CHAPTER-III
NIRGUN BHAKTI LITERATURE

LITERATURE OF THE KABIR PANTH

Among medieval saints of India, Kabir occupies a prominent place. With each passing century since his death, his name and fame have gained more luster and the wise utterances and verses of this rustic philosopher which embody his remarkable teachings are recited and quoted all over India.

According to some scholars the language of his verses is old Avadhi, a dialect of Eastern Hindi (Purbi Hindi) used in West Mirzapur, Allahabad and Oudh. Kabir himself says, “My speech is of the East; no one can understand me only he can understand me, who is from the farthest East.”

The use of vernacular language by Kabir instead of Sanskrit for religious teachings made it possible to popularize the Nirgun tradition among the masses. The philosophical thought which was the core of the scholarly Sanskrit work got transmitted by him with a spontaneous poetic flavour through simple Dohas and Padas which could be easily understood by the general people which was otherwise beyond their reach. Undoubtedly Kabir was certainly a pioneer who enriched the Nirgun bhakti literature with his versatile scholarship.

The verses of Kabir mainly consists of the following three kind of verses.
**Padas;** couplets or verses of devotional poetry especially intended to glorify the God.

**Ramainis;** which are short doctrinal poems consists of an indefinite number of *Chauvais* (A verse of four lines in a particular metre) followed by a *Doha* (A couplet in a particular metre) called the *Sakhi*.

**Sakhis;** which are short apopthegms consisting of a single couplet (*doha*) like the *Sakhis* of the *Ramainis*.

It seems likely that Kabir himself did not write his poems and that his verses were written down by his disciples who used to gather around him at the time of discourse at Banaras.

Today, in India, there are innumerable poems which are attributed to Kabir but it is not at all likely that all of them are really the genuine works of Kabir. Among the various collections of Kabir’s poems *Bijak* is considered the most authoritative by the members of *Kabir Panth*. The word ‘*Bijak*’ means a document by which a hidden treasure can be located. The compiler of the collection probably chose this word as a title for verses which were considered to reveal the hidden treasures of religious knowledge.

There is an oral tradition that the contents of the *Bijak* were originally dictated by Kabir to one of his disciple Bhaggoji or Bhagwandas. Bhaggoji took it to Dhanauti, where it long remained in the keeping of the Dhanauti Mahants and was afterwards published in manuscript form. It is also claimed by someone that the *Bijak* was given to the royal family of Rewah by Kabir himself.
and that they have an original manuscript of it which was written out by Kabir’s disciple Dharamdas in A.D. 1464. However, no original manuscript of Bijak has been discovered so far.

In the present form the Bijak consists of a collection of verses which are written in various metres. Besides Sakhis and Ramainis, it consists of the following: The Adimangal; which is a short introductory poem. Shabdas; which are similar with Ramainis but in the Lalita metre and without any Sakhi.

Chauntisi- It is another important composition of Kabir in which serious religious teachings are delivered through thirty four consonants of Nagari.

The Vipramatisi- It is a composition of thirty short verses, which were meant to attack on the orthodox religious system of the Brahmanas. Kahara, Basantas, Chancharis, Belis, Birhulis and Hindolas are religious songs in various metres whereas the Sayar Bijak Ka Pad is the conclusion of the whole Bijak.

The Bijak come down to us in various published editions. Some of these show certain similarities of style and teachings of Kabir but some other differ considerably one from the other and show very large variations, even when two versions contain the same poem, the text varies seriously. For now, it is very difficult to say what the true text of Bijak is. Some example can be cited in this connection.

First edition of the Bijak was printed at Banaras in A.D. 1868, which contains the commentary of Vishvanath Singh, Raja of Rewah. It has also been published from Nawal Kishore Press,

In A.D. 1890 Prem Chand of the Baptist Mission, Monghyr, edited and printed an edition named Bijak of Kabir at Calcutta. The order of the verses in this edition is different from that of other editions and is not identical with any of the editions published by Kabir Panthis. It contains 84 Ramainis, 113 Shabdas, 1 Chauntisi, 1 Vipramatisi, 2 Chancharis, 1 Birhuli, 2 Belis, 3 Hindolas, 12 Kahara, 12 Basantas, 364 Sakhis and 60 supplementary Sakhis.

Another edition of Bijak named Bijak Shri Kabir Sahab Ka, which contains the commentary of Purandas of Burhanpur was published from Lucknow in A.D. 1892, from Allahabad in A.D. 1905 and from Venkteshwar Press, Mumbai in A.D. 1921.

This text is recognized by the section of Kabir Panth which has its headquarters at Banaras. It comprised Pritham Anusar, 84 Ramainis, 115 Shabdas, 1 Chauntisi, 1 Vipramatisi, 12 Kaharas, 12 Basantas, 2 Chancharis, 2 Belis, 1 Birhuli, 3 Hindolas and 353 Sakhis.

In A.D. 1911 another edition of Bijak was presented by Ahmad Shah which was published by Baptist Mission, Kanpur, with the title Bijak of Kabir. It’s text follows the order of the
edition of Raja of Rewah and the verses found in other editions have been added at the end, thus making up the number of Shabdas to 115 and the number of Shakhis to 445. Besides, it is also consists of the Adi Mangal; 1 Chauntisi, 1 Vipramatisi, 12 Kaharas, 12 Basantas, 2 Chancharis, 2 Belis, 1 Birhuli, 3 Hindolas, and at the end it contains Sayar Bijak Ka Pad. Bijak was also published by Velvedere Press, Allahabad in A.D. 1922 with the title Kabir Sahab Ka Bijak.

It is said that the Adimangal and Sayar Bijak Ka Pad found in the Raja’s edition and the Pritham Anusar found in the edition of Purandas, are not the part of the original text of Bijak and were added by interpolation.²

We thus find that the collection, considered to be authentic, also has many foreign verses incorporated in it.

