CHAPTER V

ASSIGNMENT OF HEADINGS FOR HIS COMPOSITIONS

The headings given by Guru Nanak Dev Jee to his compositions are quite revealing in the sense that these contain much information about the form of the composition e.g., the \textit{rags}, the \textit{tala} etc., in which it should be sung. If we make careful study of the headings assigned to his compositions, we find the following things. First of all the name of the \textit{rags} in which the text is composed is given as \textit{Rag} \textit{Ase}, etc., secondly, after the name of the \textit{rags}, we find the word \textit{Mahla}. The term suggests the name of the Guru, who composed that particular \textit{shabad}. For example \textit{Mahla Pehla} means that the \textit{shabad} has been composed by the first Guru i.e. Guru Nanak Dev.

At various places the word \textit{Char} is included in the headings of some of his \textit{hymns}. \textit{Char} means the \textit{tala} which should be used while singing that composition. Guru Jee has used upto ten \textit{Chara} in his compositions. Thus the introductory heading invariably affixed to every composition makes it very easy to understand its nature and form. Some compositions of Guru Nanak Dev are instructed to be sung in a particular \textit{Dhwani} (Tune). Guru Jee has composed three \textit{Vaara} of such type. The type of the poetry as \textit{Chandpa}\textit{de}. \textit{Chhant}, \textit{Veer}, \textit{Ashtpadian} etc., are also included in the headings. These are the various poetic forms of his compositions in which Guru Jee has
composed his hymns. In the headings of some of the compositions, **Mool Mantra** is also stated, which sometime proceeds and sometimes succeeds the heading.

The scheme in which this information is given is as follows:

1. **Name of the Raga**

   In Guru Joe's compositions, first of all the name of the Raga is mentioned in which the **Shabad** is composed. Guru Joe has composed his **Bani** in thirty-seven **Ragas**. Some of these **Ragas** were already prevalent in Indian musical domain and others were innovated and introduced by Guru Joe himself e.g. **Raga Thukhari** is an original contribution of Guru Nanak Dev Joe. These **Ragas** are fully discussed in detail in Chapter III of this thesis.

**Use of word Dakhni in the headings of some compositions**

**Guru Nanak Dev Joe** in his tours visited whole of India & some other countries also. He delivered his message in the local musical form and language. At that time Indian Music was divided into two traditions i.e. Northern Tradition of Indian Music called Hindustani Music and the other was Southern Tradition of Music called Karnataki Music. There are six **Ragas** with which word **Dakhni** is written while assigning heading to that compositions. Some Scholars of **Gurmat Sangeet** are of the view that these **Ragas**

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belong to Karnatak Music. These *ragas* are:-

1) *Radhana Dakhni*
2) *Ramkali Dakhni*
3) *Mary Dakhni*
4) *Gauri Dakhni*
5) *Bilawal Dakhni*
6) *Prabhadi Dakhni*

If we make a careful study of the Granths of Karnatak Music of that time, the names of these raga are found nowhere in those Granths of Karnatak music. No doubt at present, some *ragas* of North Indian music are popular in Southern part of India and the names of some raga are available in their present books of music. Some *ragas* of Karnatak music are sung in Northern India also. As a matter of fact at the time of Guru Nanak Dev, the area of Punjab as well as of Northern India was very vast. The means of communication were not like those of today. That is why the language and the mode of singing a particular *raga* differed from place to place. Due to this very reason we find many types of the same *raga* in use.

Hence the word *Dakhani* denotes Southern part of North India and not the Southern Tradition of Indian music i.e. Karnatak music. In other words, we can say, that the word Dakhani means singing a *raga* in the style popular in Southern part (Dakhani) of Punjab or Northern India.
2. **Mehta Pahla** (Bani of Guru Nanak Dev).

Every composition before which *Mehta Pahla* is mentioned means that the hymn is composed by Guru Nanak Dev Jee, the first Guru. The other Gurus have also used the word *Nanak* in their compositions but it is only the number of Mehta from which we can know about the Guru who made that composition.

3. **Phum or Phum.**

Prior to Guru Nanak Dev Jee, nine *Veera* had already been composed in Punjabi language.207

These were:

1. Malik Murid Tatha Chanderrara Sohla Ki Veer
2. Tunde Aareja Di Veer.
4. Lehli Behlime Di Veer.
7. Rai Mahoo Haane Di Veer.
8. Masee Di Veer.

