

## Sikh Devotional Music—Its Main Traditions

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For spiritual elevation and as an aid to communion with God, music plays a special role in almost all the religions of the world. It is intimately related to the heart of man and has little to do with his reasoning mind. The devotee of the music, that is evocative of emotions, thus enjoys intimate communion with God. He becomes one with God as he realizes *Brahma* in *Nada*. It is not, therefore, surprising that the Sikhs attach great importance to music and regard it as one of the means of communion with God. The Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, gave music an honoured place in their religion.

The Hindu devotees (of *Saguna* worship) composed lyrics and sang them. These are included in the *kirtan*. But nowhere do we find an entire religious congregation singing this *kirtan* as one body. Sikhism established this new tradition. All those present in a congregation are entitled to participate in the *kirtan*. The absence of congregational *kirtan* in Hinduism was probably due to its rigid caste-system. (The *shudra*-s were not allowed to enter the temple precincts, to study Sanskrit, and to participate in rituals along with the higher castes).

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, believed that this kind of discrimination was a blot on religion. He also observed that when the Muslims offer *Namaz* in a mosque, there is no distinction between a prince and a pauper. Both worship God as equals. In the spiritual sphere, this absence of discrimination inspires self-respect among the humble and the lowly. Guru Nanak's keen insight enabled him to discern this vital phenomenon and so he placed a ban on such discrimination in religion. Perhaps that was also the reason why he made *kirtan* congregational in character.

Hindustani music is the common heritage of Indians. Sikhism, inheriting this tradition, evolved a new system of *kirtan*. The *kirtan* performed at Kashi, Mathura, Ayodhya and other Hindu places of worship, used to be related to the worship of gods, idols, and the *leela*-s of the incarnations of Vishnu. Tulsī and Surdas (in Uttar Pradesh), Meera (in Rajasthan), Chaitanya (in Bengal), Shanker Dev (in Assam), Namdev and Tukaram (in Maharashtra), Narsinh Mehta (in Gujarat) and the musician-saint Purandara Das of the South are among the great singers of this tradition. The Devdasis, too, sang in the temples in praise of the *Saguna* form of God. The Sikh Gurus, combining the *Gurvani* (Poetry) and *Raga*, laid the basis for prayer and worship of the *Nirguna* form of God. The *kirtan* rouses a deep desire for communion with God, and creates the appropriate spiritual atmosphere for realization of the Supreme.

The significance of the *kirtan*, for Sikhism, lies in that it alone helps a human to attain *Brahma*. *Kirtan* thus occupies an important place in all the rites (*samskara*-s) of Sikhism. After the death of a person, *kirtan* by the survivors

is the only way in which peace is attained by his soul. As Guru Arjan has said:

ਕੀਰਤਿ ਪੁਮ ਕੀ ਗਾਤ ਮੇਰੀ ਦਸਨਾ ॥  
ਅਨੇਕ ਬਾਦ ਕਰਿ ਬੰਦਨ ਅੰਤਨ ਤ-ਏ ਚਰਨ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਕਰਨਾ ॥੧॥੨੬੩॥  
ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਕਾਨੜਾ ਮਣਡੀ; ਮ: 5, ਬਦ: 2, ਪ੍ਰਠ 1298.

(O my tongue, do thou sing the glory of the Lord and the Saint! This alone shall lead thee to the Lord's feet).

*Kirtan* is music which overflows with devotion for God, and sings his glory. In his *Vani*, Guru Arjan has called *kirtan* an invaluable gem that brings peace to the soul in this life and the Supreme State in the next.

ਦਰਨ ਅਰੇਵਰ ਨਾਮ ॥ - - - -  
ਦੁਕਾਤ ਦਰਦਿ ਕੇਖੁ ਜੋਟਿ ਜ ਆਰੇ ਅੰਤੁ ਜਈ ਵਦਿ ਪਾਰਾਬਾਰ ॥੧॥੨੬੩॥  
ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਜਿਦਮੋਲਕ ਵੀਦਾ ॥ ਅਜੰਦ ਗੁਪਿ ਗਵੀਦਾ ॥  
ਗੁ. ਗ੍ਰ. ਸਾ. , ਦਾਗ ਦਾਮਕਲੀ, ਮ: 5, ਬਦ: 2, ਪ੍ਰਠ 893.

