīō ||
bāṇī brahamā vaedh dharam dṛṅaHu pāp thajāeīā bal rām jīō ||
dharam dṛṅaHu har nām dhiāvahu simrit nām dṛṅāeīā ||
satigur gur pūrā ārādhahu sabh kilavikh pāp gavāeīā ||
sehaj anand hōā vadabāaṅī man har har mū ā lāeīā ||
jan kehā nānak lāv pehiliā ārāmbh kāj rachāeīā |||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||

Figure 7.5. Melodic outline of Rāgā Sūhī

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15 AG, p. 773.
Figure 7.6. Lāvān

Lavan

Raga Subh, Rupak Tala

Lyrics by Guru Ramdas
Traditional folk tune
Arranged by Protopapas

Sohila

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

Seasonal and Temporal Šabads

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 (*pahāřē*), the days and

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16 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 (thiti), the months (Bārah Mahā) and the seasons (ratti). All of these compositions stress the importance of time, which functions as a phenomenological cycle of remembrance of the Lord. Along with these, sabads 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”

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{har jēth jurandā loriāi jis agai sabh nivanni} \\
\text{har sajan dāvāni lagāi kisi na deē banni} \\
mānak motī nām prabh oun lagai nāhi sanni \\
rang sabhé nārāinai jēthē man bhāvanni \\
jō har lorē so kārē soī jīā karanī \\
jō prabh kīthē āpanē sēī kehāi dhāhanni \\
āpānā līṭā jē milāi vichhur kio rovanni \\
sādhū sang purāpatē nānak rang māṇānī
\end{align*}
\]
In the month of Jayṭ’h, the bride longs to meet with the Lord. All bow in humility before Him. One who has grasped the hem of the robe of the Lord, the True Friend-no one can keep him in bondage.

God’s Name is the Jewel, the Pearl. It cannot be stolen or taken away. In the Lord are all pleasures, which please the mind. As the Lord wishes, so He acts, and so His creatures act. They alone are called blessed, whom God has made His Own.

If people could meet the Lord by their own efforts, why would they be crying out in the pain of separation?

Meeting Him in the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, O Nanak, celestial bliss is enjoyed.

In the month of Jayṭ’h, the playful Husband Lord meets her, upon whose forehead such good destiny is recorded. ||4||

Figure 7.7. Melodic movement of Rāgā Tūkhārī

Raga Tukhaari

Figure 7.8. Bārah Mahā

Barah Maha
Raga Tukhari - Dadra Tal

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

17 Gurnam Singh, Gurmat Sangeet, 216.
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.

Birahareē 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 Gurbāṇī 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 Ḍhādis (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.\textsuperscript{18}

To this day, the \textit{Vārs} of the Ḍhāḍīs can be heard daily at \textit{Dārbār Sāhib}. Another interesting performance of \textit{Vārs} is by a group of laypersons, which performs a processional-style service daily at \textit{Dārbār Sāhib}. This walking service, popularly called the \textit{chalna chaunkī}, is comprised of two groups with one section leading, and the other repeating the hymns \textit{a cappella}, verse by verse while circumambulating the \textit{Gūrdwāra}. They draw their repertoire from a small six-volume hymnal “\textit{Śabadam da Sangrāh},” containing a collection of nineteen \textit{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.\textsuperscript{19}

While \textit{Vārs} serve both secular and sacred functions, they are construed with sacred themes in \textit{śabad kīrtan}. Sikh Gurus composed twenty-two \textit{vārs} in nine different \textit{rāgās}, assigning folk tunes to nine of them. In his translation of \textit{Āsā di Vār}, Bhai Teja Singh postulates a connection between Greek odes and Sikh \textit{Vars}, 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

\textsuperscript{18} For a comprehensive study of this genre, refer to Michael Nijhawan, \textit{Dhadi Darbar: Religion, Violence, and the Performance of Sikh History}. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).
\textsuperscript{19} Interview with Jagjeet Singh, Amritsar, February, 2007.
between the sections of a Vār, which include Śalōk and Pauṛī, which he claims correspond to the strophe and anti-strophe format of an ode.²⁰

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.

²⁰Daljit 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.\textsuperscript{21}

These guidelines could be aptly applied to the śabad kīrtan singing tradition, which should be as Guru Arjan instructs: (1) continuously sung: “āṭh pehar gun gāē sādhū sangītai” (Twenty-four hours a day, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, in the Sādh Sangat, the Company of the Holy).\textsuperscript{22} (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

\begin{quote}


Sing, and listen, and keep love in your heart.
Your pain shall be sent far away, and peace shall come to your home.\textsuperscript{23}


\end{quote}

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


\textsuperscript{22} AG, p. 398.

\textsuperscript{23} AG, p. 2.
time of Gurū Nānak. In the Paurī of Japī Sahib, Gurū Nānak provides a three-part prescription for happiness by singing, listening to and keeping Gurbāṇī in the heart. Šabad 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 Pāṅch 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. 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.” For the Sikh, keeping the words of the scripture in the heart can guide and transform the

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24 Amritdhari Sikhs (initiates) are required to read /recite five prescribed hymns each day as per the dictum of Japī Sahib, Jāp Sāhib, Svaiyā, Rahirās, Kirtan Sōhilā.
25 The congregation is strictly prohibited from reading scripture in the inner sanctum of the Harmandir Sahib, as I found out myself during attendance at a prayer session.
26 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.⁷ 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 Gurbāṇī, the Anand Sāhib, is a liturgical hymn comprising forty stanzas, set in Rāgā Rāmkali. 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.⁸

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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⁷ Thomas J. Csordas, "Imaginal Performance and Memory in Ritual Healing."
customarily shortened to the singing of the first five and final verses. [Transcription 7.8 and 7.9]

“Anand Sāhib”

रामकली महाला ३ अनंद "

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||29

Figure 7.9. Melodic Outline of Rāga Rāmkalī

29 AG, p. 917.
Figure 7.10. Anand Sāhib

Anand Sahib
Raga Ramkali - tintal
(first Pauri)

Lyrics by Guru Amardas
Composed by Dr. Gurnam Singh
Arranged by Ian Protopapas

Raam ka li ma la tee jaa ek obkar sat guru parisad A nan da bhai yaa may ree

Percussion commences

maa ay A nan da bhai yaa may ree maa ay

sa ti gu roo mai paai ya sa ti gu roo mai

paai ya sat gur ta paai yaa saha ja say tee

man va jee yaa vaa dhaa ee yaa sat guru ta puai yaa

saha ja say tee mana va jee yaa va dhaa ee yaa

raa ga ra tana pari vaa ra pari ya raa ga ra tana pari

vaa ra pari ya sa ba da gaa van aai ya

Transcribed by author from live recording of Dr. Gurnam Singh, Glen Rock, NJ, August, 2009.
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 ṁañch banī (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 Rāgas: 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) is set in Rāgā Rāmkalī by Gurū Amardās. Refer to above description of the Anand Sāhib.

