CHAPTER VII
(GURMAT SANGEET VERSUS INDIAN MUSIC)

Music is an universal art. The swaras, talas and rhythm of music are features, accepted at international level but their practical use differs from country to country according to the diverse nature and varied interests and traditions of the people of the region. Music comprises two components. First is swara and the second is tala. In brief we can say that music is such a fine art as a musician employees to express the intense feelings through the medium of swara and tala.

Indian Music

In ancient times, music was known as Gandharva Kala which latter assumed the name of Sangeet. The word Gandharva used for the singing of Ramayana by Lax and Kush is also found in Balmiki's Ramayana which is used for singing and playing upon musical instruments. 266 Bharat Muni also used the word Gandharva for singing and playing the instruments. 267 The word Sangeet is today used for the same purposes.

In Nardy-Shiksha, Gandharva is defined as follows:-

"In word Gandharva, the word Ga stands for Gay or

266 Devangan, Tulsi Ram, in his article Namara Bhakti Sangeet in Bhakti Sangeet Anh, op. cit., P. 10.
267 Quoted by Devangan, Tulsi Ram, Namara Bhakti Sangeet, op. cit., p. 10."
singing, Dha for playing upon the musical instruments and Va for musical instruments. Even today when singing, playing upon the instruments and dance items are presented in any programme, that programme is called Music and Dance programme. From this, it is quite clear that the word music generally means playing upon the musical instruments as well as singing.

According to Sharang Dev's Sangeet Ratnakar, the base book of Indian music (as already stated) the modern definition of Indian music from the point of view of the classical music, is as follows:

"Music consists of three arts i.e. singing, playing upon the musical instruments and dancing." The definitions of Indian music found in other books of music like Sangeet Darpan, Sangeet Nahrend, or Sangeet Parjan written afterwords are similar to the Sharang Dev's definition.

The basis of Indian music is sound (Naad). According to the Bharti Sangeet Kosh, Naad (sound) and God have similar characteristics which cannot be described in words. That is why, Raj Yogi Maharaj Shrtrihari, in his book Vakvanadi has recognised Naad.

266. Quoted by Devangen, Bhakti Sangeet Ank, op. cit., p. 10.
269. Garg, Sangeet Sagar, op. cit., p. 3.
In Gurbani, Shabad is used for Naad. According to Guru Amar Dass Ji, the beginning and the end of the whole universe is due to Naad.

While describing the immense power and purview of music, Dr. Seman says that we can express ourselves better in a single musical note than writing an essay. According to Guru Nanak Dev, the musician (shadi) has the capacity to describe God though God cannot be described in words. Music is a multifaceted fine art. But, in brief, it can be said that the mystery of Indian music lies hidden in twenty-two shadujas of seven swaras and the ten sounds (Varana) of talas.

Although the origin of music is related to the origin of human civilisation, yet it developed under the rituals of the society. It is a proved fact that there had always been a deep relationship between Indian music and the remembrance of God.

India has produced so many saint-musicians who took music as a medium for the worship and attainment of God instead of taking it merely as a fine art. They made it an indispensable and integral part of their lives. These saint-musicians would sing in such a blissful state

274. Guru Granth Sahib, op.cit., p.149.
of mind that their minds would get attuned to God. Meera, Surdas, Chaitanya were among them. Indian music is literature oriented. While singing the *pada* of Meera, Surdas and Tulsidas, people are so deeply affected that they become indifferent to the worldly affairs.

Compositions imbued with devotional feelings (*bhakti kavya*) are called *Shejans*. These devotional sings of bhakti theme are free from the bindings of *Chhand* and *awara*. Shejans are sung in *rasa* and *tala* individually or in congregation. It is called *Kirtan*. Generally, the compositions of saints are used for *Kirtan* but the songs and verses of scholars are also sung and used for *Kirtan*. According to another view, the recitation or singing of the name and the qualities of God in a spirit of dedication and devotion to God through the medium of *awara* and *tala* is called *Kirtan*. During such *kirtan* the ecstatic devotees start dancing while musical instruments like *Kirtal*, *Mridanga*, *Pakhwaj* etc., are being played.

