

HAR AMRIT BHINNAY LO-INAA

*Aasaa Ki Vaar
(With Shabads)*

Gurbani Sangeet



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Aapay Patee Kalam Aap Aap Likhanhaaraa Ho-aa.

G.G.S.P. 968

**He Himself became the Tablet,
The Pen, The Scribe (of His Destiny)**

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A Brief Introduction to "AASAA KI VAAR" ‘Gurbir Singh’

‘AASAA ki Vaar is the universally renowned poetic composition of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the savior of humanity, the beacon of wisdom. The bani is found in Guru Granth Sahib Ji from page 462 to page 475. Along with this bani 24 Chakkas of Guru Ram Dass Ji also sung which are found on page No. 448 to 451.

It is well known fact that all the Vaars found in Guru Granth Sahib Ji are collection of pauries. Guru Arjan Dev Ji while assimilating Guru Granth Sahib added the related Slokas with the pauri and the remaining slokas were placed under the title ‘Sloks Vaaran Te Vadhik’ at the end of Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Originally AASAA Ki Vaar is comprised of 24 pauries and 59 related slokas. Out of which 45 Slokas are composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji and 14 by Guru Angad Dev Ji. According to the musical directions recorded at the beginning of the Vaar, it is meant to be recited in the tune of an old folk ballad which had as its hero-a prince by the name of Asraja called Tunda Asraj. The bani is being sung in Unison in the ambrosial hours (3.00 A.M. onwards).

From passage to passage the Vaar touches upon the several different themes, but one central point of emphasis is the state of man and how one may liberate oneself from the bondage of self and prepare oneself for union with Divine. The text is also strewn with telling social comment. The ills of contemporary life its inequalities and artificialities are sharply noticed.

Altogether there are 22 VAARS in Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Out of which 21 are of the Guru Sahibans Ji and 1 is of Satta Balwand Ji. The details are as follows.

<u>Guru Sahiban</u>	<u>VAAR</u>	<u>RAAG</u>
1. Guru Nank Dev Ji	3	Majh, Aasa, Malhar
2. Guru Amar Das Ji	4	Gujri Suhi Ramkali and Maru
3. Guru Ram Das Ji	8	Sri Raag, Gauri, Bihagara, Vadhans, Sorath, Bilawal, Sarang & Kanhara
4. Guru Arjan Dev Ji	6	Gauri, Gujri, Jaitsri, Ramkali, Maru & Basant
5. Rai Balwand and Satta	1	Ramkali

Details of PAURIES and SLOKAS

GURU SAHIBAN	PAURIS	SLOKAS
Guru Nanak Dev Ji	78	227
Guru Angad Dev Ji	—	63
Guru Amardas Ji	85	343
Guru Ram Das Ji	183	105
Guru Arjan Dev Ji	117	252
Rai Balwand and Satta	8	—
Kabir Ji	—	4
TOTAL	471	994

^{1*} In all these VAARS, the word preceding is 'Ki' not 'Di', therefore the right title is 'AASA KI VAAR'.

Our revered Fifth Guru – Guru Arjan Dev Ji instructed the 9 VAARS to be sung on 9 tunes (Dhuns). The tunes (DHUNI) on which the VAARS are to be sung are arranged as such in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji :-

	VAAR	GURU JI	Dhun
1.	Vaar Majh Ki	Mehlaa 1	Malak Mureed Chandhraha Sohian Ki Dhun
2.	Gauri Ki Vaar	Mehlaa 5	Rai Kamal Di Mauj Di Ki Dhun
3.	Vaar AASAA	Mehlaa 1	Tundey Asraja Ki Dhun
4.	Gujri Ki Vaar	Mehlaa 3	Sikandar Birahm Ki Dhun
5.	Vadhans Ki Vaar	Mehlaa 4	Lalla Bahleem Ki Dhun
6.	Ramkali Vaar	Mehlaa 3	Jodhay Veeray Purbani Ki Dhun
7.	Sarang Ki Vaar	Mehlaa 4	Rai Mehme Hasnay Ki Dhun
8.	Vaar Malhar	Mehlaa 1	Ranay Kailash Tatha Maal Deo Ki Dhun
9.	Kaanray Ki vaar	Mehlaa 4	Moosay ki Vaar Ki Dhun

Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji who institutionalised the concept of MIRI & PIRI to inculcate the spirit of bravery and Saint-Hood baptised the Sikhs into the saint, soldier spirit, had these VAARS sung by DHADIS in his Court on the above said DHUNS.