Only some parts of these *Veera* are available. But most of them are sung only in the form of *Dhunnian* (Tune). As already mentioned, Guru Nanak Dev Jee has composed three *Veera* i.e. *Veer Mehet Ki, Veer Asa*, and *Veer Melhet Ki*.

Var Neajh Ki, has been included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib at page 137. This *Vaar* is instructed to be sung to the tune of the *Vaar* of Malik Murid and Chandherhara Sohie. Malik Murid and Chandherhara Sohie were two chieftains, who were always fighting against each other. This *Vaar* was an expression of their battles and strifes. This *Vaar* was sung by the Dhadian. A specimen example derived from the scriptures goes as under:

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Guru Joe has composed his *Vaar* in the same metric format.

The second *Vaar* by Guru Nanak Dev Joe is *Vaar Aar* which has been composed on the tune of *Junda Aaraj ki Dhuni*. Aaraj was the son of Sarang who was injured and then thrown into a deep well by his step-brothers, Sardool Rai and Multan Khan. Aaraj was somehow saved and later on he became the heir of an issueless kind. After occupying the throne, he fought against his step-brothers and when he won, the battle, a *Vaar* commemorating his success was composed which is as follows:

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Guru Nanak Dev Ji'a's Aa Di Vaar is also in the same metric form.

The third Vaar composed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji's is Malhar Ki Vaar which is instructed to be sung on the tune of Rana Kailash and Mal Deo Ki Dhuni. Both of them were brave kings of Jammu and Kashmir. The Mughal Emperor Jahangir played a mischief and made them fight against each other just to weaken their positions. Though Mal Deo won the battle, yet he embraced his defeated brother and spared his territory. A Vaar expressing his bravery and greatness was composed, which later on became a traditional folk-tune. The Vaar reads as follows:

Guru Nanak Dev Ji also composed his Malhar Ki Vaar to this tune.

From all this, it is proved beyond doubt that Guru Nanak Dev Ji made use of folk-music and folk-tunes in his bani, but in a way which expressed his devotion and love for God. Some scholars are also of the view that the

instructions to sing these **Vann** on the above mentioned dhunies were given by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, while editing Guru Granth Sahib. But it seems more realistic that these headings were assigned by Guru Nanak Dev Jee. Because such evidences are present in Sikh History that no one changed even a word in the compositions of any Guru.

4. **Poetic Form**

In Guru Jee's compositions, we find the name of the poetical form of the composition along with the name of the **Maha**, the **Raga**, and **Ghar**. For example:

\[ \text{Maha} \quad \text{Raga} \quad \text{Ghar} \quad \text{etc.} \]

The name of the poetical form sometimes proceeds **Ghar**, and sometime it is mentioned after it. Guru Jee has written his **Bani** in the following poetical forms as **Sahuqes**, **Pado**, **Danade**, **Tinaode**, **Chawade**, **Panipade**, **Chhopade**, and **Vera**, **Patti**, **Alahundia**, **Aerti**, **Sasbeili** and **Kasbeili**, **Thitti**, **Onker**, **Sidh-Goshat**, **Sohle** and **Bani-Maha** etc.

5. **Ghar**

The word **Ghar** is found in the headings of some of compositions. Guru Nanak Dev has used up to ten **Ghars** but in the **Bani** of Guru Arjan Dev Jee, which is also included in **Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib**, up to seventeen **Ghars** have been used. Bhai Kahan Singh has taken the meaning

\[ \text{Guru Granth Sahib, op. cit., p. 489.} \]
of ghar as tale in his Meha-Kesh. Famous musician H. C. Mali also takes ghar for tale.

According to Hindustani music, the word ghar means that swara from which the singing of a particular composition is started. Just as ragas are sung today, Jati Gayan was in practice in the old times. In the age of Bharat also jati gayan was popular and in all eighteen jatis were in use. There could be more than one one swara in a jati. The main swaras of jati were called Anu Swaras. In all sixty-three anu swaras were accepted and in this way the number of Graha Swaras were also sixty-three. According to the southern tradition of music singing of a composition and the rythm may not start at the same time. Generally the rythm follows the singing. The difference of time between the start of singing and start of rythm is called graha.

