

# Jaap Sahib and Its Musicology

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**Abstract – Jaap Sahib, one of the five Banis' (texts) recited during Amrit Sanchaar (baptization ceremony in Sikh religion) and also included in Nitnem (daily routine of a Sikh) has its importance in other fields of knowledge, especially literature and Music. The research paper deals with the musicological aspect of the sacred text. The research covers study of musical terminology used in the text, taal (Indian music) discipline, Chhand (metre) discipline, Alankaar (literature) discipline, Dhyani Chitra (Indian music), Rasa (emotion) expression and linguistic aesthetics of the text to find the extent to which the modern musicology dwells in the text.**

**Keywords – Jaap Sahib, Sikhism, Sikh scripture, Music, Musicology**

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## INTRODUCTION

**Jaap Sahib** is a fundamental discourse of Guru Gobind Singh Ji's compositions, compiled in **Dasam Granth** and one can attempt at understanding the cosmology and musicology of the Guru.

It is constituted in the universe of imagination which becomes the basis of a new cosmology, a cosmology that goes beyond any conceivable cosmos of the physical as well as metaphysical world. With a crystallizing process of Abstraction, a given epithet of Beauty or Truth, Generosity or Grandeur is conceptualized in absolute purity in which the soul can long for its ultimate **Love**.

After mentioning 99 names in Holy Book **Kuran Sharif**, 465 names has been used as attributes of the Almighty which is largest in number.

Patterned on the **Vishnu Sahasr Nama** that sings the glory of Vishnu, the **Jaap Sahib** recounts numerous attributes and epithets of the creator.[1]

This holy bani has been written by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in Samvat 1742 (approx.) at the silent bank of Yamuna River, Paunta Sahib.[2]

## IMPORTANCE

Due to importance of this bani it has been included in **Nitnem** in **Sikh Rehat Maryada**. **Jaap Sahib** is recited as Morning Prayer along with '**Japji Sahib**' of Guru Nanak Dev; '**Tav Prasad Swaiyae**' and '**Chaupae Sahib**' of Guru Gobind Singh; and the '**Anand**' of Guru Amar Das. It is also included in the Banis chanted as a part of initiation ceremony of

Amrit pan, the Sikh mode of baptism enjoined by Guru Gobind Singh.

## MUSICOLOGY

Musicology: [Origin French *Musicologie*, or directly from Music *noun+ology*] the branch of knowledge that deals music as a subject of study rather than as a skill or performing art; esp. academic research in music[3]; or Scholarly and scientific study of music[4]; or the academic study of Music in all its aspects.[5]

"The German term *Musikwissenschaft* ("science of music") was first employed by F. Chrysander in 1863 in the preface to his *Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* ("Yearbook for Musical knowledge"), in which he argued that musicology should be accepted as a science and that musical studies should aspire to rigorous methodological standards of the natural sciences. It covers a wide heterogeneous area of research and is concerned with the study not only of European and other art music but also of all folk and non western music. The scope of musicology may be summarized as covering the study of the history and phenomena of music."[6]

"Modern Musicology, with its practical of phenomenological as well as its historical approach to the music of the past, may be said to have started about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when such pioneers as Samuel Wesley and Felix Mendelssohn inaugurated a widespread interest in the performance of the music of the earlier composers. The 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the publication of the *Gesellschaft* editions of George Friedrich Handel and Johann Sebastian Bach,

backed by the new musicological scholarship. After the turn of the century, the research of such scholars as Johannes Wolf resulted in the study of medieval systems of notation and in the transcription and publication of the works of many medieval and renaissance masters." [7]

## MUSICOLOGY OF JAAP SAHIB

Musicology is an enigma of Jaap Sahib and is at par the grip which can hold the universe. Defining the music I can say that Music is an aesthetical arrangement of aromatic sounds and combination of proportional gaps of elixir frequencies to be rhythmically sung and played on the instruments which becomes auxiliary in transcending the soul up to ultimate level of merger.

