

CLASSICS OF SIKH SACRED MUSIC

Āsā Dī Vār



Swarleen Kaur

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Swarleen Kaur

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by

Swarleen Kaur

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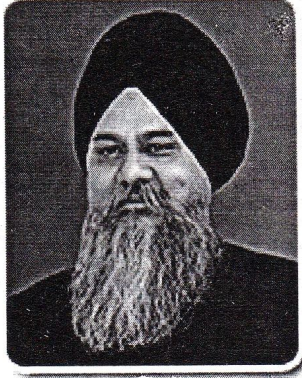
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Dedication



The Sikh sacred music is designed, propagated and traditionalized by the Sikh Gurus. Although the tradition is in vague since five centuries But its worldwide reorganization, at academics level, as Gurmat Saṅgīt got new facet, with the unending efforts and foresightedness of Dr. Gurnam Singh Ji, the founder of Gurmat Saṅgīt project, Punjabi University, Patīāla.

He is a man with the mission Gurmat Saṅgīt. The introduction of the tradition of Shabad Kīrtan, from school & college to University research level, could be materialized due to his efforts.

Due to his mission Gurmat Saṅgīt, now Punjab, Punjabi and Guru Nanak Dēv Universities, have introduced Gurmat Saṅgīt, as an academic stream or a part of music.

He did a lot to promote the tradition, not only in India, But world-wide. I got the idea to work for non-Indian, non-Sikh, students to get them relish spiritual melodies of Gurmat Saṅgīt, in their own format and language.

I owe and dedicate my work the legendary genius Sikh Scholar of the century, wholeheartedly. Akāl-purakh Wāhēgūrū May shower All His Choosiest Blessings to Dr. Gunam Singh Ji.

Swarleen Kaur

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Preface

The Sikh Sacred music is a musicological system designed, developed and propagated by Gūrū Nānakdēv Jī, the founder of Sikhism. Practical performances of the tradition can be witnessed at Sri Harimañḍar Sāhib, The Golden Temple, Amritsar. At present, this is known as Gurmaṭ Saṅgīṭ.

Gūrū Nānakdēv Jī, First Sikh Gūrū used music elements as primary tool to convey 'Dhur Kī Bāṇī', the Divine Words. It is known as Gurbāṇī, the voice of the Gūrū, the Guide to communion with Akāl-purakh, the All Mighty. The musicology emerging from headings, references and digit script of Gurbāṇī is called Gurmaṭ Saṅgīṭ.

At present Sikh sacred scripture, Sri Gūrū Granṭh Sahib, is worshiped, as living Gūrū. The sacred scripture was edited by the fifth Sikh Gūrū Arjandēv Jī, by collecting and publishing Shabadas (hymns) of his processors, in 1606 AC, at Shri Harimañḍar Sahib, Golden Temple Amritsar.

Sri Gūrū Granṭh Sahib is not only religious scripture of the Sikhs. It contains prosodic compositions of contemporary and predecessor scholars and social reformers, from different ways of life. The contributors include on Six Sikh Gūrūs & 4 Gursikhḥs (the devotees of Sikhs Gūrūs) whereas 11 Bhatas, 15 Bhagatas from different caste, creeds, areas and streams.

Gūrū Nānakdēv Jī addressed the Saṅgaṭ (congregation), using local dialect, language, music and prosodic forms, to enhance the effect of Gurbāṇī with the use of classical & folk melodies. As evident from the Index (*Ṭaṭakarā*). The Bāṇī scripted therein Sri Gūrū Granṭh Sāhib is classified into 31 ragas, known as Mukh rāgs of the Granṭh. The rāg forms/shades (Prakārs) also, placed under some rāgs used in Sri Gūrū Granṭh Sāhib. The tradition of Gurmaṭ Saṅgīṭ well equipped with its specially designed & formatted singing styles and forms. It is a blend of classical and folk singing styles.

Sikh religion developed and flourished in Punjab. The Sikh Gūrūs preferred to chose rāgs, singing styles, instruments from the folklore of the area. These are adopted in Gurmaṭ Saṅgīṭ tradition with some modifications suitable to religious canvas and communion with Akāl-purakh. These elements are being used in the traditionally since five centuries, to

convey Divine words, Gurbānī hymns, to congregation.