Another important and authoritative collection of Kabir’s poems has come down to us in the Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib which is the sacred book of the Sikhs and was compiled in A.D. 1604 by the orders of sixth Guru, Guru Arjun. Besides the compositions of Sikh Gurus, the Granth also contains panegyrics of the various Gurus and hymns of several bhaktas or devotees such as Kabir, Namdev and others whose teachings were supposed to corroborate that of the Sikh Gurus. Of these the hymns of Kabir are found in bulk.

The Adi Granth is divided in three parts, the first of which is liturgical, while the second contains the general body of the hymns and the third part is supplementary. It is in the last two
portions that the verses of Kabir are found which included 231 Sakhir and 228 Padas. Most of the verses attributed to Kabir in the Adi Granth are also found in the Bijak.

There are several other compositions of Kabir’s verses which got published by different authors. For instance, Shyam Sundar Das had edited a collection of the verses of Kabir, published by Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Varanasi in V.S. 1985/A.D. 1928, under the title of Kabir Granthavali. This collection is mainly based on two handwritten volumes. The first was written by Malukdas in Banaras in V.S. 1561/A.D. 1504, 14 years before Kabir’s death (A.D. 1518) and the second was written in V.S. 1881/ A.D. 1824. Both of these are preserved in the library of the Sabha.

This collection contains 809 Sakhir, arranged under 59 Angas or chapters and 403 Padas arranged under 16 Ragas or musical modes and 7 Ramainis on which they are to be sung. These are Raga Gauri, Raga Ramkali, Raga Asawari, Raga Sorathi, Raga Kedaro, Raga Todi, Raga Bhairava, Raga Vilavala, Raga Maru, Raga Lalita, Raga Basanta, Raga Mali Gauri, Raga Kalyan, Raga Sarang, Raga Malar, Raga Dhanashri.

However, the verses found in Guru Granth Sahib which include 192 Sakhir and 222 Padas of Kabir are not identical with the material contained by both of the aforementioned handwritten volumes.
Parasnath Tiwari edited another collection of Kabir’s work under the title of *Kabir Granthavali*. It was published by Hindi Parishad, Allahabad Vishvavidyalaya in A.D. 1961.

*Kabir Granthavali* is based on various manuscripts of different schools of thought of *Nirgun bhakti*. It also relies upon various other published editions of Kabir’s verses by different authors. *Kabir Granthavali* is largely dependent on sources like *Panchavani, Sarbangi, Gunaganjanama*, collection of *Niranjani Panth, Guru Granth, Bijak, Shabda vali* and *Sakhis*.

*Panchavani* collection has three collections belonging to Dadu Mahavidyalya and two collection belong to Purohit Harinarayn.

There are three handwritten volumes preserved at Dadu Mahavidyalya, Jaipur. First was compiled by Mati Ram in V.S. 1531/A.D. 1474, second was compiled by Jagannath in V.S. 1768/A.D. 1711 and third was compiled in V.S. 1830/A.D. 1773. The other two collection of *Panchavani* belongs to Late. Purohit Harinarayan Vidyabhushan of Jaipur are preserved in Basta No. 7, serial No. 485-839, compiled in V.S. 1715/A.D. 1658 and in Basta No. 3, S. No. 236-237 compiled in V.S. 1741/A.D. 1684 respectively.

The other two famous compiltions of *Dadu Panthi* literature viz. *Sarbangi* and *Gunaganjanama* also feed the *Kabir Granthavali*. *Sarbangi* was compiled by Rajjabdas in circa V.S.1730/ A.D. 1673. Three handwritten copies of this collection are preserved in the Dadu Mahavidyala, Jaipur. Among them first
was compiled in V.S. 1830 / A.D. 1773 while second and third were written in V.S. 1841 / A.D. 1784 and V.S. 1847 / A.D. 1790 respectively. Sarbangi consists of 155 Padas, 181 Sakhis and 1 Ramainis of Kabir.

**Gunaganjanama** is another important source of *Kabir Granthavali*. It was compiled by another Dadu Panthi poet Jagannath. One copy of it is preserved in Dadu Mahavidyalya Jaipur and another in the N. P. S. Varanasi. It contains almost 400 Sakhis of Kabir.

The other source of *Kabir Granthavali* is a comprehensive collection of *Niranjani Panth* (Rajasthan) which is also preserved in the Dadu Mahavidyalya. It was compiled by Hari Ramdas in V.S. 1861/ A.D. 1804 and incorporates the verses of various mystic poets of different schools of bhakti thought including Kabir. It contains his 1385 Sakhis, 661 Padas, 12 Ramainis and 7 Rekhtas.\(^4\)

**Guru Granth Sahib** is another significant source of *Kabir Granthavali*. An edition of *Guru Granth Sahib* was published by Sarva Hind Sikh Mission, Amritsar in A.D. 1937.

**Bijak** forms another important source of *Kabir Granthavali*. Two handwritten copies of the *Bijak* of Kabir compiled in V.S. 1942 / A.D. 1885 and V.S. 1950 / A.D. 1893 respectively are preserved in the collection of Uday Shankar Shastri of Varanasi. Besides this, one edition named *Mul Bijak* which was published by Mahant Methi Gosai of Mansor Math in V.S. 1994 / A.D. 1937.
Shabdavali also forms an important source of Kabir Granthavali. There are four editions of Shabdavali of Kabir. First of them was published in A.D. 1908 by the Velvedere Press, Allahabad. There are also some handwritten and published copies of the Sakhis of Kabir which also enriches the Kabir Granthavali. Sakhis of Kabir includes a handwritten volume which was compiled by Sadhu Bhagavatidas in V.S. 1881 / A.D. 1824 and is preserved in the Kabir Mandir, Moti Dungri, at Jaipur. A printed edition of Sakhi named Satya Kabir Ka Sakhi Granth, published by Venkteshwar Press, Mumbai also forms part of Kabir Granthavali. There are also two editions of Sakhis which have been referred in Kabir Granthavali. One edition is published by Velvedere Press, Allahabad and second was published in A.D. 1926. A copy of Sakhi collection published by Kabir Dharma Vardhak Karyalya, Siabagh, Baroda in A.D. 1935 under the title of Sadguru Kabir Sahib Ka Sakhi Granth also find reference in Kabir Granthavali.