The Jaap Sahib is composed of a number of musical ensembles of various extensions and combinations of both formal and conceptual notes. The initial ensemble is Chhape Chhand of three long couplets of about twenty words each. It delineated almost completely the kernel theme of the composition which is developed in the integrating parts as we go along the entire orchestration. [8]

"Jaap Sahib is a poetic composition that vibrates with energy and enthusiasm, whose resonance can be interpreted in no way other than these rhythmic words themselves which move like the beat of a drum, a war drum at times, and also like a musical orchestration charged with harmonious bliss. One neither needs to know Sanskrit nor Persian, with which the rhythmic flow is surcharged." [9]

Although no specific name of a Raga has been mentioned in the beginning of the text by Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, it is observed that musical aspect of the said text is very strong because firstly it is a poetry framework of literature always capable of singing secondly there is a use of important and basic musical terminology which is totally in different Chhands hence devine poetry becomes a greatest example of cosmic dimension of music.

## MUSICAL TERMINOLOGY

Lot of musical terms has been used by Guru Gobind Singh in Jaap Sahib as attributes of *Akal Purakh*. Detail of these terms has been mentioned under.

Bandh No.	Chhand	Ref.
26	Bhujang Prayat Chhand	Namastasat Raagae
47	Bhujang Prayat Chhand	Namo Geet Geetae, Taan Taane
48	Bhujang Prayat Chhand	Namo Nrit Nritae, Naad Naadae

55	Bhujang Prayat Chhand	Namo Raag Roopae
67	Bhujang Prayat Chhand	Namo Saaj Saajae
68	Bhujang Prayat Chhand	Namo Geet Geetae
70	Bhujang Prayat Chhand	Namo Param Taanang
80	Ruaal Chhand	Roop Rekh na Raag
195	Ek Acchari Chhand	Na Raagae

## Taal Discipline

Channd is synonymous to Taal. The whole Jaap Sahib is written in different Chhands. One more point observed in Jaap Sahib is the importance and repeated use of a word '*Chakkar*'. The very first chhand begins with this very important word and than each line of units 96 to 98 is containing this word. The end is also carrying this word. *Chakkar* means one cycle, a cycle of universe which is not having any beginning or end. With different cycles of time the whole universe has come into existence. In music also cycle of time is very important which is called laya. Taal is a measuring tape of laya. Total 16 times *Chakkar* word has been used for 16 kala sampuran Almighty. The divine composition revolves around this important meaning of this word.

## Chhand Discipline

Music consists of three important elements Sur, Tala and Poetry. Poetry is a rhythmic, harmonious form of literature. Prose and story writing doesn't require this type of metrical harmony. Due to metrical harmony, poetry is considered as a finest form in literature as compared to prose and story writing. These rhythmic, metrical, harmonious elements are musical contents which make poetry singable. Poetry has its own basic fundamentals like Alankaar and Chhand. These fundamentals are musical elements in poetry which makes poetry finest from the fine and richest to the superior and converts passive words into singable. From the angle of Chhand planning Bani Jaap Sahib is a museum of traditional and new experimental Chhand. Due to variety of Chhand, it is a unique example in itself.

In 199 musical units of Jaap Sahib, a total of 10 musical chhands have been used in this bani and each stanza has its independent identity and meaning but the composition as a whole forms a coherent unit of inter-related ideas.

Different Chhand has been mentioned in the different meters of the text for example Chachri Chhand and Bhagwati Chhand is a musical form of poetry which is always sung and its impact on

human mind and soul can be experienced up to the highest level of intensity with the help of music.

A total ten different Chhands has been used in twenty closures (where each Chhand ends). The detail is mentioned as under.