According to him, in the Kaliyug, *kirtan* reigns supreme and it is only through *kirtan* that one is able to attain salvation.

ਕਲਕੁਰਾ ਮਦਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਪਦਠਾਨਾ ॥  
ਗੁਰਮਾਦੇ ਜਪੀਰੇ ਲਾਡ ਏ ਆਨਾ ॥  
ਆਪਿ ਤਦੈ ਸਗਲੇ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਦੇ ਵਾਦੇ ਕਰਗਵ ਪਤਿਦੀਤ ਆਡਦਾ ॥  
ਗੁ. ਗ੍ਰ. ਸਾ. , ਮਾਰਾ ਸੋਲਠੇ, ਮ: 5, ਪ੍ਰਠ 1075.

Since music mirrors the deep feelings of a man's heart and ministers to the thoughts of Divine Love, almost all the Sikh Gurus composed religious hymns and instructed the Sikhs not to worship any man or the image of any prophet born on earth. They said, "Read these poems, recite them, and sing them and you will attain enlightenment".

Hence Sikh worship consists chiefly of recitation and singing hymns in praise of God to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. During his travels, Guru Nanak sang these hymns to the accompaniment of the *rabab* played by Bhai Mardana, his Muslim companion.

The *kirtan* is thus an integral part of Sikhism. According to the Gurus, singing the glory of the Lord in *raga-s* is *kirtan*. It is a light that penetrates the hardest heart and renders it fit for love of God. The Guru exhorts the Sikh community thus: As long as there is life, remember the (Lord's) Name through *kirtan*.

ਕੀਰਤਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਿਮਰਦਤ ਦਵਤ ਅਕ ਲਗੁ ਏਦਿ ਸਾਦੁ ॥੧॥੨੬੩॥  
ਗੁ. ਗ੍ਰ. ਸਾ. , ਦਾਗ ਬਿਲਾਠਲ, ਮ: 5, ਦੁਪਦੇ, ਬਦ: 5, ਪ੍ਰਠ 818.

From *kirtan* is derived the word *kirtania*, which means the singer of *kirtan*-s. The *kirtania* has received much praise in the *Guru Granth*.

ਮਲੋ ਮਲੋ ਦੇ ਕੀਰਤਨੀਤਾ॥  
ਦਾਸ ਦਾਸਾ ਦਾਸਾ ਗੁਜ ਗਾਤ॥  
ਏਓੜਿ ਮਾਝੁਆ ਕੈ ਬੰਬ ਦੁਆਤ॥੧॥੨੬੩॥  
ਗੁ.ਗੁ.ਸਾ., ਦਾਸਾ ਦਾਸਕਲੀ, ਮ: 5, ਏ੨੧, ਪ੍ਰਯ ੪੪5.

He who performs the *kirtan* of *Gurvani* is called a *ragi*. The *ragi* has been assigned an important place in the Sikh *kirtan*, because his duty is to sing *kirtan*-s in the *raga*-s. In congregations it is through *raga*-singing that the attention of the audience is directed towards God.

According to the Gurus, *kirtan* and *raga* are so closely related that they are inseparable. One of the lyrics of the *Guru Granth* says: The glory of Govinda is to be sung in *raga-alap*.

ਗੁਪ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗਾਠਕੁ ਸਮਿ ਏਦਿ ਜਨ ਦਾਸਾ ਦੁਤਨ ਦੁਸਨਾ ਆਲਾਪ॥  
ਗੁ.ਗੁ.ਸਾ., ਦਾਸਾ ਬਿਲਾਵਲ, ਮ: 5, ਚੌਪਦੇ-ਕੁਪਦੇ, ਏ੨੬, ਪ੍ਰਯ ੪21.

Here, the *raga* has been personified as the priceless melody of God. In Sikhism, singing *kirtan*-s set to *raga*-s has a special significance. The *kirtan* must always be in a *raga*. In actual fact, even a plain chant or a silent study of *Gurvani* is a path to heaven. But, in congregations, the *kirtan* must be sung in *raga*-s.