Among the various forms of poetry, only the (lyric) *geet* form is used for *Kirtan*. All the songs sung are devotional in nature though they may be of any *rasa* or *bheya*. All the saint-musicians adopted the tradition of *Kirtan*. The saint-poets and musicians like Tulsidas, Surdas, Meera and many others

contributed a lot in this respect. Kirtan is mainly of four types. 276

1) **Yatra Kirtan**
2) **Ashatyan Kirtan**
3) **Vichay Kirtan**
4) **Shajan Kirtan**

**Gurbani or Gurmuk Sangeet**

Gurmuk Sangeet is a different type of music. The basis of *Gurmuk Sangeet* is Indian music. But it has its special characteristics too which enabled it to have its distinct position in Indian music.

According to Prof. Tara Singh, as already stated, *Gurbani Sangeet* is the melodious kirtan of *Gurbani*, in prescribed *raga* and *tala*, with the accompaniment of musical instruments and in the presence of the Guru and the congregation in which due attention is given to * саха* and the number of stanzas written at the end of each *shabad*. 277 This type of *Kirtan* leads listeners to an ecstatic state of mind in which they become oblivious of their worldly existence and its fever and fret. The state thus produced is called *Sahel - Avastha*.

Guru Nanak Dev is the propounder of *Gurmuk*.


Sangeet. He endowed music with a spiritual and devotional touch. He brought *Kirtan* within the purview of classical music. No human being is indifferent to the effect of music. Music in fact, has the power to move even animals and plants, the modern research has proved.

Guru Nanak Dev took pride in being known as a musician (Dhadi). In *Gurbani* we find the word Dhadi at many places which the Guru used for himself:

"He, the bard out of work, the Lord has applied to His service. In the very beginning, He gave me the order to sing His praises night and day." In his *bhani* Guru Nanak Dev used suitable *renga* for the expression of different emotions. There is a close relationship between the content of the hymn and the *reng* of the *renga* used for that hymn. The Guru used *Sri*, *Gauri*, *Rambali* and *Bhairava* *renga* for the expression of the emotions of sobriety, grief and mental contentment, whereas *Bilawal*, *Suhi*, *Bhagwa*, *Basant* and *Malhar* *renga* are used for the expression of feelings of joy and happiness. *Gurbani* *Sangeet* has its semblance with the ancient *Narada Sangeet* of Indian music. Its aim was to develop the Indian music, while using it only for spiritual ends.

In *Gurbani* there are many instances to prove that music is not an end in itself but is a means to a higher and nobler end, that is, the remembrance and attainment of God.\(^\text{279}\)

**Gurbani Sangeet Versus Indian Music**

In *Gurbani Sangeet* only those hymns are used for *Kirtan* which are included in *Shri Guru Granth Sahib* whereas in Indian Music the compositions of other writers in addition to the hymns of saints can also be sung in *Kirtan*.

The main difference between *Gurbani Sangeet* and Indian music is in their aims and objectives. Worship, remembrance of God and welfare of humanity is the only object of *Gurbani Sangeet* but Indian music has generally been used for entertainment as well except during the period of Bhakti movement and the Vedic Age, when it was used for the worship and attainment of God.

The diction used for *Gurbani Sangeet* is related to spiritualism whereas in the literature of Indian music, most of the compositions are of *Shingar rasa*. Music was used to flatter and to please the kings and emperors sometimes. Even today music is employed by some purveyors of musical arts as a means of mundane

furtherance. There is no place for music for its own sake in Gurbani Sangeet. Music is considered not an aim in itself but a medium for the expression of finer feelings pervading in the Gurbani. In brief, Indian music is awaare-dominated whereas Shabad is the dominating factor in Gurbani. That is why no importance is given to Tanas, Qawwak, Ley Kervan, Meendi, Sargama etc. in Gurbani Sangeet.