Some of these Chhand has been repeated for six times. Detail is mentioned below:-

Chhand	No. of Times Used
Chhape Chhand	One
Bhujang Pariyat Chhand	Six
Chachri Chhand	Five
Charpat Chhand	Two
Ruaal Chhand	One
Madhubhar Chhand	One
Bhagwati Chhand	Two
Rasaval Chhand	One
Harbolmna Chhand	One
Ekachhari Chhand	One

The whole structure of the verses, vocabulary and Chhand is harmonized well. In music, harmony is an important component. The most important point to note is under the title, Ekachhari Chhand (Chhand with one word), Guru Gobind Singh praises Akaal Purakh in poetical form having one single word as each sentence *Ajai, Alai, Abhai, Abai; Abhoo, Ajoo, Anaas, Akaas*:[10] and this hasn't been noticed by author in any other writing of that time.

### Alankaar Discipline

Similarly, *Alankaars* experimented by Guru Gobind Singh is exemplary and incomparable. Where Jaap Sahib is a philosophic and religious poetic creation, it is also a rich specimen of traditional as well as new experimented *alankaars*. For example, *Mudra Alankaar, Ratnawal Alankaar, Purab Roop Alankaar, Samantya Anupraas Alankaar, Sam-Vikhmantya Anupraas Alankaar, Adi Anupraas and Rupak Alankaar*. [11]

### Dhyaan Chitra

"The cycle of rhythmic notes also creates its specific universe of resonance. These musical orchestrations carry their own significance which emerges only in specific combinations and which may have no purpose other than to increase the density of resonance, a resonance of course that is already highly crystallized in the form of pure epithets. So we have here a combination of musical and pictorial compositions, a creation constituted of conceptual forms and Abstract mental images, which sing and dance, which vibrate with ever increasing intensity." [12] It gives feel of Dhyaan Chitra like Raga Dhyaan Chitra in music.

### Rasa Expression

Philosophers and Scholars of Art have considered a total of Nine Rasas which can be expressed through any Art form i.e. *Shingar, Karun, Vibhiti, Raudr, Bhakti, Bir, Hasya, Vatsalya and Adbhut*. Since Vedic times, various authors in their literary compositions have tried to express these Rasas. Guru Gobind Singh has used the articulations of language to express all these Rasas in a single bani Jaap Sahib. Almost all Rasas have been used in a single *Chhand* i.e. *Harbolmana Chhand* [13]. Some of the examples of Rasa are mentioned as under.

<i>Meh Mandan Hain</i>	<i>Shingar Rasa</i>
<i>Ajbakrit Hain</i>	<i>Adbhut Rasa</i>
<i>Karunalaya Hain</i>	<i>Karun Rasa</i>
<i>Ar Ghalyaya hain, Kal Kaaran Hain</i>	<i>Raudr Rasa</i>
<i>Khal Khandan Hain</i>	<i>Bir Rasa</i>
<i>Sarbatam Hain</i>	<i>Shhant Rasa</i>
<i>Sarb Ubharan Hain</i>	<i>Vatsalya Rasa</i>
<i>Jagteswara Hain, Parameswara Hain</i>	<i>Bhakti Rasa</i>

### LINGUISTIC AESTHETICS

The whole Gurbani of Shri Guru Granth Sahib is a treasury of old dialects and Ragas. From Baba Nanak to Guru Teg Bahadur a number of dialects and languages has been used in their masterly compositions, name of languages are Eastern Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sant Bhasha, Arabic, Persian, Sindi, Bengali, Braj and Marathi [14]. Rattan Singh Jaggi in the introduction of his book assigns the name *Panch-Mel* (mixture of five) or *Mishrit Bhasha* [15] (Mixed Language) but the dominating languages are Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Punjabi. Expressions of Arabic and Persian language are highly aesthetical as experienced in Jaap Sahib. These languages are having the utmost musical grace. The Arabic words: *Afwul Gunah Hai, Ki Shahan Shah Hai* and Persian vocabulary like *Ki Husanul Vaju Hain, Tamamul Ruju Hain, Hamesul Salaamein Salikhat Mudaamein, Ganimul Shiqaste Garibul Parsate, Bilandul Makane Zameenul Zamaanein*, is full of resonance. Even if we simply pronounce it, it gives a musical soothe to the ear and soul. May be realizing the fact that the cosmic effect of Jaap Sahib can be multiplied with the help of musical notes Guru Gobind Singh has used highly metrical chhand and musical vocabulary from different languages.