In ancient India, the saints and sages recited the *mantra*-s or the Vedas musically, in addition to singing other varieties of devotional songs which existed at the time. In course of time as the concept of *raga* evolved, devotional songs came to be sung in different *raga*-s. Our modern *raga*-s are sung differently from the ancient *raga*-s, but the fact remains that in Hinduism the relation between *kirtan* and *raga* is very old.

The support lent to classical music, its subsequent adoption by the Sikhs and the acceptance of the *kirtan* in *raga*-s signified an important development. It provided an impetus to classical music. The Sikh Gurus made classical music an integral part of the hymns they composed for singing. Had the Sikhs not made classical music a vital part of the *kirtan*, classical music would possibly have not enjoyed the status it has today, particularly in the Punjab. Guru Nanak used classical music in *Gurvani* and enhanced its significance. Classical music and poetry were thus revived and also preserved by being introduced in the *Gurvani*. In a way, they regained the esteem they had lost due to various historical reasons.

The spiritual renaissance, which commenced in the fourteenth century and lasted till the sixteenth century, encouraged the *bhajan* form of worship. Different parts of India produced eminent *bhakta*-s, who enriched Indian sacred music with compositions of outstanding merit. During this period Guru Nanak did the same for Punjab. With the help of his Muslim companion, Bhai Mardana, he propagated his *Vani* set to music, and the tradition was followed by the other Sikh Gurus. In course of time this particular form of Sikh devotional music came to be known as *Shabad Kirtan*.

During his travels throughout India, Guru Nanak observed the different ways in which *kirtan* was performed by the followers of various sects. Perhaps he was impressed by the form and absorbed some of its positive features. *Kirtan* used to be performed at the time in the temples of Kashi, Ayodhya, Mathura and Brindaban by traditional musicians, (*kirtankar*-s). They used to set the devotional compositions of the Vaishnava *bhakta*-s to the prevalent *dhrupad* and *dhamar* styles of Hindustani Music. Guru Nanak visited almost all these holy places and closely studied different forms of music. With the help of his *rababi* minstrel, he may have set his own compositions in the *dhrupad* and *dhamar* styles as well as in the simple *kirtan* style. After Guru Nanak, the same tradition was followed by the various Sikh Gurus. One can listen even today to those old *kirtan* compositions rendered by the Sikh *ragi*-s who learnt them from the traditional *rababi*-s and Sikh *kirtania*-s.

The Sikh religion was founded in the fifteenth century and the Sikh system of *kirtan* was strongly influenced by the various *kirtan* traditions prevalent at that time. The Sikh Gurus adopted only the more vital elements of music in their *kirtan*, but they completely eschewed the dance performed by Vaishnava and Shaiva devotees and by the Sufis in their *Sama* gatherings. The Sikh Gurus also rejected the rhythmical clapping with the hands with which the Sufis accompanied their singing.

Thus Sikh sacred music has a tradition dating from the times of Guru Nanak when he composed his *Shabad*-s in the various *raga*-s. His example was followed by the various Sikh Gurus who came after him. Composing *Shabad*-s in *raga*-s was the need of the time. All the Sikh Gurus were well-versed in music, understood its importance and a new *kirtan* tradition was born in the form of Sikh devotional music. This music was based entirely on the traditions of classical music as is proved by both the *Guru Granth* and the *Dasham Granth*, the two main scriptures of the Sikh religion.

In all, thirty-one *raga*-s have been mentioned in *Guru Granth*. They are: Shri, Majh, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Devgandhari, Bihagra, Vadans, Sorath, Dhanashri, Jaitshri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Gaund, Ramkali, Nat-Narain, Maligaura, Maru, Tukhari, Kedara, Bhairo, Basant, Sarang, Malhar, Kanara, Kalyan, Parbhati, Jajiwanti.

The nineteen *raga*-s mentioned in the *Dasham Granth* are: Ramkali, Sorath, Kalian, Bilawal, Devgandhari, Khial, Tilang-kafi, Paraj, Kafi, Suhi, Sarang, Gauri, Dhanashri, Tilang, Kedara, Maru, Bhairo, Adan, Basant.