Singing hymns of Sri Guru Granth Sāhib is known as Shabad Kīrtan and it has become inseparable part of Sikh way of life. Classical singing styles includes Pade, Ashtpadi, Partal etc. According to musicology of Sri Gūrū Granth Sāhib, these compositions should be sung in Dhru-pad manner. The folk singing styles of Sri Gūrū Granth Sāhib are also an integral part of Shabad Kīrtan tradition of Gurmat Saṅgīt. These include Vār, chant, Paihrē, Soḍar, Pattī, Bārah-Māh, Ārtī, Kuchajjī/Suchjī, Thittī, Sohalē, Allāhuniān, Ghorhīān, Wanjārā, Karhalē, Anjalī, Bāvan-Akhrī, Din-Raiṅ etc.

Vār is a poetical narration of a story, divided into short stanzas. It is a traditional poetic style, of unknown authorship, having passed on orally from one generation to the next. Āsā Dī Vār is an important and most recited Bānī of Sri Guru Granth Sāhib Jī. Āsā Dī Vār is conceived as a combination of three words, Āsā means hope, Dī is used as conjunctive with the meaning 'of', Vār is an ode or lyrical verse/prose of folk tradition. Āsā is also a rāg, extracted from the folk tradition of Punjab.

Āsā Dī Vār is considered Ballad of Hope, by the devotees of Sikh religion. There is a belief that the listening or singing of Āsā Dī Vār, whole heartily, fulfills wishes and hopes of a real devotee.

Vār is used to instill martial spirit in the marshal armies, going to battle to destroy the enemies. But Āsā Dī Vār describes to fight with the enemies active in our behavior. It deals with the procedure to disband bad habits, and shows us the track to make ourselves pious to able to get communion with the Akāl-purakh.

The Dhunī headings are providing special features to singing of the ballad, the Vār. These are extracted from heroic deeds of the warriors of Northern India. These folk tunes are providing basis to singing of Vārs but also a valuable treasure for Indian music tradition. These headings shows the origin of rāgs related to these Dhunīs. It also advocates the central role of music tradition of Punjab in Hiṅduṣṭānī music system. Prescribed Dhunīs in combination with prescribed rāgs, establish peculiar folk singing style of Gurmat Saṅgīt. It is evident from the above articu-

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lation that Sri guru Granth Sāhib has a great importance in music, But not properly evaluated by the scholars and musicologists working in the Indian music stream. The untiring efforts of Dr. Gurnām Singh are laudable to propagate the tradition of Gurmat Saṅgīt worldwide in its true spirit and shape.

It is my humble effort to present the musicological system of Āsā Dī Vār to the non Puñjābī aspirants and researchers of Indian music tradition and Sikh Sacred Music.

The 24 units of Āsā Dī Vār are compiled in dual notation system using G-Saṅgīt and Staff notation systems along with the Gurbāñī Text, Transcribed using diacritics, enable the readers, to pronounce in a traditional essence of Gurbāñī recitation.

The Kīrṭankārs are instructed to sing Āsā Dī Vār on the tune of 'Tuñdē Asrājē Kī Dhunī'. There is an historic event, related to this tune. The term Tuñdā is used for hand amputee. The king of Asrāj (the state of As) was amputee from his hands on the his father, the king of the state. The deeds and ode of Tuñdā Asrāj were sung as bards in the typical fashion of his time. Later on Sikh Gurus adopted the tune to recite Āsā Dī Vār. Āsā Dī Vār is one of the basic sacred compositions of Sri Guru Granth Sāhib. It is sung in the morning congregations in Gurdwārās, all over the world.