4. Mundāvanī and Šalōk – 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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31 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 Nāḍ 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.*

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**“Sō Dār”**

Me Chand karāṁ apnaṁ jhullaṁ 9
9heṁ maṁ Darbār ṇāmakhe ||
Me Chand dekha lekhaṁ me šabdu lekhaṁ śuthō bāghi mukh sambalhe ||
Bhante dekhe tānhe aṁśāṁ apārāṁ dekhe dekhe bāhchāne ||
Ldekhe dekhe rūna ṇaṁ niśiḥ bhajāṅi niśiḥ bhajāṅi dekhe dekhe bāhchāne ||
Bṛāhman ṇapate bhrūṇāṁ bhrūṇāṁ bhrūṇāṁ kāre ṇaṁ pahāṁ ṇaṁkāne ||
Bṛāhman ṇapate śuthō śuthō śīdate śīdate śīdate śīdate pahāṁ śīdate ||

sō dar rāg āsā mahalāṁ 1
ik oankaar satīgur 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 ||
gāvān tushhānō pavan pāneē baisantar gāvai rājā dharam dhūārē ||
gāvān tushhāna chit gunat likh jānan likh likh dharam bhīchārē ||

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10 *AG*, p. 8.
That Doorstep. Rāg Āsā, First Mehra:

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.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{32} AG, p. 8.
Figure 7.11 Sō Dār

Sodar di Chaunki

Raga Asa

Lyrics by Guru Nanak Dev
Traditional folk melody
Arranged by Jan Protopapas

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 Ārātī hymn, composed by Gurū Nānak in Rāgā Dhanāsārī, is a prominent prayer sung/recited daily by Sikhs. It is also a popular hymn sung communally by most Sikh congregations.

“Ārātī”

Rāg Dhanāsārī Mahāl. 1

Gagan mai tāl rav chand ḍīpak banae tārikā mandal janak mōr ||
dhūp malānalā pavan chavarō karē sagal banarāē fulfil jōr || I ||
kaisī ārātī hōē || bhav khandan tērī ārathī ||
anahātā sabad vājant bhērī || I || reḥāō

Rāg Dhanāsārī, First Mehla:
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.

What a beautiful Ārātī, 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.

|| I || Pause ||

34 AG, p. 13.
Figure 7.12. Melodic Outline of Rāgā Dhanāsari

Raga Dhaneshri

Mukh Ang

Figure 7.13. Ārati

Arati

Raga Dhanasari
Kaherva Tāda - 8 beats

Lyrics: Guru Nanak
Traditional folk melody

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

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 perceive 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 Chaunkī. 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 chaunkī 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.¹

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 chaunkī) and the language embedded in the experience. The

third section considers the social interaction of Śabed kīrtan through an analysis of the first service of the day, the Āsa Dī Var dī chaunkī, examining how Gurbānī is mirrored in the practice of praise.

Part One: Exploring the Language of the Hymns

Kīrtan Chaunkī as an aural experience

“मालान जूतै धरति तमी गाई लाडी”
Gāvīai sūnīai man rakhāi bhāo²

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

² “Sing (and listen) to the praises (of God) and keep them in your heart.” From Japji Sahib, 5th 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. 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.” 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.

In Sikhism, the script may be analyzed through the musical service, the kīrtan chaunkī. Because šabads 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 šabad 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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4 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.
5 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 Japī Śāhib (the first of the five prescribed daily prayers), Guru Nānak expounds the importance of listening on the spiritual path: “sunai sikh pīr sur nāth, sunai dharat dhaval ākās...”

The very act of entering the Gūrdwāra and prostrating in front of the Gūrū Granth Sahīb 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 Sufī 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). 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’).

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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6 “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 Japī Śahīb. Doabia, Sacred Nitnem, 24.


8 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.9 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.”10

**Kīrtan Chaupkī as an Embodied Experience**

*Rang hasēh rang rōvēh chūp bhī kar jāh
When one becomes dyed in God’s love, they sometimes laugh,
Sometimes weep or become silent.*11

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*).12 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

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11 AG, p. 473.
12 For more on *Rasa* theory, consult Kapila Vatsyayan, *Bharata: The Natyasastra*. 

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elixir, ever remains imbued. All other relishes wear off in a moment. 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 bī 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.

Figure 8.1. Kīrtaniyas immersed in the Śabad at the Adutti Gurmat Sāngī Sammelan, Jawaddi Taksal, Ludhiana, December 2006. (Author on far left)

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13 AG, p. 377.
14 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.
15 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.”16 Performance of Šabad kīrtan puts into play an emotional effect between the performer and the audience where identity is both constructed and reconstructed.

**Kīrtan Chaunķī as a phenomenological experience**

Sās, sās Nānak arādhe āth pahar gūna gāva
Breath after breath, Nānak begs to sing (God’s) praises
eight pahars (eight watches of the day)17

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.18

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 Šabad in Rāgā Sūhī: “Sās, sās Nānak arādhe āth pahār gūna gāva” (With each and every breath, Nanak adores You; twenty-four hours a day, I sing Your Glorious Praises.)19 Breath

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17 *AG*, p. 749.
18 For a comprehensive list of publications on Sikh music, refer to the bibliography.
19 *AG*, p.749 (translation from Sikhitothemax.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.20

[Table 8.1]

Table 8.1. The Eight Pahārs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Pahār</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st pahār of day</td>
<td>6 a.m. to 9 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pahār of day</td>
<td>9 a.m. to 12 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pahār of day</td>
<td>12 a.m. to 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th pahār of day</td>
<td>3 p.m. to 6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st pahār of night</td>
<td>6 p.m. to 9 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 In Indian system of calculation, the day is broken up into eight, three-hour periods called “pahārs.” 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\textsuperscript{nd} pahār of night & 9 p.m. to 12 p.m. \\
3\textsuperscript{rd} pahār of night & 12 p.m. to 3 a.m. \\
4\textsuperscript{th} pahār of night & 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. \\

\textbf{Part Two: Encountering the Kīrtan Chaunkī}

\textbf{The Kīrtan Chaunkī}

Śabād kīrtan unfolds in time and space through the kīrtan chaunkī or hymn-singing service. Chaunkī, 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).\textsuperscript{21} According to Kahn Singh Nabha, famed scholar and encyclopaedist of Sikhism, a kīrtan chaunkī should consist of four rāgīs who must adhere to the correct procedures for kīrtan.\textsuperscript{22} Bhai Vir Singh, renowned poet and scholar and eminent figure in Sikh Renaissance defines a kīrtan chaunkī as used in Gūrmat 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.\textsuperscript{23} A kīrtan chaunkī can also be referred to as Śabad chaunkī or śabad kīrtan chaunkī. All major gūrdwāras hold at least four kīrtan chaunkīs daily. From early morning to late

\textsuperscript{21} Harbans Singh, ed., \textit{The Encyclopedia of Sikhism}, 4: 452.
\textsuperscript{22} Kahn Singh Nabha, \textit{Gurushabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh}, 165–166.
\textsuperscript{23} Bhai Vir Singh, \textit{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

*Kīrtan chaṇkīs* 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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24 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 Chaṇkī system**

Historically, the system of hymn singing services, *kīrtan chaṇkīs*, 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 *Japji* was recited.”\(^{25}\) Mansukhani comments that the first session, a pre-dawn service, included the recitation of *Japji Sahib* followed by *Śabad kīrtan*, in turn followed by an evening session in which the hymns *Sōdar* and Āratī were sung.\(^{26}\) 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 Chaṇkī. *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*.\(^{27}\) [Table 8.2]

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27 *Rebābis* 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gurū</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Late morning</th>
<th>Noon/Afternoon</th>
<th>Evening</th>
<th>Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gurū Nānak</td>
<td>Japjī Sāhib</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sodar and Āratī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurū Angad</td>
<td>Japjī Sāhib and Āsā Dī Vār</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sodar and Āratī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurū Arjan</td>
<td>Āsā Dī Vār Chauṇkī</td>
<td>Ānand dī Chauṇkī</td>
<td>Charan Kamal dī Chauṇkī</td>
<td>Sodar dī Chauṇkī</td>
<td>Sukhasan dī Chauṇkī/ Kalyāṇ dī Chauṇkī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Macauliffe refers to the daily routine during Guru Angad’s time with these words:

It was Guru Angad’s practice to rise three hours before day, bathe in cold water, and engage in mediation 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.  