Various forms of *kirtan* were incorporated into Sikh devotional music. During the time of the various Sikh Gurus, the form of Sikh devotional music was based purely on the *dhrupad* style of Hindustani classical music which was then popular in the country. Sikh *rababi*-s and *ragi*-s also adopted this style of singing and composed innumerable *Shabad*-s from *Guru Granth* based on the *dhrupad* style. This was a period when, in most of the Hindu temples of Dwarka, Ayodhya, Mathura, Brindavan, Pashupati Nath (Kashi), and Nath Dwara (Udaipur), the temple musicians, too, employed the same style and sang *Vishnu Pada*-s based on *dhrupad*. From the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century the

*dhrupad* style of *kirtan* became popular in the Sikh Gurudwaras and the *ragi*-s and the *rababi*-s used to perform *kirtan* to the accompaniment of the *mridanga* or *pakhawaj*, as was the case with musicians when they sang the *dhrupad* of the classical style. Later, when the *tabla* became popular in the Punjab, it took the place of the *mridanga*, but the *pakhawaj* style was adapted (*khule-hath-ka-baj*) for playing it. That is why the Punjab style of playing the *tabla* is quite different from the styles in other parts of India. When, in course of time, the *khyal* became popular, the Sikh *rababi*-s imbibed this style and composed many *Shabad*-s of the *Guru Granth* in the *khyal* style.

Besides the *dhrupad* and *khyal* styles of *kirtan*, the Sikhs also adapted various other styles of North Indian music to their *kirtan*. *Qawali*, *tappa*, and *ghazal* were among the styles of music adopted in the Sikh *kirtan*.

Sikh devotional music also abounds in various folk tunes. The *Jhotiyan-de-Shabad*, for instance, was deliberately composed for congregational singing. The *Shabad*-s based on various folk tunes known as *Dharna* and *Varas* are included in this category. These tunes, being quite easy to sing, are the most popular and appealing style of *kirtan* of today's Sikh devotional music.

The *Shabad* composed in the *dhrupad*, *dhamar* or *khyal* styles are known as *Shabad-Reet*. These *Shabad-Reet*-s are a treasure house of Sikh devotional music and more finished in their musical style. They are also the most important among the melodic group of compositions. The two essential parts of a *Shabad-Reet* are *sthai* and *antara*. They may have one or more *antara*-s, and most of the *antara*-s are sung to the notes (*swara*-s) of the first *antara*. These *Shabad-Reet*-s are also known by the *ragi*-s as *Taksali-Reet*, traditional compositions, whose training is imparted by a teacher to his pupil. A *Shabad-Reet*, set in *Charta* (*Chautal*), may be compared to the *dhrupad* form of North Indian Music which, in the words of a well-known English musicologist, "has a free masculine character; its words are religious, but not exclusively so. It is in slow time, and in selected *tala*-s—*Sulphakta*, *Chautal*, and *Dhamar*—the ionic and anapaestic metres in fact; and since to perform it requires a good command of the breath, there is a saying: 'The man who has the strength of five buffaloes, let that man sing *dhrupad*.'" *Shabad-Reet* are also masculine in character and the words are exclusively devotional. Most of the *Shabad-Reet*-s are rendered in selected *tala*-s, such as *Chautal*, *Dhamar*, *Sulphakta*, *Jhaptal*, *Chanchal* (*Dipchandi*), *Ada* (*Arachautal*), etc.

Often in the *kirtan*, the *ragi*-s, in order to astonish the audience, render a special composition known as the *Raga Sagar* or *Guldasta* (nosegay).

बाजत बसंत असु भैरव हिंडोल राग बाजत है ललता के साथ धनारसी॥  
 झालवा कल्याण असु झालकठसु भासु राग बन मे बजावे काहे भंगलनिवासु री॥  
 सुरी असु आसुरी अउ पल्लगीजे हती तहां धून के सुनत पैन सही सुध जसु री  
 केहे उउ दासुरी सु रोसु बाजी बासुरी सु भैरे जाने थाने सप्त राग को निवासु री॥  
 दृष्टान्त गल्प, "कृष्ण अवतार" कबित्त, ३३२.

In Hindustani music, this particular composition is known as *Ragamalika*. In this composition, a lengthy *Shabad* is composed in various *raga*-s and *tala*-s. The

*raga* as well as the *tala* go on changing as the rendering proceeds. The change to a new mode at each stage sustains the interest of the listener from start to finish. Only expert *ragi*-s can render such a composition, because the simultaneous changing of *raga*-s and *tala*-s, at every step and without any break, requires a high degree of knowledge of theory and practice. Sometimes at the end of the special *kirtan diwan*-s, the *ragi*-s sing another *Shabad* composition simulating the *tarana* of Hindustani classical music. Such compositions are found in the *Dasham Granth* under the title *Musical Metres*. The words used in compositions reproduce the sound of the drum.