The composition offers expressions of different languages-Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Awadhi and Braj-though the predominant language employed in the text is Braj." [16]

Dasam Guru has also introduced new vocabulary which is very near to the musical tones. At some

places, single word is a combination of two languages like “Anekul”. Anek is a word used in Sanskrit, Punjabi and Braj language but it is Persianized with “ul” adjective to make it more orchestral. Similarly a word ‘Bilundal’ is a harmonious form of a word ‘Bulandi’ with ‘ul’ adjective.

Music is a universal language beyond the caste creed and country. Same way Guru Ji has used the vocabulary which can be universally accepted. It is touching the sentiments of all the religions. The words like *Namo Suraj Suraje*, *Namo Chandra Chandre*, *Namo Indra Indre*, *Namo Mantra Mantre* are from Hindu Mythology, *Ki Razak Raheem Hai*, *Ki Karman Kareem Hai*, *Ki Pak BeaiB Hain*, *Ki Gaibul Gaib Hai* etc. are from Islam Religion. The contents mentioned in a very first Chhand are according to Sikh philosophy: *Chakkar Chihan Ar Baran Jaat Ar Paat Nahian Jeh*. The Visionary Guru has used every possible word as an appreciation of lord which could be used by different faiths. Moreover the words are woven rhythmically in the verses *Namo Naad Nade*, *Namo Geet Geete*, *Namo Raag Rage*, *Namo Taan Taane*, *Namo Nrit Nrite*. It is a direct proof of musical bent of mind of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Guru Ji is saying ‘*Namo Naad Nade*’, Naad is a molecule of sound and I have already mentioned in my definition of music in the beginning that music is an aesthetical arrangement of aromatic sounds.

## AUTHOR'S COMPOSITIONS

I tried different compositions and formulated different tunes for different *Chhand* in *Raga Bairagi* which is a morning raga in classical discipline. *Raga Bairagi* is of *audav-audav* jaati, belonging to *Bhairav Thaat*, having *Rishab* and *Nishad* swara in komal state, *Gandhar* and *Dhaivat* are forbidden swaras in the raga so *Raga Bairagi*. Reciting this bani in a raga of Birha Rasa the soul starts longing for God's love. I observed that impact of the bani has been immensed when it is sung before the audience in general. If background music can be played of *Gatka*, marshal feel can also be raised of this bani.

I have tried different chhand in different taals of Hindustani Classical Music having *Khulle Bol* (rich base sounds) to maintain the density of a sound suitable for **Bir Ras**.

All this I did in applied music and prepared a C.D. It was not only appreciated by researchers of this field but devotees of different faiths and was accepted by radio channels. Finally it was recorded and broadcasted on World Space Satellite Radio, Punjabi Channel on regular basis from Aug., 2005 to Dec., 2005 and was repeated from July, 2007 to Sept., 2007 on persistent listener's demand.

## CONCLUSION

The rich use of Musical terminology and musicological intricacies is found in the text of *Jaap Sahib*. With the use of Musical terminology, *Taal* system, *Chhands*, *Alankkaars*, *Dhyan Chitras*, multiple languages and different emotional expressions pertaining to different rasas, the musicological aspect of this poetic creation becomes highly artistic.

The use of terminology of Indian Music such as *Raag*, *Taan*, *Naad*, *Nrit*, *Geet* etc. relates the text to Indian Music. The use of ten types of metrical structures ‘*Chhands*’ induces the text with high musicological appreciation. Jaap Sahib is an example of using linguistic articulations to express all types of emotional expressions in a single text. The use of multiple languages and introduction of new vocabulary through mixing of languages have attributed the text with high linguistic appreciation.

In the end it must be said that Jaap Sahib is Guru Gobind Singh Ji's masterpiece of divine poetry and repository of rich languages wrapped in the treasury of Indian music.

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