Along with the compilation of the hymns into the Ādi Granth Sāhib and the installation of the Guru Granth Sāhib in 1604 at the Dārbār Sahib, the fifth Guru, Arjan Dēv (1563-1603) also added three more services, bringing the *kīrtan chaunkī* number to five daily services. In addition to implementing this regime of services, Gurū Arjan also established an amateur class of musicians, rāgīs, who became

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proficient in singing kirtan in rāgās.\textsuperscript{30} 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 kirtan. According to renowned Sikh musicologist, Dr. Gurnam Singh, after the Guru period and up to the partition, fifteen kirtan chaunkīs were performed by both Sikh rāgīs and Muslim rebābīs at Dārbār Sāhib.\textsuperscript{31} 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 kirtan chaunkī performed daily, while most gūrdwāras hold at least two services daily.

\textit{Kirtan Chaunkī at Dārbār Sāhib}

The Dārbār Sāhib is an ideal site from which to experience the musical mosaic of this kirtan 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 kirtan 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

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Mansukhani, \textit{Sikh Kirtan}, 103.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Gurnam Singh, \textit{Gurmat Sangeet Parbandh te Pasaar}, 49.
\end{itemize}
of fifteen kīrtan chaṅkīs is performed daily at Dārbār Sāhib.\textsuperscript{32} The following chart provides the details and timings of each service. [Table 8.3]

Table 8.3: Fifteen Kīrtan Chaṅkīs at Dārbār Sāhib

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Pahār</th>
<th>Name of Hymn Service</th>
<th>Daily timings for Rāgī Jathas</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd pahār of the night</td>
<td>Tin Pahār dī Chaṅkī</td>
<td>2:45 a.m. to 3:50 a.m.</td>
<td>1st session of the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th pahār of the day</td>
<td>Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaṅkī</td>
<td>3:40 a.m. to 7:15 a.m.</td>
<td>2nd session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st pahār of the day</td>
<td>Bilāwil dī Chaṅkī</td>
<td>6:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.</td>
<td>3rd and 4th sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd pahār of the day</td>
<td>Bilāwil dī Chaṅkī</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. to 12:00</td>
<td>5th - 7th sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pahār of the day</td>
<td>Anand dī Chaṅkī</td>
<td>12 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>8th session. Concludes with Paurī and Anand Sāhib hymn followed by ārdās prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd pahār of the day</td>
<td>Charan Kamal dī Chaṅkī</td>
<td>1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>9th session. In which hymns of various rāgās appropriate to this time are performed including Rāga Sārang and other afternoon rāgās.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th pahār of the day</td>
<td>Charan Kamal dī Chaṅkī</td>
<td>3:00 p.m. to 4:20 p.m.</td>
<td>10th session. Kīrtan in Rāgā Dhanāsārī and other rāgas of the time ending with the hymn “Charan Kamal prabh ke nit dhaivon” and “Gagan main thaal”. Followed by Anand Sāhib and ārdās prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{32} 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:20 p.m.</td>
<td>Charan Kamal dī Chaṇkī</td>
<td>5:35 p.m. to 6:40 p.m.</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; session. Hymns of the time period are sung followed by reheras prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Sōdar dī Chaṇkī</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Āratī dī Chaṇkī</td>
<td>9:30 p.m. to 10:30 (end of daily sessions)</td>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; session. Also known as Sukh Āsan Dī Chaṇkī in which evening rāgas are performed concluding with the Kīrtan Sōhila, a praise song that is recited at the closure of the evening service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Kalyāṇ dī Chaṇkī</td>
<td></td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; and final session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kānraṇā dī Chaṇkī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 processionals) 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.
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 jorī, 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 Guru Granth Sāhib in praise of God or the Guru. This composition is sung in a slow tempo of either ektāl (a 12-beat cycle following khāyāl-style), chartāl (a 12-beat cycle following dhrupad style)

(3) Śabad in Dhrupad style: the singer recites a hymn from the classical dhrupad or khāyāl style entirely based on rāga.

(4) Śabad rīt: the singer recites a hymn in a light-classical style of singing still based on rāga.

(5) Pauṛī: the final composition of a kīrtan chaunkī related to the folk style of singing vārs. The Pauṛī is also sung in a special rhythm cycle of four beats.

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Part Three: Experiencing a Kīrtan Chaunkī: The Āsa Dī Vār Service

The congregation’s involvement in a kīrtan service is never more evident than in the early morning Āsa 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 Āsa 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 Āsa Dī Vār is based the traditional ballad-style poem, vār. The Āsa Dī Vār consists of 24 sections containing 24 Pauṛīs (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 Āsa 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. 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 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 ki 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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The melodic aspect of this musical liturgy is generally believed to have developed from the folk-based rāgā, Āsā Dēś. 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).35

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 mūlmāntra (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.

35 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

Har amrita bhinnē lōīnā manu pṛēm ratannā Rām Rājē.
Man Rām kasvaṭī lāīā kaīchan) soviṇā.
Gūrmukh raṅg chalūliā mērā manu tanō bhiṇnā.
Janu Nānak muski jhakōliā sabhu janamu dhanu dhaṅnā.

(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. 36

from Āsa Dī Vār, Chhant, Guru Rām Dās, Ghar 4. First Chakka

Statement of Faith (Mūlmantar)

Ik Ōṅgkār Sat Nām Kartā Purakh Nirbhaṅ Nirvair Akāl Mūrat Ajūnī Saibhaṅ 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.

Introduction and Musical Direction

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.

Salōk

Salōk(u) Mahalā Pahlā
Balihārī Gur āpē nīohārī sad vār.
Jin(i) mānas tē dēvē kē 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 ant delay

Pauṛī

Āpīnai āp(u) sājiō āpīnai rachoī Nāo.
Duyī kudrat(i) sājiāi kar(i) āsān(u) DiTHō chāo.
Dātā kartā āp(i) tūn tus(i) dēvēh karēh pasāo.
Tūn jānōi sabhsai dē laiśē dīj(u) kavāo.
Kar(i) āsaN dīṭo chāo.
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 Chaṅkī 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.”

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).

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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38 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.**

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**Liturgical repertoire of the Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaunķī**

The entire chaunķī 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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39 Photo by author taken at Keshgarh Sāhib Gūrdwāra, Anandpur Sāhib, July 19, 2009
the service.