Aforesaid handwritten and published volumes represent all the works which are attributed to Kabir. There is very little variation of contents in all the copies and most of the verses of Kabir are common to all of them. However, they differ sometimes with regard to their number and serial number.

Thus, Kabir Granthavali of Hindi Parishad Allahabad Vishvavidyalaya has been edited very scientifically by its editor. It contains 200 Padas of Kabir which are arranged under 16 Angas or chapters, 21 Ramanis and his 744 Sakhis arranged under 34 Angas.
Kabir’s immediate disciple Dharamdas who was the reputed founder and outstanding leader of the Chhattisgarh section of the Kabir Panth, figures very largely in the literature of the Panth, a great deal of which is in the form of supposed dialogues between Dharamdas and Kabir. A collection of his verses under the title of Dharamdas Ki Shabdavali was published by Velvedere Press, Allahabad in A.D. 1960. It contains 107 Shabdas, arranged under 9 Angas, 31 Shabdas arranged under the titles of Mangal, Badhava and Sohar. Besides this, his Raga Basanta, Raga Gari, Holi, Barahmasa, Pahara, Namlila and Muktilila have also been included in this collection.

**Literature Of The Bishnoi Panth**

The literature of Bishnoi Panth contains the verses of its founder Jambhoji. The verses are in the form of Shabdas. The literature of Bishnoi Panth also contains compositions of Jambhoji’s disciple and the latter saints of the Bishnoi Panth.

Jambhoji’s Shabdas are 120 in number which are far greater than the collective verses of other saints of the time. Jambhoji himself did not write down his Shabdas. The entire verses which are attributed to him are in fact written down by his disciple during the time of his preaching. According to the tradition his disciple Redoji treasured up them in his memory and recited them daily, since then these 120 Shabdas are sung and recited by the Sadhus i.e. ‘Thapanas’ and singers i.e. ‘Gayanas’ of the Bishnoi Panth at various religious occasions. The verses of Jambhoji are designated as Chhatrapati Shabda Vani and are considered very sacred and dignified as the ‘Fifth Veda’ in Bishnoi Panth. The Bishnois still
try hard to maintain the accuracy in the *Shabdas* of Jambhoji, and can be regarded as authentic.

The language of the *Shabdas* is mainly Rajasthani – Marwari which has been enriched by the terms of various languages, such as *Brijbhasha*, a dialect of Brij Kshetra i.e. Mathura and Brindavana, Sanskrit, Eastern Hindi, Sindhi, Punjabi, Arabic and Persian.

No English translation of the *Shabdas* of Jambhoji has yet been published. However, various editions in Hindi are available. These are as following:

One of the collections of the *Shabdas* which was published by the Hindu Press, Delhi in V.S. 1646/A.D. 1589 under the title of *Shri Jambha Sagar*, contains 117 *Shabdas* with a detailed commentary by Swami Isvarananda. The text of this collection is not recognized by the followers of the *Bishnoi Panth*. Another collection was also published by Swami Isvarananda in V.S. 1655 / A.D. 1598 from Dharmik Yantralya, Allahabad under the title of *Jambha Samhita*. It consists of 152 *Shabdas* and some of them are different from the authentic *Shabdas* of Jambhoji. The edition is based on a handwritten volume which was in the collection of Pandit Jagannath Tiwari of Dharmik Yantralya, Allahabad. It is noteworthy that in the *Jambha Samhita* some *Mantras* or spiritual instructions of the *Bishnoi Panth* have been included under the title of *Shabdas*. Besides this, variation in text and number of the *Shabdas* is also there.
A third collection of *Shabdas* was published from Meerut by Sadhu Shankardas in V.S. 1666 / A.D. 1609 under the title *Shabdavani*. It is comprised of 126 *Shabdas* which includes Guru Mantras of Bishnoi Panth viz. Adi Shabda, Vishnu Vrihamivana and Chhabis Dharm Ki Akhari.

Another collection named *Jambhagita* was published by Swami Sacchidananda with his commentary from Vidya Press, Lahore in V.S. 1662 / A.D. 1605. Number of *Shabdas* included in it is 120.

Sadhu Ramdas published his collection of 120 *Shabdas*, from Vidya Prakash Press, Lahore in V.S. 1663 / A.D. 1606 with the title *Shabdavani* in V.S. 2011 / A.D. 1954. An important and comprehensive work named *Jambha Sagar* was published by Swami Ramandanda Giri, Bishnoi Sabha, Hissar. It contains 120 *Shabdas* as well as a detailed commentary on them.

Among all the aforementioned published editions, the text of *Shabdavani* by Ramdas, *Jambhagita* by Sacchidananda and *Jambha Sagar* by Bishnoi Sabha, Hissar are considered as the most authoritative by the followers of Bishnoi Panth.

On the basis of these collections, Surya Shankar Pareikh has published his edition from Vikas Prakashan, Bikaner in A.D. 2001 with the title *Jambhoji Ki Vani*. This edition is divided in three sections. First section contains the biography of Jambhooji, second presents a critical study of his *Shabdas* and their various elements such as *Jiva, Brahman, Srishti, Sadachara* etc. Third be
designated as the review section consists of the 120 *Shabdas* of Jambhoji with Hindi translation.

The compositions of Jambhoji’s disciples and followers are also considered very sacred by the followers of the *Bishnoi Panth*. The works of these latter Bishnoi saints form a vast literature of the *Panth* and called *Jambho Ki Vani*. Among all the latter Bishnoi saints Jambhoji’s disciple Vilhoji was the most famous for his contribution in the composition of Bishnoi literature. The collections of his compositions named *Vilhoji Ki Vani* was published by Krishnlal Bishnoi from Sambharathal Prakshan, Haryana in A.D. 1993. This work is mainly based on an old manuscript, viz. *Parmananda Ji Ka Potha* compiled in V.S. 1818-19/A.D. 1761-62 and preserved in Swami Vivekananda Sangrahalya, Adampur, Haryana.