The word ghar used by Guru Joe means tale. Guru Joe was a great musician and Bhai Mardana, his companion was a great rabab player. Guru Joe recited his bani in ragas. Janam Sahib and other religious books written on Qurmat reveal that one or the other rythym player was always

with him in all his Unmani. For example, Shri Bala Joe accompanied Guru Joe in his first Unmani.\textsuperscript{220}

As has already been explained that Guru Joe made use of different \textit{ragas} for the expression of different types of emotions. The same is the case with his use of \textit{taals}. In Indian music rythym and \textit{taals} have the potential to express emotions. In Indian musical compositions, slow rythym songs express serious emotions, whereas fast rythym reveals inner ecstatic. Guru Joe has made use of upto ten \textit{gharas} in his \textit{bans}. In Hindustani music a composition in \textit{Ek Taal} is generally sung in slow tempo and the compositions of serious nature are generally sung in this \textit{taal}. In this \textit{taal} the metric form of the compositions are lengthy.

According to Dr. Taran Singh, such \textit{ragas} i.e. Siri,\textit{Maajh}, \textit{Gujri}, \textit{Aa Sera} are of the nature of creating detachment.\textsuperscript{221} All these \textit{ragas} are of serious nature. Given below are some of the compositions in \textit{ghar pahla} composed in the above quoted \textit{ragas}:

1. \textit{ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਰੇ ਮੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਹੋ ਕਰੇ ਤਾਪ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਰੇ} \textsuperscript{222}
2. \textit{ਸੰਘ ਹੋ ਕਰੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਹੋ ਕਰੇ ਸੰਘ ਹੋ ਕਰੇ ਮੁੱਲ} \textsuperscript{223}
3. \textit{ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਕਤੀ ਹੈ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਕਤੀ ਹੋ ਕਰੇ ਸਕਤੀ} \textsuperscript{224}
4. \textit{ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਨਹੀਂ} \textsuperscript{225}

\textsuperscript{221} Taran Singh, Chintan Te Kala, op. cit., p. 242.
\textsuperscript{222} Guru Granth Sahib, op. cit., Rag Siri,p.74.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., Rag Maajh, p. 109.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., Rag Asa, p. 342.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., Rag Gujri, p. 489.
There seems to be a complete uniformity to a certain extent about the metric form in all the shabads which are composed by Guru Joe in ghar three. Even today the compositions which are prevalent and usually sung in Teen Tala are exactly in uniformity with the compositions of Guru Nanak Dev Joe, composed in ghar three.

Here is a Shabad in ghar three of Guru Nanak Dev Joe composed in renga Asa:

The following are some other examples in ghar three:
1. kar naa kri tre khali mand in sha
2. hame hame aaye hame hame
3. koi ke dhun saras sundar swarg mae

The increasing order of the number of gharas means the talas of the fast tempo or rhythm and often these shabads are of short metric forms. Guru Joe has used renga Suhil and Asa for the compositions made in six to ten gharas. These two ragas are considered to be the ragas expressing the feelings of happiness and pleasure.

227. Ibid., Reg Asa, p. 438.
228. Ibid., Reg Dhanasari, p. 662.
229. Ibid., Reg Sri, p. 71.
230. Ibid., Reg Tilang, p. 721.
231. Taran Singh, Chintan Te Kala, op. cit., p. 233.
The following composition in ghar ten in raga Suhi:

Another example in raga Suhi ghar six:

In rag Ase Kafi:

Another example in raga Suhi ghar nine:

Though during Guru Joe's period there was no any notation system prevailing in music, with the help of which we could make any categorical conclusion. But the deep study of Guru Nanak Dev Joe's beni, gives us enough evidence supporting the fact that he certainly used the word ghar for tala. Even these days in Indian music, talaas are known by numbers i.e. Ek tala, teen tala, char tala. Some traditional Kirtankara still use dhai tala (Dhava) for rupak tala. Hence the tradition of denoting talaas in numbers was in practice in past. From all this it can be concluded easily the word ghar denotes the name of the tala and not the number of matras nor the parts of a tala (Vibhag).

233. Ibid., Rag Suhi, p. 729.
234. Ibid., Rag Ase Kafi, p. 418.
235. Ibid., Rag Suhi, p. 751.