“So speaks Bal, the poet: Blessed is Guru Rām Dās; joining the Sangat, the Congregation, call Him blessed and great.”

Figure 8.7 lists the series of liturgical passages included in the presentation of Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṇkī. Figure 8.8 provides an analytical division of Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṇkī into six units.

**Figure 8.7. Liturgy of the Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaṇkī**

Āsa Dī Vār - Ballad of Hope
Selected hymns – śabads that reinforce and complement themes
Selected mangalācharanās – hymns of invocation
Hukamnāmā – Word of the day drawn from the Guru Granth Sahib
Savaiye of Bhat– panegyrics composed by ballad singers
Anand Sahib – Verses of Bliss
Ardās – Congregational prayer

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40 AG, p. 1405.
"So speaks Bal, the poet: Blessed is Guru Rām Dās; joining the Sangat, the Congregation, call Him blessed and great."\(^{40}\)

Figure 8.7 lists the series of liturgical passages included in presentation of Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaunkī. While Figure 8.8 provides an analytical division of Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaunkī into six units.

**Figure 8.7. Liturgy of the Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaunkī**

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Selected hymns – śabads that reinforce and complement themes
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Hukamnāmā – Word of the day drawn from the Guru Granth Sahib
Savaiye of Bhatṣ – 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
   Śabād
2. Stanzas 5 – 8
   Śabād
3. Stanzas 9 – 12
   Śabād
   Processional of Gurū Granth Sāhib into Dārbār Sāhib
   Savaiyes by Prēm Singh
   Mangalācharaṇ
   Hukamnāmā
4. Stanzas 13 -14
   Anand Sāhib and distribution of Prasād
   Ardās
5. Stanzas 15-16
   Śabād
6. Stanzas 17-18
   Śabād
7. Stanzas 19-24
   Completion of Āsa Dī Vār dī Chaunkī

\(^{40}\) 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 Hukammā, 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**
The next table, drawn from transcription and analysis of an Āsa Dī Vār dī chaunkā 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 Chaunkī at Dārbār Sāhib

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Presented</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Execution</th>
<th>Composer/Rāgā/AG page number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A medley of invocational prayers “Mangalācharanas”</td>
<td>Recitation</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Āsa Dī Vār commences with a celebratory praise announcing the composer and tune in which this vār is to be sung.</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha (head rāgī)</td>
<td>M1. Rāgā Āsā, 462 - 475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Āsa Dī Vār commences with the first chhant and continues through the first four sections including Šalōk and Paurī: first through fourth chakka</td>
<td>Chhant – sung Šalōk – sung recitation Paurī – sung (1st time, then recited 2nd time).</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha Paurī is recited by tabla player</td>
<td>M4. Rāgā Āsā, 448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Śabad selection from GGS: “Prabh tērē Pag ki dhur”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha (congregants may join in)</td>
<td>M5. Rāgā Tōḍī, 716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Āsa Dī Vār continues: fifth through eighth chakka</td>
<td>Sung and recited</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Śabad selection from GGS: “Dhan Dhan karō mila sangata.”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
<td>Bhāṭ Bal, Savaiye, 1405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Āsa Dī Vār continues: ninth through twelfth chakka</td>
<td>Sung and recited</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The twelfth hymn: “Prabh mil mai” is interrupted by the sounding of the Nārasimhā horn,</td>
<td>Blowing of the Nārasimhā horn</td>
<td>Volunteer congregants</td>
<td>M5, Rāgā Malār, 1272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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which announces the arrival of the Gurā
Granth Sāhib carried on a palanquin from
the Akāl Takhat (administrative office).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standing with folded hands. As GGS passes them, as an act of deference they prostrate, placing their forehead on the ground then return to a standing position.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. As this processional takes place, the congregation is chanting “Satanām wāhēgurū”</td>
<td>Chanting, remain standing</td>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The GGS is placed on the pihara sahib (small raised platform), and arranged with a variety of richly-colored rūmālas (scarves), the congregational concludes with the Sikh salutation: “Wāhēgurūjī kā khalsā, Wāhēgurūjī kī fatēh!”</td>
<td>Chanting, chanting remain standing</td>
<td>Congregation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the GGS has been on the pihara sahib, all congregants take seats once again on the floor.</td>
<td>Seated</td>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllables that end in an uprising of the voice</td>
<td>Recitation (notice recitation styles)</td>
<td>Prēm Singh (Beloved brethren)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. Savaiye</strong> (panegyrics) of the <em>Bhāṣ̣s</em> (ballad singers). This morning’s selections are dedicated to praises of third Guru Amardās.</td>
<td><strong>Sung recitation</strong></td>
<td>Savaiyes various <em>Bhāṣ̣s</em>, 1389-1409</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13. Eleventh and final savaiye concludes with savaiye:</strong> “<em>ham avagūṇa bharē, ek guna nahēn, amṛta chād ek aradāsā bhāṭ ki rebētē ki, Guru Rāmdās rākhō sarānāvī</em>” in which the congregation joins in for the recitation</td>
<td><strong>Sung recitation</strong></td>
<td><em>Bhāṭ Bal, Savaiye</em>, 1406</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14. Two Mangalācharaṇs:</strong> (1) “<em>So kahe atal guru seviye ah sahaṣ̣j subhay</em>” (2) “Sadan sacha patsha sir saha de saho”</td>
<td><strong>Recitation</strong></td>
<td>M5, Śālōk, 1425  M5, Śālōk, 1426.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15. Hukamnāma</strong> with the praise: “<em>Satānām Śrī WāhēGurū sahib jī</em>” Dhanāsārī Mahala Panchavān: Jah, jah pēkō, tah, tah, hazūra…. “</td>
<td><strong>Recitation</strong></td>
<td>M5, Rāgā Dhanāsārī, 677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16. Āsa Dī Vār</strong> continues with the 13th chhant: “<em>Jin mastaka dur har likhiye, sat guru milia raam raje.</em>”</td>
<td><strong>Sung and recited</strong></td>
<td>M4, Rāgā Āsā, 450</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. After the completion of this section, the ensemble sings a śabād: “Hai hazoora katha dur patharo... Kabira ka swami rahiya suami.” (mixed Rāgā Bhairavi). (Bell from the clock tower can be heard sounding 5 o’clock am).</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
<td>Bhagat Kabīr, Rāgā Bhairō, 1160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The 14th chhant is sung by the ensemble</td>
<td>Sung and recited</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Anand Sahib</td>
<td>dharnā</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha and congregational response</td>
<td>M3, Rāgā Rāmkali, 917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Following the Anand Sāhib, the congregation rises and stands with hands joined in a prayer position and stands silently as ardāsī (assigned person who, standing directly in front of the Guru Granth Sahib, leads the congregation in the (official prayer and petition ardās). The ardāsī initiates the ardās with the phrase: “Bōlō ji wāhē gurū” (Respond dear congregants: “Wonderful is God”).</td>
<td>Recitation</td>
<td>Ardāsī assigned person who, standing directly in front of the Guru Granth Sahib, leads the congregation in the ardās</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Ardās (official prayer and petition)</td>
<td>Recitation Throughout the prayer, congregants are requested to respond. Ardāsī: “Khalsā ji, bōlō ji” (holy</td>
<td>Ardāsī / sangat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
brethren, please repeat)
Sangat: “Wāḥē
gurū, wāḥē gurū,
wāḥē gurū.”
Wonderful is God,
Wonderful is God,
Wonderful is God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>22. The prayer concludes with the Congregational praise: WāḥēGurū jī kā khalsa, wāḥēGurūjī kī fatēh!</th>
<th>Chanting praise/all sit down following The ardās</th>
<th>Congregation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the proceeding period, prasād, (lit. Sanskrit: blessed food, sweet pudding) is distributed to seated congregants</td>
<td>Seated</td>
<td>Congregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. The Āsā Dī Vār continues at the 15th section: “Tu hare tera sabho ko....” Section 16th is sung</td>
<td>Sung and recited</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. A śabād from GGS</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Āsā Dī Vār section 17 and 18</td>
<td>Sung and recited</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Śabād: “Ham mane arabī.....”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Āsā Dī Vār section 19 to 24</td>
<td>Sung and recited</td>
<td>Rāgī Jatha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annotation of Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaunķī

Thus commences the Āsā Dī Vār hymn. The Rāgī jathā commences this beautiful rendition of Āsā Dī Vār with the celebratory praise: “Ekōṅkār 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). 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). Following the twelfth chhant, the rāgī jatha sings another hymn: “Prabh milbē kī chā” (My mind wanders through the dense forest. It walks with eagerness and love, hoping to meet God).

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: “Satanāṁ Śrī wāhēgurū sahibjī” commences and is continued as the Gurū Granth

12 AG, p. 716.
13 AG, p. 1405.
14 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!” 15

The following section of the Āsa Dī Var dī Chaunkī consists of the recitation of famous savaiyes (panegyrics) of the Bhaṭs (ballad singers) by Prēm Singhs (assigned congregants). 16 The Bhaṭs (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. 17

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15 Khalsa belongs to the Lord and the victory belongs to the Lord.
16 Prem Singhs are congregant members who are assigned to sing selected hymns of the Bhaṭs.
17 AG, p. 1406.
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.18

My Friend is the True Supreme King, the King over the heads of kings.

Following this, the head Granthī, Singh Sahib Giani Jassinder Singh leads the congregation in two invocations, after which he announces the hukammāma with the praise: “Satānām Śrī Wāhēgurū sāhib ji 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 šabad by Bhagat Kabīr:

18 AG, p. 1425.
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.19

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.20

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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19 AG, p. 917.
20 Anand Sāhib consists of 40 stanzas. Conventionally a shorter form of this hymn, often referred to as “Chhōṭi Anand 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 ji, bōlō ji” (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 Gūrdvāra in New Jersey, who prefers to remain anonymous, I was provided with four examples of hymns that borrowed tunes of both popular film and Sufī ghazals. Two examples of Śabads that borrow from film tunes are Rākh lēhu ham tē bigārī21 (Save me! I have disobeyed You) sung to the popular Hindi filmi tune “Tu Sajana Barkha Bahār” and the hymn: “Kanthē mālā jihavā rām”22 (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 Hamāra23 is sung to the tune of a popular Urdu ghazal by Gulam Ali “Fāslē Aisē Bhī Hōngē” while “Har Kīyā Kathā Kahāṇīyā Mērē Piyārē” (The True Guru has preached the sermon of the Lord 24 is set to the Punjabi folk song “Hō Javē Jē Pyār” sung by famous Qawali singer Nustrat Fateh Ali Khan.

21 AG, 856.
22 AG, 479.
23 AG, 1018.
24 AG, 452.
While the singing of Šabads 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.²⁵

This chapter has explored Šabad kīrtan as a lived musical experience through the kīrtan chaṇkī. I have mapped out the sonic movements of Āsā Dī Vār service to show how the Divine Word as Šabad 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

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”

मेघि उभयगुण भूम वहं डटि निविस मंडलि पलति योलि तजन ||
सिंह मंडलित शिख निधु भजनी गे मंडलित निधवन तजन ||

सोि रामदास गुर्बल भान्न निल संगत ठानं ठानं कराहु ||
जिह सतिगुर लङ प्रानह पािल सो सतिगुर सिमाराहु नाराहु

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. 1

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 Šabad 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 Šabad kīrtan service.

Guided throughout by a phenomenological approach, I considered the role of time and space, the “how, when and where” of Šabad kīrtan, as primary in interpreting how Šabad kīrtan infuses communal identity and memory into the participants. From early morning to late evening at Dārbār Sāhib, Šabad kīrtan provides a sonic weave of phenomenological interaction pulsating throughout the

1 AG, p. 1405.
hours, days, weeks and months. Through this singing, a historical consciousness always connected to the present moment is continually 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 Šabad kirtan through the lens of phenomenology, I have suggested the relevance of a wider vision towards the study of Šabad kīrtan, which takes into account both the musical and extra-musical features of Šabad 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 Šabad 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 Ḍādhīs 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.

Šabad kīrtan and embodiment

I have also considered Šabad 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. Šabad 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.⁶

I examined this space through an exploration of the Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaunkī, which, by encouraging congregational interaction, provided an ideal musical and

⁶ 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. 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.”

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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(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.”

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 Šabad 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.\(^9\) Similiarly, 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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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 Šab ād kīrtan, but on studying the Šabad 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 Šabad 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 chaunkī 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 Gurdwāras, 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.

Vār of Bilāwal, Fourth Mehal:
One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru: Salok, Fourth Mehal:
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! \( \|/ \)\(^{11} \)

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\(^{11}\) 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 Gurgūrbs (festivals marking events in the lives of the Gurūs). The Sikh calendar is composed of twelve months as follows:

**Months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sikh month</th>
<th>Begins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chēt</td>
<td>March 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisakh</td>
<td>April 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jēth</td>
<td>May 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harh</td>
<td>June 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāwan</td>
<td>July 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadon</td>
<td>August 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asu</td>
<td>September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katik</td>
<td>October 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maghar</td>
<td>November 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōh</td>
<td>December 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māgh</td>
<td>January 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phāgan</td>
<td>February 12</td>
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</tbody>
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**Principal Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nānakshāhi Date</th>
<th>Gregorian Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chēt 1</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Accession of Gurū Har Rai and Nānakshāhi New Years Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chēt 6</td>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Gurū Hargobind’s demise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisakh 3</td>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Gurū Angad’s demise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accession of Gurū Amar Dās</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gurū Harkrishan’s demise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accession of Gurū Tēgh Bahādur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisakh 5</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Angad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisakh 19</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Tēgh Bahādar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth of Gurū Arjan</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nānakshāhi Date</th>
<th>Gregorian Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jēth 9</td>
<td>May 23</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Amar Dās</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jēth 28</td>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>Accession Gurū Hargobind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harh 2</td>
<td>June 16</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Gurū Arjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harh 21</td>
<td>July 5</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Hargobind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāwan 8</td>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Harkrishan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadon 17</td>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Installation of <em>Gurū Granth Sāhib</em> in the Golden Temple by Gurū Arjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asu 2</td>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Gurū Amar Dās’s demise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accession of Gurū Rām Dās</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Gurū Rām Dās demise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accession of Gurū Arjan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asu 4</td>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Accession of Gurū Angad</td>
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<td>Asu 8</td>
<td>September 22</td>
<td>Gurū Nānak Dēv’s demise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asu 25</td>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Rām Dās</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katik 6</td>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Installation of <em>Gurū Granth Sāhib</em> as Eternal Gurū at Hazoor Sahib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katik 7</td>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>Demise of Gurū Gobind Singh at Nanded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maghar 11</td>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Gurū Tēgh Bahādar, who was beheaded in Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accession of Gurū Gobind Singh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōh 23</td>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Gobind Singh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māgh 19</td>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>Birth of Gurū Har Rāi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisakh 1</td>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>The creation of the <em>Khalsa</em> (Sikh order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōh 8</td>
<td>December 21</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Gurū Gobind Singh’s elder Sons, Ajit and Jūja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōh 13</td>
<td>December 26</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Gurū Gobind Singh’s Two younger sons.</td>
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## Sikh Events by Guru

