CHAPTER VI
COMBINATION OF MAARGE WITH DESI SANGEET LEADING TO
THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF GURMAT SANGEET.

Before saying something about Guru Jee's contribution towards the combination of Maarge and Desi Sangeet, it is necessary to define the aforesaid terms. Both these are the different modes of Indian music. Maarge Sangeet is also known as Gandharva Sangeet and Deshi Sangeet as Geet. A melodious composition is called Geet and it is of two types, known as Gandharva and Geet.

Maarge Sangeet

In ancient times, the sages and saints perceived that music possessed the immense innate power of strengthening the mind through concentration of will-force and they used it for meditation and worship of God. They were of the view that the sound Om is Need Brahma. After determining the aims and objects of music, the students of music bound it to hard and fast rules. Bharat Muni called this rule bound music as Maarge of Maaro Sangeet which is considered a means for the realisation and attainment of God. A musical sound, pleasing to the ear is called need by the musicians. The Indian music owes its being to the same need, but our sages and saint musicians discovered such elements in this need as lend a blissful happiness to the

237. Ibid., p. 113.
mind and so they called it Anhad nade. Anhad Nade appeals to the inner self of man and it is the basis of Nearage Sangeet. Guru Nanak Dev has mentioned anhad nade in his hymns at various places e.g. "The blissful music of the Guru’s word spontaneously plays for him, who has obtained the Immaculate Lord." In another composition of Guru Jii:

"Day and night, the Divine music resounds within him, who, by Guru’s grace knows the wondrous state of the Deathless Lord." 241

The eminent scholars have used Nearage and Gandharya as synonyms and likewise Dehi and Gaan denotes same thing. Pt. Kalli Nath has also referred to the same fact: 242

Gandharya Sangeet is the sangeet which is helpful in our spiritual upliftment and which is sung by Gandharyan i.e. the inhabitants of Heaven. The same Nearage Sangeet was used by Shart Mani for the worship of Lord Shiva. Guru Nanak Dev has expressed similar view in his bani:

"The gods, adepts, gods slaves, heavenly singers,

241. Ibid., p. 904.
242. Quoted by Nigan, in Sangeet Kaumudy, op.cit., p.117.
silent sages and Saints sing manifold praises of Thine O Lord. Sharang Dev in his book Sangeet Ratanker has defined the Gandharva sangeet as:

"This tradition of music is very old and the Gandharvas i.e. singers of heaven used it. Certainly, it is helpful to the spiritual upliftment and its aim is attainment of God."

In Maanas sangeet religion is related to music. There is no denying the fact that there existed a close relationship between religion and music in all the ancient cultures of the world. The cultures of Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Greece and India bear testimony to this fact. In almost all the cultures of the world, the origin of music can be traced to spiritual leanings and pursuits of human mind. India has been quite fortunate that because of the devotion and hard work of her sages and saints, we find the ancient songs of religious strain or Maanas sangeet still in our ancient treatise Rig Veda. The recitation of the shalokas of Rig Veda is like that of recitation of poetry, but the singing or Sama Veda is

based on alapa and classical music. Almost all the scholars agree that the Vedas are the ancient and perpetual fountain-head of Indian culture and spiritual knowledge in the form of manuscripts. The origin, growth and development of classical music is closely connected with and is in fact, dependent on the performance of Vedic rituals to the accompaniment of the chanting of hymns.

Besides the singing of *gharanas* in the Vedas in Maanas Sangeet, other religious and spiritual compositions were also sung. It is very difficult to give proof that religious devotees of that age (i.e. Vedic era from 4000 to 2500 B.C.) used to sing and what the form or content of those musical compositions had been, as it was mainly in oral form. Moreover, the notation system in music was not in vogue at that time. It is thought that the devotional, musical and spiritual compositions were available in written form only after the Vedic Age.

Gurmat Sangeet bears resemblance to Maanas Sangeet, but it does not adhere to rules and regulations as strictly as the latter. The main purpose of Gurmat Sangeet is to develop music within the limits of


classical music. As in 

also the purpose of music is the attainment of spiritual upliftment. Music is regarded not as an end in itself but as a means to the attainment of a higher end i.e. the spiritual upliftment and welfare of humanity. Some of the couplets from Gurbanī hint to this pointe.

"Ragas and musical sounds are peerless no doubt but above all there is something which is to be known and that can be only with His blessings". 249

Devi Sangeet or Geans

When the musicians realised that music, besides the attainment of God had the potentiality of entertaining people, another form of music came into being, called Devī Sangeet. Now music came to be devided into two forms i.e. classical and Devī. The aim of the first form was the worship and attainment of God and that of the second came to be the entertainment of the masses. Therefore, the second form of music underwent a periodical change because of the change in the taste and traditions of the people. It was given a regional colour later on. It was set free from the rigid rules of classical music.