*Vilhoji Ki Vani* contains following composition of Vilhoji.

*Katha Gyanchari*, is a very important work and considered second only after the *Shabdavani* i.e. the *Shabdas* of Jambhoji. It is a lyrical poem which contains 132 Dohas and Chaupais.

*Sakhis* of Vilhoji are 10 in number and are arranged in seven *Ragas* to which they are to be tuned and sung.

*Katha Dharabhandh Chauhjugi*, is a mythological composition and consists of 53 Dohas arranged in *Raga Dhanashri*.

*Manjh Akhara Duha Dus Avatar Ka*, contains 27 Dohas arranged under *Raga Khambhavachi*. 
Katha Avatarpat, is composed in Raga Asa and contains 142 Dohas and Chaupais. It is also called as Katha Anaharpat, Autarpat Ka Bakhan, and Avatarchirat Jambhoji.

Katha Gugaliye Ki, is a composition of 86 Dohas and Chaupais arranged under Raga Asa.

Katha Pulheji Ki, consists of 25 Dohas and Chaupais arranged in Raga Asa.

Katha Sach Akhari Vigatavali, contains 55 Dohas and Chaupais.

Vison Chhattisi, is a composition of 36 Kundalis.

Katha Dunapur Ki, is arranged under Raga Asa and consists of 65 Chhandas.

Vilhoji Ki Parmadhrupi Chhappaya, is a composition of 45 Chhappayas.

Vilhoji Ke Harjas, is of the most important compositions. It has 20 Harjas and are arranged under 8 Ragas.

Katha Jaisalmer Ki, consists of 112 Dohas, Chhappayas and Kavittas.


Battis Akhari consists of 39 Chhandas and also contains 29 rules of Bishnoi Panth.

Besides all the aforementioned works, this collection contains other miscellaneous Sakhis, Dohas, Sorthas and Kavittas,
under the title *Chhutak Sakhi, Kavitta Prasang Ke*, and *Vilhoji Ke Atpopadesh*.

Many other saints of *Bishnoi Panth* have also contributed greatly to their sacred literature in which their *Harjas* (Religious songs) are regarded as the most important. Both the *Nirgun* and *Saguna* forms of the God are described in the Bishnoi *Harjas*. Krishnlal Bishnoi had edited a collection of the *Harjas* of Bishnoi saints under the title of *Bishnoi Santon Ke Harjas* which was published by Sambharathal Prakashan, Haryana in A.D. 1993. This collection is based on *Parmananda Ji Ka Potha*. It covers the period of almost 450 years and contains 140 *Harjas* of 27 saints of *Bishnoi Panth*. These are as follows: *Harjas* of Udoji Naina, arranged under 6 *Ragas* viz. Kambhavachi, Gauri, Kafi, Ramkali, Kedara and Ghumar.

12 *Harjas* of Alamji arranged under 7 *Ragas*; Suhab, Dhanashri, Kambhavachi, Nat, Sorath, Malhar, and Gauri.

20 *Harjas* of Vilhoji, arranged under 8 *Ragas*; Gauri, Asa, Bhairava, Bilavala, Ramkali, Malhar, Dhanashri and Sorath.

13 *Harjas* of Kesoji Godara which are arranged under 9 *Ragas*; Maru, Bhairava, Dhanashri Malhar, Bilvala, Gauri, Hanso, Suhab, and Kedara.

48 *Harjas* of Surjanji Punia arranged under 10 *Ragas*; Bilavala, Malhar, Asa, Maru, Sorath, Dhanashri, Bhairava, Gauri, Kedara, and Kambhavachi.

6 *Harjas* of Parmandaji Banial which are to be sung in 3 *Ragas*; Kambhavachi, Sarang and Dhanashri.
The collection also contains 28 miscellaneous Harjas of 21 other poets of the Bishnoi Panth. These are arranged under 10 Ragas, Dhanashri, Asa, Khambhavachi, Ramkali, Hanso, Sorath, Malhar, Bhairava, Vihagarau, and Bilavala.

**Literature Of The Nanak Panth**

The sacred scripture of the Nanak Panth is known as Adi Granth which is popularly called Granth Sahib or Guru Granth. From the very beginning the Adi Granth received deep respect from Sikhs not merely as the collection of their Guru teachings but also as a living proof of the Sikh doctrine, since there was no difference between the Guru and his word (Shabdas or Bani). Thus, the Granth serves as the symbolic representation of the Gurus, who are considered as only one man viz. Nanak, the light of whose soul passed on to each of his successors one by one.

All Gurus of the period were gifted poets who composed hymns of religious appeal and in Sikhism worship consisted of singing those hymns of Gurus. The sixth Guru Arjun wished to lay down the contents and the rules of the hymns that were supposed to be sung in rituals performed by the Sikhs. He also desired to raise the status of Sikhism from a sect to a religion. This object could be attained by providing the Sikhs with holy scripture of their own. He therefore, made a collection of all the compositions of his predecessors and with the addition of his own and those of some like minded saints of the land in the form of the Adi Granth in Gurumukhi script. The script was developed by the second Guru Angad from a local script of Punjab.
The *Adi Granth*, then called *Pothi Sahib*, was compiled in V.S. 1661/A.D. 1604. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh put the seal of finality on it after including in it the *Shabdas* of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur and one single *Dohra* of his own. The line of the *Gurus* closed with the tenth *Guru Gobind Singh* as per the wish of the *Guru* himself who called upon Sikhs to regard the *Granth Sahib* as the living *Guru*.