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gurū</th>
<th>Birthday</th>
<th>Gurūship</th>
<th>Death</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Nānak</td>
<td><em>Katik Pūranmashi</em></td>
<td>from birth</td>
<td>Asū 8 Sept. 22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vaisakh 5</td>
<td>Asū 4 Sept. 18</td>
<td>Vaisakh 3 April 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Angad</td>
<td><em>Jēth 9</em></td>
<td>Vaisakh 3 April 16</td>
<td>Asū 2 Sept. 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May 23</td>
<td>Asū 2</td>
<td>Asū 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Amar Dās</td>
<td><em>Asū 25</em></td>
<td>Oct. 9 Sept. 16</td>
<td>June 16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vaisakh 19</td>
<td>Asū 2 Jēth 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Rām Dās</td>
<td><em>Asū 25</em></td>
<td>October 9 Sept. 16</td>
<td>June 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vaisakh 19</td>
<td>Asū 2</td>
<td>Asū 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Arjan</td>
<td><em>Vaisakh 19</em></td>
<td>May 2 Sept. 16</td>
<td>June 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vaisakh 19</td>
<td>Asū 2</td>
<td>Jēth 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Hargobind</td>
<td><em>Harh 21</em></td>
<td>July 5 June 11</td>
<td>Harh 6 March 19</td>
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<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Har Rai</td>
<td><em>Māgh 19</em></td>
<td>January 31 March 14</td>
<td>Katik 6 October 20</td>
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<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Harkrishan</td>
<td><em>Sāwan 8</em></td>
<td>July 23 October 20</td>
<td>Vaisakh 3 April 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Tēgh Bahādar</td>
<td><em>Vaisakh 5</em></td>
<td>November 24 Katik 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Gurū Gobind Singh</td>
<td><em>Pōh 23</em></td>
<td>November 24 Katik 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.21

1.

Dr. Gurnam Singh, Sikh Musicology, 29-278.
4. 
Rag Gauri Guareri

5. 
Rag Gauri Dakhani

6. 
Rag Gauri Cheti

7. 
Raga Gauri Bairagani
8. Rag Gauri Purabi Deepaki

9. Raga Gauri Purabi

10. Rag Gauri Deepaki
11. 
Rag Gauri Malva

12. 
Raga Gauri Mala

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

19.
Raga Gujari

20.
Rag Devagandhari

21.
Rag Devagandhar
22.
Raga Bhihaagn

23.
Raga Wadhans

24.
Rag Vadhnas Dakhani

25.
Raga Sorath
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.
Raga Tilang Kafi

Mukh Ang

32.
Raga Suhi

Mukh Ang

33.
Rag Suhi Kafi

Mukh Ang
38.
Raga Gond

39.
Raga Bilaval Gond

40.
Raga Ramkali

41.
Rag Ramkali Dakhani
42.
Raga NaT Naraayan

43.
Raga NaT

44.
Raga MaaligauRa
45. Raga Maru

Mukh Ang

46. Rag Maru Kafi

Mukh Ang

47. Rag Maru Dakhani

Mukh Ang

48. Raga Tukhaari

Mukh Ang
49.
Raga Kedara

50.
Raga Bhairo

51.
Raga Basant

52.
Rag Basant Hindol
57.
Raga Kalyan Bhapali

58.
Raga Prabhati

59.
Raga Prabhaati Bibhaas

60.
Rag Bibhaas Prabhaati
Raga Prabhaati Dakhani

Mukh Ang

Rag Jaijavanti

Mukh Ang
Appendix C: Popular Tālās

Popular Tālās used in Śabad Kīrtan

**Pauṛī tāla:** 4-beat cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beats</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic syllables in Gurmukhi</td>
<td>ṭe ṭi ṭa ṭe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic syllables</td>
<td>ḡe ṭiTa ṭे ṭeṭā</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clapping</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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**Dāḍrā tāl:** 6-beat cycle

<table>
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<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ṭa ṭi ṭa</td>
<td>ṭa ṭe ṭa</td>
<td>dhā dhin dhā</td>
<td>Dhā tin tā</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

**Rūpak tāl:** 7-beat cycle

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ṭi ṭi ṭa</td>
<td>ṭi ṭa ṭa</td>
<td>ṭi ṭa ṭa</td>
<td>Tin tin nā</td>
<td>dhin nā</td>
<td>dhin nā</td>
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**Kehravā tāl:** 8-beat cycle

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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ṭa ṭa ṭe ṭi</td>
<td>ṭa ṭe ṭe</td>
<td>dhā gē nā ti</td>
<td>Nā gē dhin Nā</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Jhaptāl:** 10-beat cycle

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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ṭi ṭa ṭa</td>
<td>ṭi ṭi ṭa</td>
<td>ṭi ṭi ṭa</td>
<td>ṭi ṭi ṭa</td>
<td>ṭi ṭi ṭa</td>
<td>dhin nā</td>
<td>dhin dhin nā</td>
<td>tin nā</td>
<td>tin tin nā</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
**Ēktāl:** 12-beat cycle

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<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhin dhin X</td>
<td>Dhāgē tirakita</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tū nā</td>
<td>Kat tā</td>
<td>Dhāgē tirakita</td>
<td>Dhin nā</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Chartāl:** 12-beat cycle

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhā</td>
<td>Dhā</td>
<td>Dhin tā</td>
<td>Kiṭa tā</td>
<td>Dhin tā</td>
<td>Tiṭa katā</td>
<td>Gāḍi gana</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| X | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 4 |

**Dīpchandī:** 14-beat cycle

<table>
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<th>4</th>
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<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhā</td>
<td>Dhā</td>
<td>Dha ge tin</td>
<td>Ta tin</td>
<td>Dha ge tin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| X | 2 | 0 | 3 |

**Panjtāl:** 15-beat cycle

<table>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhin –ta -ka</td>
<td>Dhin dhin dha dha</td>
<td>tin tā dhin dhin</td>
<td>Dha dhage</td>
<td>Nadhatirakita</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

| X | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Tintāl:** 16-beat cycle