ਕਾਗੜ੍ਹੰਗ ਕਾਕੀ ਕਟਾਰੀ ਕੜਾਂਕ॥ ਤਾਗੜ੍ਹੰਗ ਚੀੜੇ ਚੁਪਕਕੇ ਤੜਾਂਕ॥  
 ਖਾਗੜ੍ਹੰਗ ਨਾਗੜ੍ਹੰਗ ਬਾਗੜ੍ਹੰਗ ਬਾਜੇ॥ ਗਾਗੜ੍ਹੰਗ ਗਾਜੀ ਸਟਾਗੜ੍ਹੰਗ ਗਾਜੇ॥  
 ਵ. ਗ੍ਰ., "ਦੰਗੀਤ ਮੁਜੰਗ ਪ੍ਰਯਾਤ ਓੜ", ਗਠੀ ਗਦਿਤ ੩॥

In the day-to-day *kirtan diwan*-s, many of the *kirtan*-s performed by the *ragi*-s are based on light music and various folk tunes. As explained earlier, in Sikh devotional music, the term for the folk tunes is *Dharna*. It is also called *tarz*. The *kirtan*-s based on the styles of *Dharna*-s are most appealing and are meant for mass-singing in the congregations. When the *Shabad* is recited in any particular *Dharna*, the *sthai* (*Rahau-di-Tuk*) of the *Shabad* is repeated from time to time in the course of the singing by the *sangat* (congregation), and the rest of the phrases are sung by the *ragi jatha* (party) alone. Sometimes folk-tunes, other than the particular *Dharna*, are also introduced. Some expert *ragi*-s also impart the touches of appropriate *raga*-s.

There is yet another style of performing *Shabad Kirtan*, in which the *sangat* alone manages the *kirtan*. This particular style of *kirtan* known as *Jhotiyan-de-Shabad* is based on a traditional plainsong style. These *Shabad*-s are sung in simple notes and have been standardized by the usage of centuries. This tradition of singing the *Shabad Kirtan* can be compared to other congregational *kirtan* traditions prevalent in various regions of the country, namely the *kirtan* performed by the Kali-Bhaktas in Bengal, or the Vaishnava devotees of Northern India. It is the common heritage of *kirtan* which every Sikh possesses today.

Here, however, we must make a distinction between the two major styles of *kirtan*, one based on the pure classical music tradition, that is *Shabad-Reet* and the other based on *Dharna*-s (folk tunes). The first is an individual style of *kirtan* performed by the *ragi-jatha* alone, whereas the other is meant for the congregation. The term *Shabad-Reet* refers to the composition whose importance lies principally in its music. In the *Dharna*, the *Vani* (*sahitya*) is of primary importance. A *Shabad-Reet* is remembered and valued primarily for its aesthetic content, while a *kirtan*, based on *Dharna*, is significant mainly for the devotional content of its *Vani*. The portrayal of the *Raga-bhava* is the main feature of a *Shabad-Reet*, whereas in the plain *kirtan* it is only incidental. The *kirtan*-s based on *Dharna*-s are older than *Shabad-Reet*. *Reet* is, in fact, a development of the *kirtan*.

The *kirtan* is, strictly speaking, a sacred form. Its *Vani* is purely devotional in character. The music and the rhythm of a *kirtan* are simple in character and the music is used here only as a vehicle for singing the glories of God.

Thus, in the *kirtan*, music is subordinate to the *Vani*. The range of its music is small and the pieces can easily be learnt by heart even by a layman. In the *Shabad-Reet*, however, the *Vani* is sacred in form, the music comparatively complex and rich in technical beauty. The *kirtan*-s can be sung even by persons with average skill and training, whereas *Shabad-Reet* can be sung only by those who are thoroughly versed in music. The *kirtan*-s are meant for congregational singing, but not so the *Shabad-Reet*-s. *Kirtan*-s are composed in familiar *raga*-s but *Reet*-s can be sung in both the familiar and the more difficult *raga*-s. It is only through the *Shabad-Reet*-s that many rare *raga*-s have been preserved and kept alive.