Mārgī sangeet was dominated by spiritual thought, whereas Devī Sangeet was dominated by swaras. Devī music based on simple tunes, lucid language and simple poetry.

249. Guru Gobind Sahib, Salok Mahia 4 (Salok Varan Ton Wadhik) P. 1423.
reflected the deep thoughts of common people. The following
couplet taken from Sharanq Dev's Sangest Ratankar, which
is considered to be an authoritative work on Indian music,
explains that music, which is composed by the musicians in
Desi ragas and the purpose of which is to entertain the
common people is termed as Gaan or Desi Sangest. When the
purpose is simply to entertain people, the periodical change
in form and nature of music is inevitable.

Combination of Desi and Naarsee Sangest

The aim of Naarsee Sangest is to help man attain
concentration of mind and realization of God. That is why
this type of music is bound in certain hard certain hard and
fast rules. No musician is permitted to sing it according
to his own stylistic whims. The subject matter is concerned
with the worship of God.

The Guru composed the whole of his bani in raga and
sung it himself in the form of Kirtan at various places.
In Bhakti Movement, besides meditation, Kirtan too was a
means of God realisation. Most of the hymns of Guru Nanak
Dev can therefore be sung in one or the other raga. In
the Guru Ji's bani, selection of the raga for a particular
composition is of paramount significance. In Indian music

251. Madan, Dr. Panna Lal, Theory, Aesthetics and
every \textit{Raga} has its own \textit{Rasa}. The Guru had a sharp and penetrating insight into the depths, nuances and subtleties of Indian music. In his \textit{Shabads}, we find a harmonious combination of subject-matter, \textit{Raga} and \textit{Rasa}. As discussed in the chapter \textit{Element or Traces of Rasa in Guru Nanak Bani}, the choice of words and imagery made by the Guru in his \textit{Shabads} for the expression of his thoughts, is according to the time, nature and season of the \textit{Raga}. Every \textit{Raga} can assimilate a particular type of metaphor. The \textit{Raga} expressing the feelings of joy and happiness have their own similies and the \textit{Raga} with sad tone use the similies befitting them. Guru Jee has also used different \textit{talas} alongwith \textit{Ragan} for the expression of emotions. He has used the word \textit{Ghay} for \textit{tala}.

233 The music of the Vedic Age is a historical proof of the fact that the aim of music at that time was the worship of God, and other deities for spiritual elevation and salvation. This was called \textit{marjya sanseea}. Thus the music of Guru Nanak was in accordance with the Vedic traditions and cultural heritage of India. Stress has been laid on the introspective sound (Anhad Naad). The Guru highly commended this \textit{Anhad Naad} in the \textit{Bani}, for example:--

"The name has no form or outline. It resounds spont-
aneously". 234 God has no form but He presents Himself in the


shape of Anhad Naad. It is the music of the soul which inspires us to rise above the corporeal frame. "By perfectly (controlling) or (filling) the nine doors, one is accomplished arriving at the tenth gate. There in the tenth gate resounds the music of the imperishable Lord". From the above cited, it is clear that Guru Nanak’s hani is quite close to the maaran sansar.

The second aspect of Guru Jee’s hani is the use of Desi Sangeet made by him, to bring about social reform. As a result, his hani though spiritual in content, served chiefly the above-mentioned purpose. Now the fulfillment of this purpose required the use of such music as could be easily comprehended and understood by the common man. So when the Guru visited different places during his Undassies, he preached through the language of the people and sang his hymns in their style. He also owned and absorbed the music of different provinces in his various compositions. He composed some of his hymns in the reas based on folk-tunes, for example, Aa-Di-Vaar. He used some regional reas as Auni, Tilang, Aa also. A number of instances of the use of folk-songs can be found in his hani as Alahunie, Chhand, Varan, Pade, Bara-maha etc. From this, one can conclude that the style of singing of Guru Nanak Dev was

235. Ibid., p 943.
236. i. Tara Singh, Prof., Gurbani Sangeet Ate Bharti Sangeet De Dalatiae Arvan, Patiala, Nov. 83, p. 10.
ii. Taran Singh, Dr., Chintan Te Kala. Jalandhar-1969, p 249.
very simple and a common man could understand it very well. His compositions represented the routine life of common people and the songs sung at festive times.