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<th>4</th>
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<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dha dhin dhin dha</td>
<td>Dha dhin dhin dha</td>
<td>Ta tin tin ta</td>
<td>Dha dhin dhin dha</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| X | 2 | 0 | 3 |

| Sum | Thali | Khali | Thali | Thali |
**Bīrlāl:** 20-beat cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhīn</th>
<th>Dhīn tirakita</th>
<th>Dhīn tirakita</th>
<th>Dhīn tirakita</th>
<th>Dhīn tirakita</th>
<th>Dhīn tirakita</th>
<th>Dhīn tirakita</th>
<th>Dhīn tirakita</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dhīn</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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”\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\multicolumn{7}{|c|}{Rahāō (Refrain)} \\
\hline
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\hline
SaRe & SaRe & SaRe & SaRe & SaRe & SaRe & SaRe \\
Ja & Ja & Ja & Ja & Ja & Ja & Ja \\
\hline
- & - & - & - & - & - & - \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\multicolumn{7}{|c|}{Antarū (Verse)} \\
\hline
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\hline
- & - & - & - & - & - & - \\
\hline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Appendix E: Format of Chauṅkīs

Typical format of services including recommended Šabads and rāgās

1. Āsā Dī Vār dī Chaunkī

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item presented</th>
<th>Šabad</th>
<th>Execution</th>
<th>Rāgā/author</th>
<th>Page in AG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Šhān</td>
<td>Rāgā Āsā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalācharan</td>
<td>“Dandot banda anik bār”</td>
<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabad-dhrupad ang</td>
<td>“Rāmīyā hō bārik tērā”</td>
<td>sung</td>
<td>Āsā, Bhagat Kabīr</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhant</td>
<td>“Hari amrīta bhinnē lōenā”</td>
<td>sung</td>
<td>Āsā, M4</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šalōk</td>
<td>“Ēkōngkār, satinām kartā purakh...”.</td>
<td>Tonal recitation</td>
<td>Āsā,</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Āpīnai āp sājio”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Āsā, M1</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šabād - rīt</td>
<td>“Sēvak kō nīkaTī hōyi Dikhāve”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Āsā, M5</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommended Rāgās: Āsā, Gauṛī Dakhani, Gauṛī Bairagani, Rāmkalī, Mārū Dakhani, Prabhāṭī Dakhani, Bhairō, Basant Hiṇḍōl, Prabhāṭī, Prabhāṭī Bibhas, Bibhas Prabhāṭī, Prabhāṭī Dakhani.

2. Bilāwal dī Chaunkī (first session)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item presented</th>
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<th>Execution</th>
<th>Rāgā/author</th>
<th>Page in AG</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Šhān</td>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Bilāwal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalācharan</td>
<td>“Dandot banda anik bār”</td>
<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabad-dhrupad ang</td>
<td>“Aisī prīti karō man mērē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M5</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabad</td>
<td>“Sānta pāyī gur satigur pūrē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M5</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Hū hari prabh āp āgam”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M3</td>
<td>849</td>
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</table>

Recommended Rāgās: Āsāwarī, Gūjarī, Dēvgandārī, Dēvgandār, Waḍhans, Tōḍī, Sūhī, Sūhī Kafī, Sūhī Lalīt, Gōnd, Bilāwal Gōnd, Basant, Bilāwal.

3. Bilāwal dī Chaunkī (second session)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shān</td>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Bilāwal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalācharaṇ</td>
<td>“Danḍot banda anik bār”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partāl</td>
<td>“Bōlahu bheīyā rām nām”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M4</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šabad</td>
<td>“Jīvahū nām sun?”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M5</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Hū hari prabh āp agam”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M3</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
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</table>

4. Bilāwal dī Chaunkī (third session)

<table>
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<th>Execution</th>
<th>Rāgā/author</th>
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<td>Shān</td>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Bilāwal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalācharaṇ</td>
<td>“Danḍot banda anik bār”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhamar</td>
<td>“Hamārai ēkai hari hari”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Tōḍī, M5</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šabad – rit</td>
<td>“Rūṛō man hari rangō lōrāi”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Tōḍī, M5</td>
<td>715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Āpanā āpo pāviyon”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Gūjarī,</td>
<td>971</td>
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5. Bilāwal dī Chaunkī (fourth session)

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<td>Shān</td>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Wadhans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalācharaṇ</td>
<td>“Phirata phirata prabh”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloka</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partāl/dhrupad</td>
<td>“Suhāvī Kaun Suvēlā”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Wadhans, M5, ghar 1</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šabad</td>
<td>“Hari kō nām sadā sukhadāyī”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Mārū, M9</td>
<td>1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Āpē kari kari vēkhadā āpē”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
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<td></td>
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### 6. Anand dī Chaunkī

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<td>Shān</td>
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<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalācharaṇ Sloka</td>
<td>“Phirata phirata prabh”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>GauRī, M5</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partāl/dhrupad</td>
<td>“Suhāvī Kaun Suvēlā”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Wadhans, M5, ghar 1</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabad</td>
<td>“Hari kō nām sadā sukhadāyī”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Mārū, M9</td>
<td>1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Āpē kārī kārī vēkhādā āpē”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommended Rāgās: Wadhans Dakhaṇī, Dhanāsari, Tilang, Bilāwal Dakhaṇī, Mārū, Sārang.

### 7. Charan Kamal dī Chaunkī (first session)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Shān</td>
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<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mangalācharaṇ</td>
<td>“Danḍōt banda anik bār”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>GauRī, M5</td>
<td>256</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dhrupad</td>
<td>“Mai har har nām sōv”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Sūhī, M4</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabad rīt</td>
<td>“Gur sajaN mērā mēli hārē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>WaDhans, M4</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Tū āpē hī āpī āpī”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
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Recommended Rāgās: Wadhans, Sūhī, Tōḍī, Sārang.

### 8. Charan Kamal dī Chaunkī (second session)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Mangalācharaṇ</td>
<td>“Ādī gurē namē”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>GauRī, M5</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhrupad/partāl</td>
<td>“Nirguna rākhi liyaa”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Tūkhārī, M5</td>
<td>1117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śabad rīt</td>
<td>“Ihī hamārai saphala kāj”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Mālī GauRī, M5</td>
<td>987</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“vadhī hū vadha apār tērā”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Rāmkālī, M5</td>
<td>965</td>
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8. Charan Kamal dī Chaunķī (third session)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Shān</td>
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<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Gauṛī Mājh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mangalācharan</td>
<td>“Wahegurū satiṇām”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Popular chant</td>
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<td>Dhrupad/partāl</td>
<td>“Hari rām rām rām rāmā”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šabad</td>
<td>“Charan kamal prabh kē nita dhiāō”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bilāwal, M5</td>
<td>806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šabad Sohila</td>
<td>“Gagan mai thāli ravi chand Dipāk”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Dhanāsārī, M1</td>
<td>13, 663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anand Sāhīb</td>
<td>“Anand bhaiyā mērī māē”</td>
<td>Sung Congregationally</td>
<td>Rāmkalī, M3</td>
<td>917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“vadhī hū vadha apār tērā”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Rāmkalī, M5</td>
<td>965</td>
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Recommended Rāgās: Jaitsrī, Tūkhārī, Bairāṛī, Rāmkalī Dakhaṇī,