There used to be a notion among the Sikhs that the sacred *Granth* must not be allowed to be printed, but now this prejudice has vanished and now the *Granth* is being published. However extreme precautions have been exercised to maintain the accuracy of the text and that’s why there is almost no textual variation in all the available published editions of it. The printed *Adi Granth* consists of 1430 pages. It contains 974 hymns or 2949 stanzas of Guru Nanak, 62 of Guru Angad, 907 of Guru Amardas 679 of Guru Ramdas, 2218 of Guru Arjun and 115 of Guru Tegh Bahadur and hymns of 16 saints both Hindu and Muslim, and songs of 4 minstrels. The number of saint’s hymns is as follows: 2 Jaideva, 134 Shaikh Farid, 4 Tirlochan, 60 Namdeva, 1 Ramananda, 1 Sadhana, 3 Beni, 14 Ravidas, 541 Kabir, 4 Dhanna, 1 Pipa, 1 Sain 1 Parmananda, 1 Surdas, 2 Bhikhan, and 1 Mirabai. Of the minstrels there are: 3 Mardana, 6 Sundar, and 8 Satta and Balwand. Apart from this 123 *Savayyas of Bhatts*, who flourished in different periods in Gurus darbars, have also been included in *Granth Sahib*.

In the *Adi Granth* the hymns are not given in chronological order according to the *Gurus* but are adjusted in accordance with
31 Ragas to which the hymns were to be recited. Under each particular Raga there are different Mahlas. The first one belongs to Guru Nanak, second belongs to Guru Angad, third Mahla belongs to Guru Amardas, fourth to Guru Ramdas, fifth to Guru Arjun and ninth Mahla belongs to Guru Tegh Bahadur.

The Granth itself consists of the following portions.

1. The Japji, it is recited by the Sikhs in the morning prayer.
2. The Sodaru, sung as the evening prayer together with,
3. Sopurkhu, the combined name for both the Sodaru and Sopurkhu is Rahirasa.

This is followed by the conclusion of the Granth and is called Bhog. This portion contains Shaloka Sahaskriti, Gatha, Funhe, Chaubole, Shalokas of Kabir and Farid, Savayyas of the
Gurus and Bhattas, Shalokas of the Gurus and Ragamala or index of musical measures.

The original manuscript of Granth Sahib was installed in Harimandir, popularly called Golden Temple at Amritsar. In Harimandir the worship of God simply consists of recitation from the Granth. No preaching and no discussions are permitted. The original copy of Guru Arjun exists in the Gurudwara at Kartarpur near Jallandhar. For the first time Guru Granth Sahib was published in Gurumukhi by Bhai Mohan Singh Vaidya from Taran Taran, Amritsar under the title Adi Shri Guru Granth Sahibji. It’s Nagari edition was published in A.D. 1927 with the same title and from the same publication. In the Nagari script Shri Guru Granth Sahib was also published by Sarva Hind Sikh Mission, Amritsar in A.D. 1937. Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Kameti, Amritsar, published it in Gurumukhi in A.D. 1951. Bhuvan Vani Trust, Lucknow had published Adi Shri Guru Granth Sahib with Hindi transliteration by Nanda Kumar Avasthi and Hindi translation by Manmohan Sahgal. It was presented in four volumes. First of them was published in A.D. 1978, second in A.D. 1980, third in A.D. 1981 and its fourth volume was published in 1982.

For the first time Earnest Trumpp had translated Adi Granth into English. This edition was published from Delhi in A.D. 1877 under the title The Adi Granth. Max Arthur Macauliffe had presented his English translation of the Granth in A.D. 1909, in 6 volumes under the title The Sikh Religion which was published from Delhi.
The tenth Guru of Sikhs Guru Gobind Singh himself prepared no authentic compilation of his own compositions and though he gave the final shape to the *Adi Granth* in A.D. 1705, he did not include any of his compositions (except a single *Shaloka* which is included in the verses of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur) in the *Granth Sahib*.

After his death the compositions attributed to him were compiled in one volume by his disciple Bhai Mani Singh in A.D. 1734. The compilation is collectively known as *Dasham Padshah Ka Granth*. It’s old collections and published versions include the following compositions of Guru Gobind Singh:


Some handwritten collections which include the aforementioned compositions of Guru Gobind Singh are preserved in the *Gurudwara* of Patna. Among them one was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh which included some pages written by Guru Gobind Singh.⁷

Besides this, various other hand written volumes and manuscripts containing his compositions are preserved in Shri...
Guru Ramdas Library, Amritsar, Shiromani Gurudwara Reference Library, Amritsar, and Patiala Central Library.

There is no doubt that the largest part of the *Dasham Granth* was composed by Guru Gobind Singh. However, some stories and translations in the volume like *Pakhyan Charitra* and *Higayat* which are said to be a part of *Zafarnama*, seem to be entirely out of tune with the Guru’s teachings and on that ground are not considered as genuine and authoritative compositions of Guru Gobind Singh. Moreover, writers attached to the Guru’s court might have been responsible for certain compositions which are attributed to him after his death.

The *Japu* and *Akal Ustat* are among the most authoritative and important works of Guru Gobind Singh. The *Japu* is a devotional song. It is recited in the morning prayer and used in the baptism of the *Khalsa*. It is based on the model of *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* and contains about 950 names of God. It portrays Gods as *Nirakara, Anama, Anadi, Nirvikara* etc. According to Macauliffe, “The *Japuji* of Guru Gobind Singh is held by the Sikhs in the same spirit as the *Japji* of Guru Nanak. Like the works of Hindu scholars called *Vishnu Sahasra Nam* which has Vishnu’s thousands names. The *Japu* was composed to supply the Sikhs with similar number of epithets of the creator.” The *Japu* contains 199 *Chhandas* and compiled in *Brijbhasha* language in *Gurumukhi* script. Terms of Persian and Arabic are also be found in it at some places.

The *Akal Ustat* (Praise of the immortal) contains 271 *Chhandas*. It is noteworthy that there are several questions related
to Jivana-Marana, Pap-Puniya, Jnana-Ajnana etc. are put in Chhandas 201 to 210 of the Akal Ustat to which no answer is given, and the last Chhanda of this composition is not complete. All those facts indicate the incomplete nature of this work.