Neither Guru Nanak's hāni was entirely like Nārāyaṇa Sāngīt which was bound in rigid rules nor did he bring his hymns to the level of Desāi Sāngīt, the main aim of which was only to amuse the common people. He formulated a new tradition in music, which is known as Gurhāndi Sāngīt. It was a fine blend of Nārāyaṇa and Desāi Sāngīt. During this period, the music was misused, hence the musicians were given no respect in the society. It was used for the cheap entertainment of the kings and emperors. At this time, the Guru used this Desāi Sāngīt as a means for the remembrance of God and the welfare of the society, but he used it within the rules and standards of classical music. The difference between Gurhāndi Sāngīt and Desāi Sāngīt is mainly in their objectives. The aim of Desāi Sāngīt is only to amuse common people whereas the remembrance of God and the spiritual upliftment is the object of Gurhāndi Sāngīt.257

A poem expressing devotional spirit is called Bhājan and when Bhajans are sung in rage and tale producing a blissful state of mind, we call it Kirān.258 According

257. Tara Singh, Prof., Gurhāndi Sāngīt, op. cit., p.3.
to another view, to sing hymns of great saints to the
accompaniment of music, is called *Kirtan*. The real *Kirtan*
is related to our innermost self. In the Sikh religion, *Kirtan*
and *Sangat* (congregation) have been given great importance.
The Guru himself remembered the Almighty through the medium
of *Kirtan*. In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, we find that there
are a number of such ragas as are sung in the early hours
of the day e.g. *Asa, M blat, Parbhali* and *Ramkali*.

There is ample evidence that the Guru in his old age
after having settled at Kartarpur used to sing *Asa - Di -
Yaar* early in the morning every day. 260 Guru Nanak's another
contribution to Indian music is that he started the
tradition of holding *Kirtan* based on classical standards
of music. Even before him, a number of Sufi poets and
saint-musicians like Surdas, Kabir and Tulsidas had composed
their hymns and sung them as well. 261 But their singing was
mainly individualistic. Guru Angad Dev Jee, Guru Amar Dass
Jee and Guru Arjan Dev Jee continued the tradition of *Kirtan*
set up by Guru Nanak Dev. 262 In short Guru Nanak contributed
to this aspect of Indian music. In fact his unique
contribution lay in using *Kirtan* as a medium for personal

Ludhiana-1969, p. 197.
261. Taran Singh, Dr., *Chintan Te Kala*, op. cit., p.12.
262. Tara Singh, Prof., *Vedaan Kala*, op. cit., p. 274.
salvation as well as for the moral and spiritual upliftment of society.

**Bhakti Sangeet, Kirtan and Gurbani Sangeet**

Intense love for God and complete surrender and dedication to His will, is called Bhakti and a song expressing such a devotional spirit is called Bhejan. There are no limitations of ohm and aum on devotional songs. But even then when these devotional songs are presented in raga and tala, they send the listeners into raptures. Generally the hymns of great saints are used for Kirtan but compositions of other poets expressing devotional spirit can also be used.

Gurbani Sangeet is not the same as the Kirtan tradition of Indian music. The basis of Gurbani Sangeet is to be found in Indian music but it has its own peculiarities and characteristics. In the presence of the Guru and congregation, when devotional songs taken from Gurbani are sung in proper ragas and taals to the accompaniment of musical instruments, giving proper attention to Sahas and pados-anks of the Shabads (mentioned at the end of each stanza of the Shabad) we call it Gurbani Sangeet. And this Gurbani Sangeet helps the congregation establish a

263. Gary, Bhakti Sangeet Anil, op. cit., p. 2.
link with God, the Akal - Purush by passing through the stage of Sahal Avastha (wise passiveness attained as a result of Naam-Simran).

Guru Nanak is the founder of Gurbani Sanmeet. During the course of his Mission, he came in contact with a number of organizations and people. Through his meetings with them, he analysed and synthesised the culture of that age. He brought about a revolutionary change in Indian literature, music and art and used them for the spiritual upliftment and welfare of society. Thus Gurbani Sanmeet is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Its aim is not only adoration and worship of God, but also upliftment of mankind.

To indicate the significance of Kirtan in Sikhism, suffice it to say that only by Kirtan can men attain to Brahma.

Under the socio-economic conditions prevailing at the time of Guru Nanak, Naaraone Sanmeet was beyond the reach of common masses, because it was bound in rigid rules and Deshi Sanmeet, commonly used at that time had


degenerated and was being used for obscene and cheap purposes. The Guru made a great contribution to the upliftment of Desi Sangeet by combining it with Naargee Sangeet.

Guru Nanak Dev wanted to convey his message to the common people and so he adopted a middle path. He brought about substantial development in Desi Sangeet by combining it with Naargee Sangeet. He used Desi Sangeet in accordance with the standards and criteria of Indian Classical music. In this way, he secured for music its old glory and respect, which it had enjoyed in the Vedic age, by originating Gurmat - Sangeet tradition.