The details of RAAG, PARKAR and PARTAAL in which the BAANI of Guru Ji's and BHAGAT Ji's in RAAG ASSAA was composed is as follows :-

Guru Sahib Ji / Bhagat Ji	Shabad	Ashatpathi	Chhant	Pauri	Salok	Patti	Birhara
Guru Nanak Dev Ji	40	22			44		
Guru Angad Dev Ji	-	-	5	24	15	-	-
Guru Amar Das Ji	13	15	-	-	-	-	-
Guru Ram Das Ji	16	2	2	-	-	18 Band	-
Guru Arjan Dev Ji	163	2	14	-	-	-	-
Guru Teg Bahadur Ji	1	-	15	-	-	-	3
Bhagat Kabir Ji	37	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bhagat Naam Dev Ji	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bhagat Ravidas Ji	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sheikh Farid Ji	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bhagat Dhanna Ji	2	-	-	-	-	-	-

Aasaa kaffi
Aaasaavri
Aasaavari sudhan

partaal, 5 shabad
(page 408-409)

Legend of TUNDE ASRAJ

Asraj was the son of king SARANG. His wife expired when Asraj was still young & he was re-married in later years of his life. The new queen got infatuated towards Asraj. A young lad Asraj was of a holy disposition & had high moral values. He didn't succumb to her overtures. When she failed in her villainy, she was infuriated and brought about false allegations against Asraj and complained to the king. The king was enraged and ordered his son to be hanged till death.

The king's minister was a wise man. He didn't put Asraj to death, however, he cut off Asraj's one hand and left him in a deserted place outside the city. A caravan of traders happened to pass by that place. One of the traders took Asraj with him. When this caravan passed through another state, this trader sold Asraj to a washerman. Asraj started serving his new master very diligently.

It so happened that the ruler of that state died childless leaving no heir to the throne. His ministers conferred regarding accession to the throne. They decided that who-so-ever is the first person to knock at the gate of the city in the morning shall be appointed king.

Destiny favoured Asraj. His master (washerman's) bullock went astray and Asraj was making all efforts to find it. He woke up very early in the morning and set out in search of the bullock. In the process, he came to this city and knocked at the gates. Being the first man to knock at the gates, he was appointed the king of that state. Being of royal lineage, Asraj was endowed with administrative skills. He took over the reins of the kingdom very astutely. After some time, the neighbouring states came in the grip of famine but Asraj's state was flourishing. People started coming to this state to buy food-grains. His father's minister also came for this purpose. Asraj looked after him very well and sent him off with big stores of food-grains as a gift.

On return, the minister related the whole episode to the king by lavishing praises on Asraj. He counselled the king to call back Asraj and hand over the reins of the kingdom to him. In the meantime, the king had also come to know about his son's good conduct and his high moral values. He sent for him and appointed him the ruler investing in him all the administrative powers. This legend was written in the form of VAAR which the 'Dhadis' sang and obtained handsome rewards from the king's court.

Guru Ji instructed AASAA-Ki-VAAR to be sung on the musical-notes of this VAAR.

1. Rules and features of Raag Formation.

1. THAAT

1. Collection of seven notes in a sequential order of ascent and which form basis of a Raag are defined as 'Thaat'.
2. Thaat gives the information regarding use of 'Komal' and 'Tivra' notes. Bhatkhande ji has given it in ten series.