In Gurbani Sangeet, out of three components of music i.e. singing, playing the instruments and dancing, singing is given priority over the other two. Playing the instruments is secondary to singing and physical dance is not allowed in Gurmast Sangeet. But about the dance of the inner mind it is written as follows:

"Dance, O my mind before thy Guru." In abode incestual奔赴 in his exhibiting his dalliance. Such a dancer is born not again.  

In Gurbani Sangeet, the first and the most important musical instrument is Rabab. After that Guru Amar Das inented Sirenda and used it as an accomaniment to Kirtan. Now-a-days some kirtankars have started using Dilruba, Sitar, Veilin and Harmonium in Kirtan. For rhythm Mirdang Pakhawaj and Tabla are used. There is no place for solo vadan (playing the instruments) in Gurbani Sangeet whereas in Indian

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281. Ibid., Malha-5, Rag Ramkali, p. 889.
musical tradition, it has a unique position.

Four sittings (Chaunkis) every day for the remembrance of God are in practice in Gurmee Sangeet tradition. These are, 

Aae-Dae-Var Di Chaunki, Allawal Di Chaunki, Sodey-Di-Chaunki and Kirtan-Sabhe Di Chaunki. This tradition has been in vogue in Shri Darbar Sahib Amritsar since the time of Guru Arjun Dev. But in Indian music, there is no such system prevailing at any religious centre in India.

In Gurbani Sangeet special attention is given to Rehao. The line of a Shabad with Rehau word is taken as Santal for the singing of Shabad, because the central idea of that hymn is expressed in that very line. As Gurbani sangeet is Shabad dominant, so it is sung according to the above mentioned technique. While singing Gurbani, proper attention is given to the number of stanzas written at the end of each Shabad because there is one complete Antre in one number. After singing one stanza the Santal is repeated. In Gurmee Sangeet there can be more than one Santal in one Shabad. But in Indian music there is only one Santal in one composition. This is a technical difference between Gurmee Sangeet and Indian music.

In Gurmee Sangeet the kirtankars are not appreciated by way of clapping or by saying Aali Aali as it is generally done in the concerts of Indian music. Gurmee Sangeet is for the worship of God and
not for entertainment of the audience.

According to the time theory of Indian music, there is a fixed time for the singing of each _raga_. We often see exceptions to it in the concerts of Indian music but in _Gurbani Sangeet_ this theory is strictly followed e.g. Bihagra _Raga_ is sung only in the second _Pahar_ of the night. Guru Arjun Dev composed a _shabad_ in this _raga_, the wording of which is quite in tune with the _raga_ of this _raga_:

_Vadh Sukh Rang Raja Prem Lege_ 262

The meaning of this is:

"O peace-giving night, grow long as I have come to enshrine love with my beloved."

There is another example in _Rag_ _Ase_ as it is also sung in the third _pahar_ of night. This composition of Guru Jee in this _raga_ pictures the scene of night-

_Shinni Rang Rang Cheheer Tare_,

_Jageh Sant Jana More Ram Pyare_ 263

(In the dewy night the stars glitter the saintly persons, the beloved of my Lord remain awake).

_Raga Tukhari_, _Majh_ and some types of _Gauri_ as _Gauri Deepki_, _Gauri Gharbar_, etc. are used for the first time in _Gurmukh Sangeet_. These _ragas_ are not

263. Ibid., _Rag_ _Ase_, p. 459.
found in any ancient book of Indian music before the birth of Guru Nanak Dev Jee. Hence it is a unique contribution of Gurbani Sangat, originated by Guru Nanak Dev to Indian music.

Partial is a unique singing style in Gurmast Sangat. By Partial we mean the change of tala in a shabad. In this type of composition we use different tales for different stanzas of a shabad. This style of singing is found nowhere in Indian music except Gurmast Sangat.

In Indian music there is no any other religious book found anywhere except Guru Granth Sahib, which is, written and edited on the basis of Adi Granth. From all this, it is quite clear that Gurbani Sangat has not only preserved the main qualities of Merajee Sangat in it but has also given a new lease of life to the Indian music. It brought about a radical change in the field of music. In brief we can say that it is different from Indian music and is a harmonious combination of Merajee, Desi, Northern and Southern traditions of Indian music.