It is, therefore, clear that to preserve Sikh devotional music, particularly the *Shabad-Reet*-s and the various *Dhuni*-s, the Sikh Gurus employed professional *kirtan* singers, (*rababi*-s, *ragi*-s and *dhadi*-s). The pupil received the traditional kind of training from the teacher (Ustad) and this pattern continues to this day. This has enabled the Sikhs to preserve the traditional *Shabad* compositions for posterity.

Mention should also be made of the peculiar style of singing adopted by the *rababi*-s and the *ragi*-s. Their voice is cultivated and trained in a special way. The characteristic features of the style are that they display all the graces with lively combinations of *swara*-s which are rendered in a slightly rounded form. This has a wonderful effect. The use of *murki* is a special trait of their singing style. Their full-throated, powerful singing may perhaps be ascribed to the robust health of the people of the Punjab. The songs are long but ornamental in nature. The rhythm is very marked and the music is generally in a medium tempo. The *alap* is followed by short *tan*-s. The powerful and complicated *tan*-s sometimes bewilder the audience for the effect is one of fire-works of musical notes. In order to create an element of wonder, the artiste often digresses into allied *raga*-s. Quite often the singer alternates these *raga*-s, presenting the *swara*-s of one *raga* followed by those of the other, returning again to the original *raga*. This process provides freedom to the artiste for variations and lively improvisation. In this style, the *sapat* (notes of fast ascent and descent), the *gamak* (grace notes), the varieties of *tan*-s and *murki*-s are of a special kind, which immediately distinguish it from other styles. The beauty of the singing lies in the quick display of various permutations and combinations of notes. This peculiar style of the Sikhs is usually described by Indian musicians as the Punjab style of singing.

Since the *tala*-s used for the *kirtan* are based on the purely classical style, the Sikh *kirtan* occupies a higher position than the relatively simple *bhajan*. The Sikh *kirtan* can be regarded as an independent branch of classical music since it is mainly concerned with the purity of the *raga*-s and *tala*-s. The Gurus laid great emphasis on the correct pronunciation of the *Vani* and accuracy in singing the various notes of a *raga*. The Gurus, it may be remembered, were well-versed both in music and in poetry.

It is true that the compositions of the Gurus are not meant to be sung on a public platform other than the Gurudwara, nor can the Gurudwara be regarded as a public stage. The object of music in the Gurudwara is to produce a serene atmosphere. Therefore, no *ragi* can ignore the ancient laws of classical music. We need not regard only the music at *mehfil*-s as classical in character. Devotional

songs, which follow the laws of classical music, can also be placed in the category of classical music. The fact that Sikh devotional music is entirely based on the tradition of Indian classical music cannot be ignored.

Thus we find that from the earliest days of Guru Nanak, music had played a great part in the Sikh religion. The first Guru, with his never-failing companion, Bhai Mardana, and the succeeding Sikh Gurus, following in the footsteps of Guru Nanak in this regard, retained the members of Mardana's family as professional *kirtania*-s in their courts. Nearly all the Gurus' compositions were set to various *raga*-s of Indian classical music and were intended to be sung in those *raga*-s to which they were set. Some of the *raga*-s used by the Gurus were new to Indian classical music (for instance, *Asa* and *Tukhari*). The Sikh Gurus introduced the use of the *rabab*, *sarinda*, *taos*, *pakhawaj*, *mridanga*, etc., in their *kirtan*. They also established the two classes of musicians—the *rababi*-s and the *ragi*-s, whose vocation was to sing the *Gurvani* in classical music. It is entirely due to these two classes of musicians that the *Shabad*-s of the Gurus have been preserved for us in their original musical form. These *Shabad* compositions (*Shabad-Reet*) can stand the test of classical music.

By basing the *kirtan* on classical music, the Sikh Gurus made a very significant contribution to the propagation of classical music in the Punjab. The *kirtania* was first trained in regular classical music (*dhrupad*, *dhamar*, *khyal*, etc.) and only then was he allowed to turn his attention to the *kirtan*, which was also sung in the traditional style. It may be noted that, apart from the tradition in South India nowhere has religious music made any conscious effort to incorporate classical music as in the Punjab.

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