The next composition of Dasham Granth is Bichitra Natak which stands by itself as a composition of autobiographical and historical importance. It consists of 471 Chhandas which are arranged under 14 chapters.

Interestingly, the major part of the compositions preserved in the Dasham Granth deals with Hindu mythological stories such as Chandi Charitra Ukti Vilas, which is a free version in Brijbhasha of the chapter on Durga Saptashati in the Markendya Purana. It contains 262 Chhandas, arranged under 8 chapters.

Var Shri Bhagvati Ji Di or Chandi Di Var comes next to the Chandi Charitra Ukti Vilas and based on the same plot i.e. Durga Saptashati of Markendya Purana. It is composed in Punjabi and contains 55 Chhandas.

Chaubis Avatar speaks of twenty four incarnations of Vishnu in total 4315 chhandas,

In the work named Brahma Avatar Katha, seven incarnations of Brahma are described in 355 Chhandas. Other two compositions named Rudra-Avatar and Parasnath-Rudra Avatar deal with the incarnations of Rudra and Parasnath respectively. Former is divided in 24 sections and comprises 498 Chhandas while the latter contains 358 Chhandas.
Mehdi-Mir Vadh Kathan is another composition included in Dasham Granth, which is described in 11 Chhandas. It is said that this is inspired by the literary works of Shia sect of Muslims.

In the composition named Gyan Prabodh Granth, the four stages of the progressive evolution of religions is described through the examples of Mahabharata and other mythological stories. These four stages are: 1. Raj Dharma (Religion of politics and government), 2. Dan Dharma (Religion of charity) 3. Bhog Dharma (Religion of householder’s controlled enjoyment) 4. Moksha Dharma (Religion of striving for salvation). This work contains 336 Chhandas.

The Shastranama Mala is ostensibly a catalogue of weapons which were used in the period of Guru Gobind Singh. This composition has a close link with the Guru’s militant ideology. In this work the description of weapons has been given in 1318 Chhandas.

10 Shabdas of Guru Gobind Singh have also been included in ‘Dasham Granth. These Shabdas are collectively called Shabad Hazare and are arranged under 8 Ragas viz. Ramkali, Sorath, Kalyan, Bilavala, Devagandhara, Khyal, Tilang and Kafi. Except 6th Shabda which is composed in Punjabi in Khyal, the language of all the Shabdas is Brijbhasha.

33 Savayyas, of Guru Gobind Singh deals with the attributes of God and repudiates the doctrine of incarnation. It also criticizes ascetic practices and superstitions and condemns the Masands. Besides Dasham Granth also contains 3 Savayyas and 1 Doha.
arranged under the title *Savayya Jo Kihu Lekh Lekhiyo Vidhana*. Here *Khalsa* is described by Guru Gobind Singh.

The *Guru*’s philosophy of protest against violation of truth and righteousness is expressed in poetic style and contains intensive usage of Persian language in *Zafarnama*. It is in the form of a letter which was sent to Aurangzeb by Guru Gobind Singh.

*Zafarnama* consists of 12 Persian *Baits*. Besides this, 12 *Hiqayats* (Persian stories) are also attached to it which have been described in 868 *Baits*. The *Hiqayat* is practically a Persian version of the *Pakhyan Charitra* and each story opens with praises of God.

Besides this, 49 miscellaneous *Kavittas* and 4 *Baits*, describing the rules of Sikhism are also included in the *Dasham Granth*.

Thus, the *Dasham Granth* is not a single work with a single theme. It is a collection of writings on diverse themes in three languages-*Brijbhasha*, Punjabi and Persian. Guru Gobind Singh’s mastery of Persian is evident in the *Zafarnama* and the *Hiqayat*. The *Var Shri Bhagvati Ji Di* is the first and the finest specimen of *Vir rasa* poetry in mixed Punjabi and *Brijbhasha*. The remaining parts are composed in *Brijbhasha* though in many cases has been enriched by appropriate words borrowed from Sanskrit, *Awadhi*, *Dingal* (Rajasthani), Punjabi, Persian and Arabic.

Bhuvan Vani Trust, Lucknow has published *Shri Dashm Granth Sahib* with Hindi translation and Nagari transliteration by Jodhsingh. First and second volumes of this edition were

LITERATURE OF THE DADU PANTH

_Dadu Panthi_ literature of 16th and 17th centuries comprised of the verses of _Panth_’s founder Dadu Dayal and his disciples viz. Rajjabdas and Sundardas.

Maximum number of Dadu’s verses as found today in various collections is 3120 which included 2680 _Sakhis_ classified under 37 _Angas_ and 446 _Padas_ and are arranged under 26 or 29 _Ragas_. The language of his compositions is mainly Rajasthani-Hindi which has been enriched by the terms of several other languages such as Gujarati, Sindhi, Punjabi, Marathi, Persian and Sanskrit.

As was the case with many other saints of the period Dadu Dayal himself did not compile his own. It is said that after his death the compositions attributed to him were collected under the title _Hirde Bani_ by some of his disciples like Santdas and Jagannathdas. This collection is not found today but its revised text, made by Dadu’s close disciple Rajjabdas in A.D. 1595, named _Angabandhu_ is available. This contains the verses of Dadu Dayal which are properly classified and arranged under 37 different _Angas_ (chapters).

Besides this, there are several other collections and _Panchavani_ collections of _Dadu Panth_ such as _Sarbangi_ of Rajjabdas and _Gunaganjnama_ of Jagannathdas which included the
compositions of Dadu Dayal with the verses of various other saints.

There are many handwritten collections which contain the compositions of Dadu Dayal. Among them three volumes can be regarded as authoritative due to their direct relation with the followers of Dadu Panth. These are:

One handwritten volume which was written in V.S. 1710/A.D.1653 by a Dadu Panthi author named Khemdas, is now preserved at the Naraina sect of Dadu Panth.