Sr. No.	RAAG	Description	Example
1.	Bilawal	All Shudh notes	Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Śa
2.	Khamaj	<u>Ni</u> Komal	Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha <u>Ni</u> Śa
3.	Yaman	¹ Ma Tivra	Sa Re Ga ¹ Ma Pa Dha Ni Śa
4.	Kafi	<u>Ga</u> <u>Ni</u> Komal	Sa Re <u>Ga</u> Ma Pa Dha <u>Ni</u> Śa
5.	Bhairi	<u>Re</u> <u>Dha</u> Komal	Sa <u>Re</u> Ga Ma Pa <u>Dha</u> Ni Śa
6.	Marwa	<u>Re</u> Komal, ¹ Ma Tivra	Sa <u>Re</u> Ga ¹ Ma Pa Dha Ni Śa
7.	Aasaawari	<u>Ga</u> <u>Dha</u> <u>Ni</u> Komal	Sa Re <u>Ga</u> Ma Pa <u>Dha</u> <u>Ni</u> Śa
8.	Poorvi	<u>Re</u> <u>Dha</u> Komal, ¹ Ma Tivra	Sa <u>Re</u> Ga ¹ Ma Pa <u>Dha</u> Ni Śa
9.	Bhairavi	<u>Re</u> <u>Ga</u> <u>Dha</u> <u>Ni</u> Komal	Sa <u>Re</u> <u>Ga</u> Ma Pa <u>Dha</u> <u>Ni</u> Śa
10.	Todi	¹ Ma Tivra, <u>Re</u> <u>Ga</u> <u>Dha</u> Komal	Sa <u>Re</u> <u>Ga</u> ¹ Ma Pa <u>Dha</u> Ni Śa

2. Jatee

The number of Notes used in a Raag, forms its Jatee. Three main types of Jatees are:

1. Audav - Audav (5-5 SWAR)
2. Shadav - Shadav (6-6 SWAR)
3. Sampuran- Sampuran (7-7 SWAR)

But because of change in number of notes in 'Aaroh' & 'Avroh' the 'Jatees' also change. Thus, there are total nine Jatees.

Sr. No.	Notes of Aaroh	Notes in Avroh	Jatee's Name
1.	5	5	Audav - Audav
2.	5	6	Audav - Shadav
3.	5	7	Audav - Sampuran
4.	6	5	Shadvav - Audav
5.	6	6	Shadvav - Shadav
6.	6	7	Shadvav - Sampuran
7.	7	5	Sampuran - Audav
8.	7	6	Sampuran - Shadav
9.	7	7	Sampuran - Sampuran

NOTE: The Raags in which sur-sankhya is not fixed, their Jatee Vakar is considered complete.

3. **Time factor or Time period:** It is the distinction of Gurmat Sangeet that every Raag has a prescribed time for singing, when its beauty is heightened and the aura and ambience related to it increases manifold. The division of the time period is as follows:

- a) First quarter of the day 04.00 A.M.-07.00 A.M.
- b) Second quarter of the day 07.00 A.M.-10.00 A.M.
- c) Third quarter of the day 10.00 A.M.-01.00 P.M.
- d) Fourth quarter of the day 01.00 P.M.-04.00 P.M.

- a) First quarter of the night 04.00 P.M.-07.00 P.M.
- b) Second quarter of the night 07.00 P.M.-10.00 P.M.
- c) Third quarter of the night 10.00 P.M.-01.00 A.M.
- d) Fourth quarter of the night 01.00 A.M.-04.00 A.M.

Aaroh (Ascent)

Ascent refers to the 'upward' motion from lower notes to higher notes.

For Example: The Ascent of Raag Kalyan is

Ṇi Re Ga [!]Ma Dha Ni Ṣa

Avroh (Descent)

The 'downward movement' from higher to lower notes is called a 'descent' of the Raag.