9. Sōdar dī Chaunķī (first session)

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Jaitsrī</td>
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<td>Mangalācharan</td>
<td>“Phirata phirata prabh”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Gauṛī, M5</td>
<td>289</td>
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<td>Dhuūpad</td>
<td>“Hari jū rākhi lēhu pati mērī”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Jaitsrī, M9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Šabad madhyalāya</td>
<td>“Hari janu rām nām guna gāvai”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bairāṛī, M4</td>
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<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“vadhī hū vadha apār tērā”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Rāmkalī, M5</td>
<td>719</td>
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Recommended Rāgās: Jaitsrī, Tūkhārī, Bairāṛī, Rāmkalī Dakhaṇī,
10. Āratī dī Chaunkī

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Āratī</td>
<td>“Gagan mai thāl ravi chand dīpāk”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Dhanāsari, M1</td>
<td>663</td>
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<tr>
<td>Šabad</td>
<td>“Saranī Aiō nāth nidhān”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Kēdārā, M5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Šabad</td>
<td>“bisarat nāhi man tē hari”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Kēdārā, M5</td>
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11. Kalyān dī Chaunkī (second session)

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<td>Kalyān</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mangalācharan</td>
<td>“Balihārī is jāti kō”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Slōka, Bhagat Kabir</td>
<td>1364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dhrupad/partāl</td>
<td>“Hari jīō nimāNiyā tū mān”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Sōrath, M5</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šabad rīt</td>
<td>“sakhīsahēlī mērīyā mērī jindaRīyē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Bihāgarā, M4</td>
<td>538</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Āpē jant īpāiyān”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Bihāgarā, M3</td>
<td>556</td>
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</table>

Recommended Rāgās: Kalyān, Kalyān Bhūpāli, Asā Kāfī, Mājh, Kēdārā, Gauṛī variations, Gauṛī,

12. Kānarā dī Chaunkī

<table>
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<td>Shān</td>
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<td>Instrumental prelude</td>
<td>Sōrath</td>
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<td>Mangalācharan</td>
<td>“Bhai Nasan duramati”</td>
<td>Sung recitation</td>
<td>Slōka, M9</td>
<td>1427</td>
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<td>Dhrupad/partāl</td>
<td>“Bītā jaihē bīta jaihē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Jaijāvantī, M9</td>
<td>1352</td>
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<td>Šabad rīt</td>
<td>“Aisī māng gobind hī sidh saḍhikē”</td>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Kānarā, M5</td>
<td>1298</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pauṛī</td>
<td>“Tū āpē hī sidh saḍhikē”</td>
<td>Sung/recited rhythmically</td>
<td>Kānarā, M4</td>
<td>1313</td>
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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 Chaunkī after Sukhāsana - 9/15/06
- Amṛtsar, Dārbār Sāhib: Āsā dī Vār - 9/16/06
- Patiala, Interview with Jagpinder on Pilgrimage to Hemkunt- 9/28/06
- Amṛtsar, Shahīdī Smārak Gūrdwāra: Āsā Dī Vār - 9/18/06

October 2006
- Village Jagraon: Jasvinder’s Kurmāyī - 10/4/06
- Patiala, Dukh Niwarin Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Parikrama Chaunkī - 10/11/06
- Amṛtsar: Dīwālī - 10/2006
- Amṛtsar, Shahīdī Smārak Gūrdwāra: Āsā dī Vār - 10/22/06
- Amṛtsar, Dārbār Sāhib: Chalna Chaunkī - 10/22/06
- Patiala, Punjabi University: Gurmat Sangīt Festival - 10/28/06
- Patiala, Punjabi University: Gurmat Sangīt Competition - 10/28/06
- Sangrur, Mastuāṇa Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Šabad kīrtan for new saint installation - 10/30/06
- Anandpūr, Keshgarh Sāhib Gūrdwāra: Gurmat Sangīt Sammēlla - 10/20/06

November 2006
- Ludhiana, Bhainī 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 Chaunkī - 11/14/06
- Sangrur, Mastuāṇa Sāhib Gūrdwāra; Gurū Nānak’s Birthday - 11/5/06
- Ludhiana, Bhainī Sāhib: interview with Pyara Singh - 11/12/06
- Ludhiana, Bhainī Sāhib: Halē da Divan with Gurdeep Singh - 11/29/06

December 2006
- Ludhiana, Bhainī Sāhib: Jap Prayog - Halē da Divan - 12/2/06
- Ludhiana, Jawaddī Taksāl: Adutti Gurmat Sangīt Sammēlla - 12/6/06
- Ludhiana, Bhainī 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 chaunkī - 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: Akhaṇḍ 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 chaunkī 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 Chauṇḳī - 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. Shṛngar - Love, Attractiveness
2. Hāsyam - Laughter, Mirth, Comedy
3. Raudram - Fury
4. Kārunyam - Compassion
5. Bīhatsam - 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

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>18</td>
<td>112</td>
<td><em>Shān in Rāgā Āsā</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>116</td>
<td><em>Śabād in Rāgā Basant, Dhrupad Ang</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>118</td>
<td><em>Śabād in Rāgā Basant, Khyāl Ang</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>121</td>
<td><em>Śabād in Rāgā Śrī</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>136</td>
<td><em>Ghōrīān: “Deh Tejan Ji Rām”</em></td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>Anand Sāhib</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Āratī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>First Chhant in Āsā Dī Vār: “Hara Amṛta Bhinne Loena”</em> (M4, Rāgā Āsā, AG, 448)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Processional singing of “Satānam, Śrī Wāḥēguru Sāhib,” along with blowing of Nārasimhā horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Congregational salutation: “Wāḥēgurūjī kā khalsā, Wāḥēgurūjī kī āṭēh”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Savaiyye (panegyrics) of the Bhāts (ballad singers) (Bhāṭ Bal Jālap, Savaiye, AG, 1394)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Congregational singing of the concluding savaiyye. (Bhāṭ Bal, Savaiye, AG, 1406)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Recitation of the Hukammāna “Satānām Śrī WāḥēGurū sahib ji” Dhanāsārī Mahāl Panchavān: Jah, jah pēkō, tah, tah, hazūra....” (M5, Rāgā Dhanāsārī, AG, 677)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Group singing the Anand Sāhib (M3, Rāgā Rāmkali, AG, 917)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Group recitation of the Ardās, Congregational prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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)
Alāhuṇīā – 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
Ḍāḍhī – 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 Gobind 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
Dīkṛ – 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 Mangalācharan
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

Japī – 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

Mangalācharana – 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

Mīrirī Pirī – symbol for temporal and spiritual authority

Mīls – 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

Nagārās – large, animal-headed drums used in the Gurdwārā to make announcements

Narasimha – large brass horn blown to announce the arrival and department 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 Šabad

Panthīs – followers of Gurū Nānak

Pauṛī– literally a “step,” this six to eight line folk-style Šabad 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 Šabad that houses the central theme of the prayer
Rasa – the emotional state or quality of the Rāgā and Rāginī
Šabad – hymn, also the mystical sound.
Šabad kīrtan – hymn singing
Sanātan Sikhs – conservative Sikhs
Sangat – religious congregation or assembly
Šalok – 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 Šabad 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 Sangī
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 Ślokas and Paurī verse forms, using a simple four-beat ballad meter (Paurī tālā) with simple repeating rhymes
Vībhāg – division of a tālā into several units
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