Second work was written by Dadu Panthi poet Jagannathdas in V.S. 1768/A.D. 1711 and is now preserved in the Dadu Mahavidyalya at Jaipur. Third collection which included the verses of Dadu Dayal is preserved in N. P. S., Varanasi, with the number 1406. It was written by another Dadu Panthi author named Mansaram in V.S. 1797/ A.D. 1740.

Besides these, four other handwritten volumes also exist, which are preserved in the N. P. S., Varanasi, with the numbers 1394, 1611, 1393 Ka and 1759. Among these, second and third are dated as V.S. 1874/A.D. 1817 and V.S. 1908/A.D. 1851 respectively.

Some published versions of Dadu’s verses have also been presented by different editors. Among them first was edited by Sudhakar Dwivedi which had been published from N.P.S., Varanasi in Nagari Granthmala series no 11and 14 in A.D. 1906 and 1907 respectively. It’s first part was named Shri Dadu Dayal Ki Bani and second Dadu Dayal Ka Shabad.
In A.D. 1907 verses of Dadu Dayal was published by Vaidik Yantralya, Ajmer in two parts under the one title *Shri Swami Dadu Dayal Ki Bani*. This collection was edited by Chandrika Prashad Tirpathi on the basis of *Angabandhu*.

One edition of *Dadu Bani* was published by Jail Press, Jaipur in V.S. 1975 / A.D. 1918


Another edition had been edited by Swami Jivananda Bharatbhikshu and was published by Shri Dadu Sewak Press, Jaipur in three parts under the title *Anbhaya Vani* in V.S. 2003/A.D.1956. Mangal Press, Jaipur had published another edition of Dadu’s verses in V.S. 2008/A.D. 1951. This was edited by Shriswami Mangaldas of Dadu Mahavidyalya, Jaipur

On the basis of all the aforementioned handwritten and published volumes, Parshuram Chaturvedi edited a collection of Dadu’s compositions. This edition was published by N.P.S., Varanasi, in V.S. 2023/A.D. 1966 with the title *Dadudayal Granthavali*. It contains 2453 *Sakhis* of Dadu Dayal divided under 37 *Angas* while his 427 *Padas* are arranged under 26 *Ragas* viz. *Rag Gaudi, Rag Mali Gaudio, Rag Kalyan, Rag Kando, Rag Adanho, Rag Kedaro, Rag Maru, Rag Ramgari, Rag Asawari, Rag Sidhoodo, Rag Gujar*, *Rag Prajyo, Rag Sarang, Rag Dev Gandhar, Rag Todi, Rag Hussaini Bangalo, Rag Nat Narain, Rag Sorath, Rag Gund, Rag Bilaval, Rag Suho, Rag Basant, Rag Bhairon, Rag Lalit, Rag Dhanashri, Rag Aarti*. Besides this, two
*Laghu Granthas* (Small works) viz. *Granth Kaya Veli* which contains 8 *Padas* and *Granth Pahara* which consists of 4 *Padas* are also included in the end.

Besides, the collection and preservation of their teacher’s compositions, Dadu’s disciples produced a large quantity of devotional verses of their own. Among them, of outstanding worth are the works of Rajjabdas. Even in Dadu’s lifetime his poems were highly esteemed and widely used by his fellow disciples. But most of his best works including his famous spiritual tribute, known as *Bhent Ke Savayye* to Dadu and Gharibdas were composed after Dadu’s death (A.D. 1603-04). These are still very popular among the *Dadu Panthis* and are present in various *Panchavani* collections of the *Panth*.

Rajjabdas is said to have been the author of about twenty *Laghu Granthavalis* (Small works) and a huge amount of *Sakhis*, *Shabdas*, *Savayyas*, *Arillas* and other miscellaneous verses. An old and mutilated copy of his works may still be seen at his shrine in Sanganer, Rajasthan. Works of Rajjabdas are well preserved in the various *Panchavani* collections of *Dadu Panth*.

An edited text of some important works of this great mystic poet was published as *Rajjab Bani* by the Gyan Sagar Press, Mumbai in A.D. 1918. This is a very comprehensive collection dealing with variety of subjects which includes Rajjab’s 5352 *Sakhis* under 193 different *Angas*, 209 *Shabdas* arranged under 20 *Ragas* and 117 *Savayyas* under 26 *Angas*. The text also includes his *Bhent Ke Savayye*. In addition to these 3 *Gurchhandas*, 82
Arillas, 13 small and miscellaneous Shabdas and 89 Chhappayas are also incorporated in the same collection.

As the edition was largely obscure and sometime very inaccurate, a revised text of the same was prepared by Dr. Brijlal Verma and was published by the Upama Prakashan, Kanpur in A.D. 1963. The second edition of it also included a Bani Kosh or an index of different works.

In its present form Rajjab Bani seems to have also incorporated some works written in his name by his disciples or followers as was the case with many other saints of the period.