VOWEL & PHONETICS COMPATIBILITY IN PUNJABI, ENGLISH AND HINDI

ਅ	a	अ	ਸ	s	स
ਆ	ā	आ	ਹ	h	ह
ਇ	i	इ	ਕ	k	क
ਈ	ī	ई	ਖ	kh	ख
ਉ	u	उ	ਗ	g	ग
ਊ	ū	ऊ	ਘ	gh	घ
ਏ	ē	ए	ਙ	ñ	ङ
ਐ	ai	ऐ	ਚ	ch	च
ਓ	o	ओ	ਛ	chh	छ
ਔ	au	औ	ਜ	j	ज
ਜਾਂ	ñ	.	ਝ	jh	झ
			ਞ	ñ	ञ
ਟ	t	ट	ਤ	t	त
ਠ	th	ठ	ਥ	th	थ
ਡ	d	ड	ਦ	d	द
ਢ	dh	ढ	ਧ	dh	ध
ਣ	ṅ	ण	ਨ	n	न
ਪ	p	प	ਯ	y	य
ਫ	ph	फ	ਰ	r	र
ਬ	b	ब	ਲ	l	ल
ਭ	bh	भ	ਵ	v	व
ਮ	m	म	ੜ	r	ड़
ੜ	rh	ड़	ਜ਼	z	ज़
ਸ਼	sh	श	ਖ਼	kh	ख़
ਗ਼	g	ग़	ਫ਼	f	फ़

MUSIC NOTES COMPATIBILITY IN PUNJABI, ENGLISH AND HINDI

ਸਾ	S	सा	ਸਾਂ	S	साँ
ਰੇ	r	रु	ਰੇਂ	r̄	रुँ
ਰੇ	R	रे	ਰੇਂ	R̄	रैँ
ਗੁ	g	गु	ਗੁਂ	ḡ	गुँ
ਗ	G	ग	ਗਾਂ	Ḡ	गं
ਮ	M	म	ਮਾਂ	M̄	मं
ਮ	m	म	ਮਾਂ	m̄	मं
ਪ	P	प	ਪਾਂ	P̄	पं
ਧੁ	d	धु	ਧੁਂ	d̄	धुँ
ਧ	D	ध	ਧਾਂ	D̄	धं
ਨੀ	n	नी	ਨੀਂ	n̄	नीँ
ਨੀ	N	नी	ਨੀਂ	N̄	नीं
ਨੀ	ṅ	नी	ਧੁ	ḍ	धु
ਨੀ	N	नी	ਧ	D̄	ध

Gurmat Saṅgīt : An Introduction

The Sikh Sacred music, known as Gurmat Saṅgīt, is designed & propagated by Gūrū Nānakdēv Jī. He used music as primary tool to convey 'Dhur Kī Bāṅī', the Divine Words. It is known as Gurbāṅī, the voice of the Gūrū, the Guide to communion with Akāl-purakh, the All Mighty. The musicological emerging from headings, references and digit script of Gurbāṅī is Gurmat Saṅgīt.

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Prominent Bāṅī contributors of Sri Gūrū Granth Sahib include Gūrū Nānakdēv Jī (1469-1539), Gūrū Aṅgad Dēv Jī (1504-1552), Gūrū Amardās Jī (1479-1574), Gūrū Rāmdās Jī (1534-1581), Gūrū Arjandēv Jī (1563-1606), Gūrū Tēgbahādar Jī (1621-1675). Other Bāṅīkār are Bhagat Jaidēv (1171-1204) a revolutionary poet of Bengal, born in Kendulī, Sheikh Farid (1175-1265) a Muslim Sufī Fakīr of Kothīwal (Pāk Pattan), Bhagat Trilochan (1267-1335) a Brahman of Barsī district Sholāpur (Maharashtra), Bhagat Nāmdēv (1270-1350) of Maharashtra, Bhagat Rāmānand (1366-1467) a Brahman, follower of Nirguna cult born at Prayāg, Bhagat Kabīr (1389-1495) a believer of Nirguna Bhagti movement, resident of Banaras, Bhagat Sain (1390-1440) a Barber, born in Bandhav Garg, of Rīva district, Bhagat Bēnī (14th Century), Bhagat Pīpā (1480-1568) a disciple of Swāmī Rāmānand, resident of Mewār, Gagraon, district Jalawar of Rajasthan, Bhagat Bhīkhan (1480-1573) Lucknow, Bhagat Dhannā (15th Century) from Jatt family a resident of Tak area district Dhuān of Rajasthan Birbhumi, Bhagat Ravidās (15th Century) a cobbler of Banaras, Bhagat Sadhnā (15th Century) a butcher by occupation born in Sehwan (Hyderabad), Bhagat Parmānand (15th Century) a Vaishnav Brahman born in Barsi, district Sholapur, Bhagat Sūrdās (16th Century) a Brahman of Brij.