For Example: The descent of Raag Kalyan is

Ṣa Ni Dha Pa [!]Ma Ga Re Sa

PAKAR

That special combination of musical-notes (SUR SMOOH) with which the RAAG can be recognised instantly is called PAKAR (MUKH ANG) or most important aspect. Every musical composition (RAAG) consists of two or three such special groups, out of which any one can be given the title PAKAR. This is the reason why the PAKAR pieces are found separately; for example the most important part of RAAG BILAWAL is :

Ga Re Ga Pa, Dha Pa, Ma Ga, Ma Re Sa

VAADI SUR

In the contemporary RAAGS, VAADI SUR has the utmost importance. In the empire of RAAGS, VAADI SUR is compared to an emperor. Its use is much more than other SURS. The uniqueness of the RAAG is dependent on these SURS.

The following points are worthy if paying special attention to :

1. SUR which is used maximum in the RAAG is VAADI SUR.
2. The aesthetics (heavenly) of the RAAG is dependent on VAADI SUR.
3. By changing the VAADI SUR, many new RAAGS have been created and many more can be created.
4. The RAAG is recognised by the VAADI SUR group from among the many SUR groups.
5. Among the contemporary RAAGS, VAADI SUR holds the prime place.

SAMVAADI SUR

The word SAMVAADI is a combination of SAM + VAADI meaning equal to VAADI SUR but it is counted at second place to VAADI SUR because it is used lesser than VAADI SUR. If VAADI is at the 21st position, SAM VAADI is at the 19th position. Hence SAMVAADI SUR is that which is used less than the main SUR in a RAAG.

Every RAAG contains pairs of such VAADI - SAMVAADI SURS on which the full expansion of a RAAG depends. In these pairs of VAADI & SAM VAADI, elements of SUR – SAMVAAD are present because these are made on SARAJ – PANCHAM and SARAJ MADHIAM for example SARAJ PANCHAM pairs are made as follows :

Sa: Pa, Re: Dha, Ga Ni, M: Sa.

SARAJ MADHIAM pairs are –

Sa: Ma, Re: Pa, Ga Dha, Ma: NI & Pa: Sa

NIAS

NIAS has special importance in the RAAG formation. The SUR on which a GEET or ALAP ends, that last SUR is called NIAS SUR.

PURVANG – UTRANG

SAPTAK has been divided in two. The first part from SARAJ to PANCHAM is called PURVANG; the second from MADHIAM to TAAR SAPTAK SARAJ is called UTRANG. Just as 24 hours of the day are divided in two parts – 12 O'clock of day to 12 O'clock of night is called PURVANG; 12 O'clock of night to 12 O'clock of day is called UTRANG of time. The VAADI SWAR of the RAAG which falls in the SAPTAK of PURVANG, meaning the five SWARS (notes) of SARAJ, their singing time is also in the PURVANG of time. The singing time of such RAAGS is also in the PURVANG time of the day i.e. from 12 O'clock of day to 12 O'clock of night. The RAAGS sung in this time are called PURAV RAAG. Similarly, the VAADI Swar of the RAAGS falls in SAPTAK of UTRANG, meaning from medium to TAAR SARAJ, their rhythm also comes (falls) in the SAPTAK of UTRANG. Their singing time is also the UTRANG of time i.e. from 12 O'clock (night) to 12 O'clock (day).

TEERO-BHAV – AVIR BHAV

TEERO-BHAV : Some singing maestros, during the expansion of RAAG, create an amazing affect among the listeners (audience) by creating an illusion of SAMPRA KRITIK RAAG. At such juncture, the audience definitely hear the reflection of the other RAAG.

Great singers and musicians try to keep the main RAAG illusive during its expansion by using some pieces of similar RAAGS thus creating doubts among the audience. This doubt is the TEERO-BHAV. For example, during singing of BASANT RAAG, if stress is laid on NI Sur, doubt is created its being PARAJ RAAG and BASANT RAAG is hidden. By doing this TEERO BHAV is created but soon reverting to the main application, AVIR BHAV is created.

AVIR BHAV : With the presence of TEERO BHAV, it becomes imperative to mitigate this effect by using the prime note-combination so that the reflection of similar RAAGS is evaporated from the minds of the audience. This way, the effort to remove the TEERO BHAV is called AVIR BHAV.