The greatest contribution of Rajjabdas lies in his famous compilation known as Sarbangi or Sarvanga-Yoga. This collection was compiled by him in circa V.S. 1730/A.D. 1673. Unfortunately, the original manuscript is not available but a number of its copies are preserved in several Panchavani collections at Jaipur and at Varanasi. For instance, the Dadu Mahavidalya at Jaipur preserves the work in Basta No. 3 compiled by Charandas in V.S. 1819/A.D. 1762 (ff. 332-500); Basta No. 36, compiled in V.S. 1825/A.D. 1768 (ff.9-261), Basta No. 19 compiled by Maujiram in V.S. 1833/A.D. 1776 (ff. 256-488) and Basta No. 8 Compiled by Ram Ghandas at Nagpur in V.S. 1841/A.D. 1784 (ff. 253-500). Likewise, the N.P.S. at Varanasi, contains the text of Sarbangi in the manuscripts of Serial No. 1394 compiled by Ramdas in V.S. 1771/A.D. 1714 (ff. 611-790), Serial No. 1708 compiled by Khusyaldas in V.S. 1836/A.D. 1779 (ff. 229-427) and Serial No. 1407 compiled by Gyandas in V.S. 1872/A.D. 1815.
There is, however, a very little textual variation in all available copies of the work though they differ sometimes in giving the total number of Angas. Sarbangi of Rajjabdas contains, under 142 or 145 Angas, a total of 3836 verses and hymns of different kinds which included 2643 Sakhis, 877 Shabdas, 188 Sanskrit Shalokas, 75 Persian Baits, 24 Arillas, 15 Kavittas, 7 Chaupais, 2 Savayyas, 2 Ramainis, 1 Soratha, 1 Gatha and 1 Kundalya Chhanda. In addition to these there are fifteen Laghu Granthavali- two in Sanskrit and the rest in Hindi. The two Sanskrit works are Granth Sadh Mahima and Granth Niranjan Ashtak, and the Hindi works are Avigat Lila, Granth Anga Bhed, Granth Akal Lila, Prem Pariksha, Man Prakash Pariksha, Shabad Pariksha and Gyan Pariksha- all of Rajjabdas. Granth Sadh Parkhya of Chaturbhuj, Saunj, of Dadu Dayal, Guna-Nishani of Wazid, Abhay Mantra Granth of Gorakhnath, Granth Gavitri of Prithinath and Nirban Jogpad of an unidentified author.

It is important to note that the Sarbangi incorporated the compositions of about a hundred mystic-poets of different schools of thought flourished from 12th to 17th century A.D. Among them the saint of different schools of bhakti thought, the Muslim mystic of different orders and the Siddhas and Yogis are included.

The collection has maintained the traditional Panchavani system by giving maximum representation to the verses of five saints viz. Dadu, Kabir, Namdeva, Raidas and Hardas. Rajjab’s own verses also find appearance. However, it gives a different classification of the Angas than the popular Panchavani system. This is evident from the name Sarbangi i.e. a work containing all
the chapters, a special attention has been paid to the division of *Angas*. The whole work is divided, according to subject matters into 142 or 145 *Angas* under which *Sakhis* are arranged.

As compiling of the sacred texts was considered an act of devotion, a great care and caution was taken to maintain the accuracy of the text in the *Sarbangi* collection. Even a cursory reading of it shows that there is a marked linguistic difference between the verses of *Dadu Panthi* teachers and those of other schools, notwithstanding the casual variation due to the local dialect and style. On one hand the verses of Dadu Dayal and his followers are found in the popular vernacular form with a great effect of Persian style and terminology together with the influence of local Rajasthani dialect, while on the other hand, the verses of Kabir, Raidas, Surdas and others are preserved in their native linguistic form i.e. *Purbi Hindi* or *Awadhi*. Likewise, while the verses of the Maharashtrian saints like Gyandev and Namdeva are found in a loose form of the *Marathi* language, those of Nanak, Shaikh Farid and other saints of the Western side are greatly under the influence of the Punjabi language and its style. It is worth noting that the difference is not confined to the linguistic level but it is also visible in the use of terminology and symbolism found in the various regional as well as periodical accounts.

Shahabuddin Iraqi has edited *The Sarbangi of Rajjabdas* or *Rajjabdas Ki Sarbangi* on the basis of the manuscripts copies of *Sarbangi* preserved in the N.P.S., Varanasi and Dadu Mahavidyalya, Jaipur. This edition was published from Aligarh in A.D. 1985.
Sundardas, who was another famous disciple of Dadu Dayal was the contemporary of Rajjabdas. He was primarily a scholar, a prolific writer and a poet of real distinction. He composed many works of devotional nature. Purohit Harinarayan of Jaipur had collected and edited various compositions of Sundardas and presented a thoroughly reliable text of the complete works of Sundardas. This edition was published in two parts by Rajasthan Research Society, Calcutta in A.D. 1936 under the title Sundar Granthavali. This collection is mainly based on an original manuscript compiled in the supervision of Sundardas by his disciple Rupadas at Fatehpur, Rajasthan, in V.S. 1742/A.D. 1685 and a handwritten copy by a Dadu Panthi author Asha Ram.

*Sundar Granthavali* contains the following compositions of Sundardas.

*Gyan Samudra*, is the most widely known work of Sundardas and is a popular exposition of the way of *bhakti* and of the teaching of the *Samkhya* and the *Vedanta*. It takes the form of a dialogue between master and disciple. It consists of 314 *Chhandas* which are divided in 5 chapters *Laghu Granthavali* which comprises 37 small *Granthas* of Sundardas composed in 1216 *Chhandas*.

Sundardas’s *Savayye*, popularly known as the *Sundar Vilas*, takes its names *Savayye* from the dominant metre in which it is written. It consists of 563 *Chhandas* arranged under 34 *Angas* dealt with a large variety of subjects. Both in matter and arrangement, it bears a strong resemblance to the *Bani* of Dadu. A collection of *Sakhis* and hymns are among the large and more
important works of Sundardas. This collection contains 1351 Sakhis under 31 chapters and among these eight have the same titles as those of the Savayyas. The collection also contains 213 Padas of Sundardas arranged under 27 Ragas and 149 miscellaneous compositions of Sundardas.

The language of the aforesaid compositions of Sundardas is mainly Brijbhasha and Rajasthani and has also been enriched by the terms of Persian and Arabic. Besides this, a slight influence of Gujarati, Purbi, Punjabi and other languages are also be found in many cases.
Notes And References:

2. Keay, p. 54
3. Each *Raga* being considered suitable to some reason of the year or time or the day
4. *Rekhtas* are short didactic poems or verses in praise of God or of *guru* (teacher)
5. Guru Arjun dictated the hymns to Bhai Gurudas who actually wrote the sacred *Granth*, Gupta, p. 96
8. Macauliffe, V, p. 261, f. no.-1